



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos (Kauno fakulteto)
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS „TAIKOMOJI KERAMIKA“
(valstybinis kodas - 612W10007)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF "APPLIED CERAMICS" (state code - 612W10007)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vilnius Art Academy (Kaunas Faculty)

Review' team:

1. **Dr. Sarah Bennett (team leader)** *academic,*
2. **Doc. Dr. Eugenia Loginova,** *academic,*
3. **Doc. Dr. Karen Harsbo,** *academic,*
4. **Prof. Dr. Richard Launder,** *academic,*
5. **Ms Asta Vaičiulytė,** *representative of social partners'*
6. **Ms Rūta Stankutė,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator -

Mrs Kristina Maldonienė

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Taikomoji keramika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612W10007
Studijų sritis	Menai
Studijų kryptis	Dailė
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (4 metai)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Dailės bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997 05 19 Nr. 565

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Applied Ceramics</i>
State code	612W10007
Study area	Arts
Study field	Art studies
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (4 years)
Volume of the study programme in credits	240 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Art
Date of registration of the study programme	1997 05 19 No. 565

© Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras
The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1. Background of the evaluation process.....	4
1.2. General.....	4
1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information.....	4
1.4. The Review Team.....	6
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	6
2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	6
2.2. Curriculum design	7
2.3. Teaching staff	10
2.4. Facilities and learning resources	11
2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment.....	13
2.6. Programme management	13
2.7. Examples of excellence	18
III. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	20
IV. SUMMARY	21
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	24

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.

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

Kaunas Faculty of VAA (VAA KF) is an integral structural part of Vilnius Academy of Arts. VAA is a state school of higher education of arts organising university first-cycle (bachelor), second-cycle (masters), special vocational, integrated, third-cycle, doctoral studies, performing research and developing high-level professional artistic activities. It is an autonomous institution carrying out independent academic, administrative, economic and financial management activities based on the principle of self-government, academic freedom, and defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the Academy.

The VAA community, including VAA Kaunas Faculty, VAA Vilnius Faculty, VAA Telšiai Faculty and VAA Klaipėda Faculty, sees itself as an educational institution of visual arts, recognised by its programme and value provisions, socially oriented staff of highly skilled artists and pedagogues, seeking to implement cutting-edge art technologies and capable of preparing professional artists, designers, architects who can compete in the art market, as well as experts in humanities and social science (art critics, cultural management professionals). The most talented graduates of the Academy comprise a significant part of the Lithuanian cultural elite producing art works that are recognised and appreciated in Europe and around the world.

The VAA KF offers university study programmes of arts at two levels (bachelor and master): 9 bachelor (Design, Graphic Design, Sculpture, Applied Ceramics, Applied Textile, Glass, Painting, Applied Graphics and Interior Design (from 2015), 8 master (Design, Graphic Design, Applied Ceramics, Applied Textile, Glass, Painting, Applied Graphics), and 1 integrated study programme (Architecture, after bachelor and master study programmes were combined in 2016). In cooperation with the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, the joint master study programme Art Therapy was prepared and launched (overseen by the departments of Humanities of VAA and LUHS).

The BA Applied Ceramics study programme is located in the Department of Ceramics and Porcelain alongside the MA Applied Ceramic study programme. The department has been implementing the study programme in the field of ceramics since 1991, however the roots of ceramics education in Kaunas goes back to Kaunas School of Arts, where studies of ceramics were introduced in 1931. The BA Applied Ceramics study programme was first assessed in 2008, then again in 2010 and again in 2013. It was given accreditation for 3 years on each occasion of evaluation. The BA Applied Ceramics study programme is taught by teachers from the Department of Ceramics and Porcelain, the Department of Humanities and students can take electives from other departments in the Faculty.

The previous evaluation took place in 2013 and the study programme was accredited for three years. The evaluation of the Programme in 2017 has been conducted by an international team assembled by the SKVC (see 1.4 below). In this work the team has followed the legal requirements and methodological guidelines, established for higher education institutions in Lithuania. The international expert group undertook its evaluation based on the information provided in the Self-Evaluation Report (hereinafter – SER), the submitted additional information by the VAA KF and the observations made during the site visit to the KF. Following the visit, the views and findings of the review team members were discussed, which are reflected in this report.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. V-41 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 5/April/2017.

- 1. Dr. Sarah Bennett (team leader)**, *Kingston University Head of The School of Art and Architecture, United Kingdom.*
- 2. Doc. Dr. Eugenia Loginova**, *Art Academy of Latvia, lecturer, Latvia*
- 3. Doc. Dr. Karen Harsbo**, *Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art, lecturer, Denmark.*
- 4. Prof. Dr. Richard Launder**, *University of Bergen, Institute of Art & Design, lecturer, Norway.*
- 5. Ms Asta Vaičiulytė**, *Contemporary Art Centre, curator and editor, Lithuania.*
- 6. Ms Rūta Stankutė**, *student of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

During the meetings the review team have been confirmed in our view that the BA programme aims and learning outcomes are well-defined, clear and available to publics and meet the needs of the students, graduates and social partners to a high level of satisfaction. This is evidenced in the quality and breadth of student work as well as exhibitions. The staff are to be highly commended that individual development and independent learning are supported to a high level and this clearly enables students to find their artistic and/or design direction during their BA studies which corresponds to first cycle of studies in the arts.

It is recognised that the first cycle programme presents two fields: artistic ceramics and ceramics design (SER p8) and the staff stated that these are regarded as equal in terms of the allocation of study resources, a position which the review team totally supports, and notes the particular opportunity which this creates for a contemporary hybrid practice. During the meetings with teaching staff the title of the BA was discussed i.e. regarding whether it would benefit from increased visibility of the contemporary aspect, but it was agreed that it remains appropriate and aligned to the learning outcomes. The programme aim and the learning outcomes were renewed in the preparation process for the year 2016-2017 and the review team agree that they are appropriate to recent trends in the ceramics (SER p9). The review team note through meetings, review of student work and the SER (p7) that the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes reflect

academic requirements, however, the review team recommends that in order to extend preparedness for second cycle study (LO A2) the programme consider that BA students produce a reflective critical text on their Bachelor exam project, which is broadly inclusive of embedded studio research: enabling the 'making is thinking' haptic.

The review team welcome that the Faculty is already implementing (summer 2017) new technology equipment that will further support the BA programme learning outcomes, and that the use of these are already integrated into the educational structure (SER p9). The review team further suggest that these become linked to (MB1930) Portfolio, Art of Rhetoric, Studio Photography and the proposed Basics of Entrepreneurship and Art Markets (see annex no.6) in addition to studio usage. When in place, the creative possibilities which this new equipment will enable will form an important aspect of creating a contemporary level field between conventional and new technology languages of making and expression in ceramics. Social Partners found this of interest and useful in terms of possible employment opportunities and is evidence that programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are linked to the state, societal and labour market needs (SER p7).

Overall, as experienced by the review team in meetings, artwork, SER (p4) this BA Applied Ceramics study programme fosters high quality artistic output and professional education and aspires to a unique place in the cultural life of Lithuania.

2.2. Curriculum Design

The curriculum design is described in the SER (pp12-13) and shows that the programme meets the legal requirements. The total volume of the programme is 240 credits (ECTS). It has a duration of 8 semesters (a period of 4 years). As required for the plan of the study programme the number of subjects studied during one semester within a programme does not exceed 7 (no less than 3 credits each). The electives that students can choose from courses, comprise 15 ECTS (it is possible to choose from 66 ECTS). Optional subjects must not exceed 6.3% of the total number of subjects. Practice gives 18 ECTS and final work - Bachelor's degree project 18 ECTS, all corresponding to the requirements.

According to Annex no.1, the review team can confirm that the study programme of Applied Ceramics is based on the combination of individual, yet interconnected blocks of subjects. Subjects of study are taught in a consistent manner, subjects or topics are not repeated. The programme is organised in accordance with the study goals, logically enhancing the level of difficulty of assignments. The theoretical and practical subjects are interconnected and supplement each other. The recommendations by the accreditation commission of 2013 were taken into consideration,

which has enabled improvements in the study process, for example: the addition of the Portfolio subject to produce a creative portfolio; interdisciplinary subjects were added; the International Kaunas Porcelain Symposium was integrated into the teaching; and facilities were improved (Annex no.6).

The strength of VAA KF always was classical, academic education, but the review team now recognises that Applied Ceramics is keeping classical traditions whilst also taking a contemporary direction. The content of subjects corresponds to the type and cycle of studies. As mentioned in the previous evaluation report of 2013, the programme is firmly focused on the development of traditional skills, thus developing mainly students' professional skills. At present positive changes take place: the programmes are being upgraded, and introduction of new subjects ensures closer links with real life (SER pp14-15). During the first two BA study years (1- 4 semesters), students acquire general fundamental knowledge and skills (LOs C4, C5). Beginning with the 3rd year they start the in-depth research of fundamental themes and take up new subjects (LO B1, B2). The review team saw evidence of increased numbers of electives in the BA and students are supported to undertake them even when there are limits in terms of group sizes (too few). The subjects of *Digital media* (MB1225) are integrated into special subjects and ensure the acquirement of the basics of 2-dimensional computer graphics and 3DS Max spatial graphics and their application to their speciality of ceramics by using new technologies (LO C3). Students also have a possibility to get theoretical and technological knowledge of photography and animation, which enables them to widen the field of expression for their creative abilities. The new subject *Portfolio. Rhetoric art. Photography in a studio* (MB1930) develops the skills of a high level presentation, which is the first step for communication in the art world (LO C7). The review team commend the portfolio preparation as good professional practice. Students appreciated the opportunity of taking photography as an optional subject. Other notable popular electives were glass, jewellery and sculpture. To encourage students to get involved in business activities a new subject *Basics of Entrepreneurship and Art Markets* was proposed (annex no.6) for consideration, as well as *Management of Cultural projects* (HB0006 and HB0269) (LO A4, D1, D2). The introduction of the Business/Marketing subjects has enhanced BA student preparation for future careers in addition to the acquisition of study skills –evidenced by the success of graduates.

The content of subjects and study methods are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. According to the SER (Appendix 2 – course descriptions) the main methods are lectures, workshops, individual work, practices, seminars, team work and group discussions at mid-term assessments. Goals of the programme were upgraded while preparing for the study year 2016-2017 (SER p.9). Now they are in line with the latest trends in ceramics, students' and

employers' needs and requirements of the study cycle, and are in a proper correlation with study subjects. Students achieve a good professional level and are able to produce good design or art ceramics items, which is evidenced by successful cooperation with various business partners (LOs D3, C5). The conversation with the social partners from Kaunas Porcelain factory (company Kauno Jiesia) convinced us of that. One of the most successful examples of the cooperation is the bone-china tea – coffee set *Academy* that is in production now and sells very well. The assignments of ceramics subjects tend to be interlinked with the designing and satisfaction of clients' needs, which is evidenced by other examples as well: the design of the bottle for Stakliškės mead and its introduction into production, a souvenir for Mingè village, creation of the Kaunas Tennis Cup tournament prize (SER, Appendix 6, p3). The review team witnessed that the alumni and social partners appreciate the study programme and the graduates' professional skills.

The scope of the programme of 240 ECTS is sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes of the Bachelor of Applied Ceramics. The review team has been informed of the greater diversification of the curriculum, which was supplemented with some theoretical and practical classes to promote creative thinking and critical analysis of the art process. The subject *Creative Laboratory of Art and Science* (HB0018) is meant to boost students' self-confidence when they work with professionals from other spheres, to enhance their understanding about the possibilities of collaborative art practices, and to encourage carrying out projects based on community participation (LO C3). The acquired theoretical knowledge can be successfully tested out in art projects where students have a possibility to take a greater creative risk and carry out manifold projects as well as evolve their conceptual ideas, as, for instance in the *Exhibition* (MB0091) by the end of their third year and *Art Projects 1-2* (MB1174- MB1175) in the fourth year (LOs B2, E1). A positive and praiseworthy initiative is the International Kaunas Porcelain Symposium organised twice by the Department of Ceramics and Porcelain during the summer practice (SER, Appendix no.6, p3). Thus, the Department facilitates international cooperation with other Art Universities by inviting them to participate and share their professional and creative know-how. That helps to advance international contacts, students' and professors' mobility. In this way the study process is being constantly renewed in the international context.

It should be noted that within the last two years the programme was greatly supplemented and renewed in accordance with the latest academic, artistic or technological achievements, that allows to integrate into the context of contemporary art and demonstrate the professional competence in final projects (according with stated aims SER p9). As mentioned above, praiseworthy is the inclusion of the subject *Digital media* (MB1225) in the list of compulsory subjects. It improves students' skills in the 3D graphic modelling related to working with the 3D ceramic printer, which

has already been ordered and soon will be added to the Department's material and technical resources. Also, such all-embracing programmes as *Exhibition* (MB0091) or *Art Projects 1-2* (MB1174- MB1175) enable students to develop their ideas in any direction (LOs D1, E3, E4). Having seen the completed graduation works the review team can state that the programme is above the craft level, many works reveal a deep philosophical meaning which is visualised in a new form that is not characteristic of the traditional applied art – it is new, contemporary ceramics art level and it is commended as good practice. All the above mentioned improvements and supplements of the programme are a good starting point to achieve the highest results of quality. It would be advisable to keep in touch with the graduates, to follow their development and to critically assess the training results and professional viability.

2.3. Teaching staff

The review team note that the BA Applied Ceramics study programme is taught by the following staff: there are 38 teachers involved in the BA study programme of Applied Ceramics: 6 professors, 17 associate professors (including 5 PhD scientists), and 15 lecturers (5 PhD scientists). 26.3% of the teachers have a degree of PhD, 15.8% have a pedagogical title of a professor, 44.7% have a pedagogical title of an associate professor, and 39.5% - of a lecturer. 97,4 % of BA teachers giving lectures of compulsory study field subjects are scientists and/or established artists (clarified by email 23.5.17). When the review team consider these statistics in relation to the study programme we can see that the staff profiles meet the legal requirements.

The qualifications of the teaching staff (Annex no. 4) are more than adequate to ensure learning outcomes, and the quality of student work that the review team saw evidences the high standards of teaching and ensures that the learning outcomes are achievable by the students. This was also in evidence through the experience of the students who told us in the meeting that they are well supported by staff in their studies and that staff quickly resolve matters to do with choices for electives when issues arise. The review team also noted the strong tutorial support to assist students in finding their artistic direction between applied and artistic approaches (LO C4) and in developing independent learning (SER p8), (LOs C1, C2 , C5). The number of staff (SER p17 and Annex no.3) is also adequate to deliver the learning outcomes, and there is scope to increase student numbers to a total of 20 without placing a great stress on staffing (see 2.6).

The review team note that in addition to the full-time staff some younger ones have joined the staff team in recent years in order to compliment the pedagogical experience of the professors and associate professors (SER p18). This has created a better balance of older and younger staff and has benefited the contemporary possibilities while maintaining the technical principals at the heart of

the programme. In view of these changes the review team consider that the teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme - however, the review team advise that staff should keep renewing their subject knowledge and particularly in relation to contemporary artistic theory and trends. The review team also note most of the staff are engaged in international activities that provide valuable insights into the global context for BA students and that an additional opportunity was provided for BA students and graduates by the invited international artist workshop (USA). The review team suggest that these types of workshops/series should be extended further and are pleased to see the residence in the renovation of the former hospital building that can be used to host visiting artists.

The review team congratulate VAA and the Kaunas Faculty on the implementation of the Systematic Professional Development of staff (SER p20), which is evidence that VAA KF ensures conditions for professional upgrading of staff necessary to implement the programme such as increasing international experience through exchange. For example in 2016/17 one staff member went on the KUNO lecturer's mobility programme to the Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn; in 2015/16 another went to Latvian Academy of Arts, Riga; and in 2014/15 four utilised the support for staff mobility (SER p22). In particular the review team are impressed by the support for staff to make both internal and external funding bids that extends the scope of research beyond the Faculty and into other institutional and international contexts. Through our review meetings teaching staff spoke about their professional interactions and research activities in the city such as the porcelain symposium, and the review team commend the department staff for the way in which they contribute to the dynamic cultural and arts sector in Kaunas. This provides an excellent learning context and environment for the students and they can aspire to similar professional attributes (LO D2). The social partners also play a very positive and complimentary role in the students learning, especially in the Practical Training (LO A4). The professional relationships are valuable and strong between the Faculty and their social partners.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

Following the recommendations of the previous external evaluation (2013) the review team are pleased to see the improvements in the department facilities and to hear about the future plans regarding the renovation of the former hospital and commend the Faculty administration for the ambition of the project. As mentioned in the meeting with the VAA KF Administration, they regard the Applied Ceramics programme to be quite unique and try to invest not only Faculty funds but also through attracting external funding. The renovation project will in time move the department to the former hospital, but some parts have already been taken into use, which were

presented during the visit; for example the library and guest dormitories. The premises for studies are presently adequate both in size and quality and proximity supports valuable peer-to-peer learning across the BA and MA. There are separate rooms for technical functions (SER p23) and improved health/safety installations. The review team was told about a confirmed plan to check health and safety responsibilities (Administration Meeting).

The teaching and learning equipment are adequate both in size and quality for the students to acquire knowledge of the ceramic processes (SER p24). There is a focus on electric kilns, but for students wishing to learn about wood firing there is an arrangement with VAA Vilnius Department of Ceramics. On the topic of health and safety they have instructions at the start of each year to all students and staff and certification for use of laboratories and machinery during the year. Hazardous materials are now clearly labelled and there are information tables on the walls where appropriate. It was mentioned (student meeting) that the improvements have helped them in the context of making creative work. Students are supplied with all ceramic materials for free by the programme, provided by the social partners. The programme has purchased a ceramic 3D printer (arriving June 2017). The Faculty have a computer classroom with 14 computers and relevant upgraded software. Other facilities are accessible for students - printing labs, wood, metal (SER p24)

The extent of the students' possibilities for practice is adequate and rests on close collaborations with local stakeholders: manufactures; galleries; museum (SER p25). The place for practice / internship is chosen by the students and the department helps to establish the contact. Students can also choose new locations. Kauno Jiesia, porcelain manufacturer, have 6 students in practice every year as well as supplying the programme with materials. A case was mentioned (social partners), where a students' design was taken into production and now sells well, but with no design credit to the artist. It raised the question of copyright or IPR, which the review team recommends is addressed in the case of similar commissions through a written protocol. The review team see the value of the symbiotic relationships with a variety of social partners and of their "sponsorship in kind" with regards to tools, materials and equipment. However, the team would recommend that, as when finances are available, the Faculty can invest further in equipment and updating appropriate technical training for the programme.

Teachers and students have access to VAA library in Vilnius and its divisions and to its several subscriptions to international and national databases (SER p25). The local library at VAA KF has been moved and refurbished with 32 working spaces and wireless internet and provides course books and specialized literature and publications. The Review team were impressed by the new

location for the library but viewing the selection during the visit recommend that the Faculty remain vigilant regarding relevant library stock for the BA and MA Applied Ceramics programmes to ensure the literature remains current, and improves as budget becomes available. The library at the methodical room is well stocked with a mix of Lithuanian and international publications and popular amongst student and staff although quite a few are gifts from staff and others rather than purchased by the Faculty. Methodical papers and previous students MA theoretical papers and information of foreign study programs are likewise kept here.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Entrance requirements of Vilnius Academy of Arts (VAA) are well set, consistent and transparent. The entrance requirements are reviewed every year in compliance with the *Description of the Procedure of General Admission to First-Level and Integrated Studies in the Higher Education Schools of Lithuania in 2016*. Approved by the President of the Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for General Admission Procedures upon the order of 16 May 2016, No. 16-29 (SER, p.27). For the BA studies of Applied Ceramics students can be enrolled after high school. Entrance examinations are competitive in order to determine the future students' talents and skills in drawing and painting, their abilities to execute the assigned creative idea through visual expression. The admission procedure was reviewed and renewed in 2009, 2011 and 2016. For instance, since 2016, additional points have been given to applicants applying for the study programmes of arts, if they had won prizes in the International or National Olympiads of Arts, as well as National Contest of Visual Arts *Čiurlionio takais*. During the last five academic years, the average number of applicants for the VAA KF Applied Ceramics programme was 7.8 (SER Table 10, p27). The number of dropouts was only 2 between 2012-2016, and there were 2 graduating students in 2012 and 33 graduating students in 2014.

Organisation of the study process (existing regulations and procedures) ensures proper implementation of the programme and achievement of the intended learning outcomes of a Bachelor of Applied Ceramics. The admitted students are introduced to the study process and the principles of evaluation. The students get acquainted with the ceramics laboratory equipment and health and safety measures in the ceramics workshop. The flexible study timetable combines compulsory and elective study subjects and ensures a productive study process.

Students of Applied Ceramics are encouraged to take part in artistic activities. Students can attend various exhibitions and get involved in various projects as well as present their artworks or make contributions to creative and educational projects. Students also take an active part in the exhibitions organized by VAA's divisions and in the Lithuanian Artists' Union's projects as well as

international ones. During the conversations with students and professors the review team were convinced of the active creative life in the Ceramics Department. They were also given evidence of students' participation in symposia, for instance, the International Bone China Symposium (2014, 2016) organised by the Department, the 13th International Ceramics Symposium "We/Reduction 2015", exhibitions and competitions, such as the Baltic exhibition of contemporary ceramics "Spring" in Kaunas (2014-2016), the international students' ceramics competition "The Gizem Frit Ceramics Competition" (Turkey, 2016), projects and creative workshops – project "Let's meet Wroclaw 2016" (Poland) and many others (SER p. 30).

Students are informed about the possibilities of mobility within Erasmus+ and Kuno un Cirrus programmes. During the last five years, three students (SER Table 14, p31) have taken advantage of it and cooperated with Hacettepe University Ankara, Turkey (2013), HDK The School of Design And Crafts, Sweden (2015), and University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca, Romania (2015). VAA has signed the ERASMUS+ student and graduate internship contracts – 162 contracts in Europe, and in 2016 the geography of mobility was extended to other continents as well (SER p. 31). The review team heard that Kaunas Ceramics Department has good, friendly relations with the neighbouring countries – Latvia and Estonia and several international projects are implemented without any official support, through private contacts, for instance, every year 3-4 Department students take part in the Latvian Art Academy's International Baltic states wood-firing symposium Buro-Box (2014 and 2016). The review team advises the administration to provide more support to students' mobility opportunities.

VAA KF ensures proper academic and social support for students, as it is described in (SER p31-32). Students can make use of many possibilities provided by the KF in various spheres: informative support, formal and informal education, KF gallery premises for their exhibitions, creative in Nida (the Curonian Spit) and Mizarai (Druskininkai district) owned by the Academy, Faculty transport for various creative projects, etc. AS VAA KF is the part of VAA the review team recommends closer collaboration with Vilnius Faculty (VAA VF), so that students could access the new contemporary technical equipment of new technical laboratory located in Vilnius more frequently. Awarding of scholarships and benefits is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, according *The Regulations on the Granting of Scholarships of Vilnius Academy of Arts*. Approved at VAA Senate meeting on 18-01-2012, No. S-1; Approved at the Rector's Office meeting on 03-02-2015, No. R-4. However, SER observes that financing is not adequate to satisfy students' requirement for benefits (SER p. 37).

The system of assessing student achievements is clear, public and appropriate to assess the learning outcomes and relies on the principles of impartiality, objectivity, validity, constructiveness and clarity. The assessment system is based on: Recommendations for the improvement of evaluation of study results, prepared by Order No. ISAK-16 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on 05-01-2009 (SER p33). At the outset of a semester the teaching staff inform the students about the criteria of assessment of their learning outcomes providing information about the syllabus, goals of the subject, anticipated learning outcomes, assessment system, impact of mid-term assessments on the final grade, requirements and assessment criteria. All issues are discussed with the students and also individually if it is needed. According to the *Order No. ISAK-2194 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on 24 July 2008*, regarding the approval of the system of study results evaluation a 10-point criterion grading scale is used (SER Table 15 p. 33).

Professional activities of the majority of programme graduates meet the expectations of programme operators and employers. According to the graduate survey distributed on 14-11-2016, 100 % of all graduates either have art-related jobs, mostly in ceramics, or are involved in artistic activities or teaching (SER Table 16 p36). Some of them are studying for a Master's degrees. In a conversation with the alumni the review team heard that some of them are teachers of ceramics, others work in museums with ceramic collections, a few of them are engaged in restoration or production (porcelain factory Jiesia) some are free-lancers or have started their own businesses. During the conversation with the experts the employers highly evaluated the professionalism of the graduates. In the conversations with alumni and social partners the review team were reassured that graduates are in demand and are working in the ceramic-related areas, which proves that the study programme Applied Ceramic BA corresponds to the state economic, social and cultural and future development needs and meets all the needs.

Feedback is provided throughout the study time, during the classes or individually, and fair learning environment is ensured. In the course of the semester, during the mid-term and final assessment shows open discussions are held, students present their work and express their opinion, professors and invited experts have their say. The feedback is an integral part of studies, as it is based on the *Description of the Academic Feedback System of VAA* (approved by the Senate of VAA in 2015), (SER p34). Each semester anonymous questionnaires have questions about students' needs, content of the study programme, quality of subjects, social and academic support. In the conversation with students the review team stated that students disapprove of this official way of communication so the review team recommend that, whilst using anonymous questionnaires, VAA should maintain more effective ways of official feedback. They prefer informal discussions and meetings in the

Department with the participation of all students and professors. Of a great value is a friendly atmosphere in the Applied Ceramics Department, where students are really able to resolve all their problems.

Students can make complaints and lodge appeals in accordance with clear, public and transparent procedures. VAA is an independent institution that carries out administrative, economic and financial management activities based on the principle of self-government, academic freedom, and defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the Academy (SER, p.4). There is Ethics Committee in VAA, which ensures fair learning environment and the implementation of the regulations of the Code of Ethics. It also considers the ethics-related reports it receives, imposes sanctions, etc. (SER p30). Honest attitude to studies is ensured in accordance with the regulations of the VAA *Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius Academy of Arts. Approved by the Resolution No. S-2015-4/13 in VAA Senate meeting on 11-11-2015 No. S-2015-4*. Throughout the analysed period, the Department of Ceramics and Porcelain has not received any complaints from the students.

2.6. Programme management

The review team confirm that the new QA processes are effective and efficient and are embedded in the Department and valued by staff and students. With regard to the Quality Assessment Assurance Policy, the review team notes that a new position - Senior Specialist of Study Quality Department - has been created to work with this, working together with VAA; descriptors are provided in every faculty, via the Study Programme Committees (meeting twice per year). As this is a very new system, there has been a considerable change, which takes into account the various voices: students, staff, stakeholders, etc. Previous recommendations have been taken into account and re-thought in regard to quality and contexts; an alternative to the numerical system is now in place: an academic survey for the students which is more individualised - each professor does a questionnaire at end of each course resulting from face-to-face discussion. There is also a meeting to review the previous semester (SER p39). The review team approves of these changes. The review team note that responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated through the Study Programme Committee, the methodological commission of the faculty, and Council of the Faculty, each playing their role, and through collecting feedback from employers, students and alumni (SER p. 38).

The review team commend the department for their successful admissions strategies that ensure a critical mass of students on the BA and suggest that this strategy should be shared with other BA programmes in the Faculty. Exemptions from the Government rules are under discussion, which

will positively impact admissions, and the review team supports this development. The review team recognise that the devotion of the staff is contagious, encouraging student applications, which is also further promoted via high school internships and BA students' visits to Schools.

The review team were told that there may be plans to increase student numbers to approximately 20 students in total on the BA, in relation to this, it is recommended that the Faculty remain attentive to maintain the quality of delivery of both programmes in terms of resourcing - in line with this potential increase, and that resources do not become over stretched. It was indicated that the data and other information regarding programme implementation are collected and analysed periodically and that the outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme. With regards to Health & Safety, raised in the previous evaluation 2013 (SER p43) the issues have been addressed (see 2.4 above) and the review team were assured that there will be a new post appointed to organise health and safety and sign-off.

In consideration of professional development and the Institutional support available for this raised in the previous evaluation 2013, the review team were informed that via the Systematic Professional Development (see 2.3 above), each individual finds their own route – professors present their motivation and Institutional support is available via application; this is similar in relation to Erasmus Staff Exchange Funding and Public Support Funding. The review team is very positive that the Faculty are actively involved in these various routes of research strategy: staff research-led field work/field trips, and attendance at seminars/conferences have become a route for greater contemporary relevance and competence of staff. This is reflected in the educational experience that the students receive. It is also noted that these activities greatly enhance and nurture staff development and upskilling in terms of leadership, increased responsibility and teaching zones.

The review team applauds the formal relationships with Social Stakeholders (many of whom are alumni), who help to evaluate and improve the programme and support the practical training. The review team encourages more partnerships, both formal and informal, which may be an enhanced possibility if Kaunas becomes a future City of Culture 2022. It is noted that Kaunas City Council is increasing investment, with many more creative projects due. The Social Partners found it very beneficial that more business skills have been introduced (see 2.2 above), together with other examples of collaboration (see 2.5 above) such as an international touring exhibition (Italy, etc.) in which an area was dedicated to young ceramic artists (many from Kaunas), the Artists Union who guide the students to learn self-promotion as well as the National Scholarship application procedures. The review team also noted the supportive role which the Kaunas Ceramic Museum has played: curating and exhibiting staff and student works, affording access to the Porcelain Archive,

etc. and given that Kaunas has a reputation as the ceramic city of Lithuania the review team were perplexed that this museum has been closed – and encourage the Institution to do what it can to have it re-opened.

In the department, it is noted that there is a new wave of a younger generation who are now getting involved in teaching (see 2.3 above) so the competence of a contemporary approach to the field is thereby expanded and fulfilled. The part time staff are also fully involved throughout the programme (tutors, exam responsibility, etc.). It is noted that the department has a PhD Candidate, which it views as an extremely positive factor, both as an indicator of quality, attractiveness of the department and as a further expansion of expertise, attitude and as an example available to the student body. While the review team welcomes these, it is of critical importance to create more opportunities for the students and staff to have greater contact with more visiting artists (see 2.3 above). It was noted that a Start-up Art Incubator will be available in future, to encourage and enable the students upon graduation with their transition into the professional sphere – this is an ambitious initiative, which the review team fully supports. The review team note that information about the study programme is public, relevant and easily accessible through the website and admissions information.

2.7. Examples of excellence

1. The staff are to be highly commended that individual development and independent learning are supported to a high level and this clearly enables students to find their artistic and/or design direction during their BA studies.
2. The review team commend as good practice that way the student works reveal a deep philosophical meaning which is visualised in a new form that is not characteristic of the traditional applied ceramics – it is new, contemporary ceramics art level.
3. The review team commend all the Department staff for the strength of their interactions and professional activities in the city and beyond, which contributes to the dynamic cultural and arts sector that the graduates will enter as professionals themselves.
4. The review team commends the Faculty Administration for the ambitions of the future plans regarding the renovation of the former hospital and in particular the new residence centre at the Kaunas Faculty which can encourage visiting international artists and students.

5. A positive and praiseworthy initiative is the International Kaunas Porcelain Symposium organised by the Department of Ceramics and Porcelain during the summer practice. Thus, the Department facilitates international cooperation and advances international contacts, students' and professors' mobility, as well helps view their place in a global context of art.

6. The review team commend the department for their successful admissions strategies that ensures a critical mass of students on the BA Applied Ceramics study programme. The review team suggest that this strategy should be shared with other BA programmes in the Faculty.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The review team recommends that the programme consider that BA students produce a reflective critical text and visual on their Bachelor exam project.
2. The review team recommends that the success of the workshop by an international artist (USA) is extended into an annual event or workshop series, subject to opportunities for funding being sought.
3. The review team recommends that the Faculty should establish a protocol for addressing copyright or IPR for instances when student work goes into production with the social partners.
4. The review team recommends that, as when finances are available, the Faculty can invest further in equipment and updating appropriate technical training for the study programme.
5. The review team recommend that the Faculty remain vigilant regarding relevant library stock for the BA Applied Ceramic study programme to ensure the literature remains current, and improves as budgets become available.
6. The review team recommends closer collaboration with VAA VF, so that Applied Ceramics students can access the new contemporary technical equipment of new technical laboratory located in Vilnius more frequently.
7. The review team recommends that the administration of VAA, whilst using anonymous questionnaires, should maintain more effective ways of official feedback.
8. The panel recommend that the Faculty remain attentive to maintain the quality of delivery of the study programme in terms of resourcing - in line with a potential increase in student numbers to approx. 20 students in total, and that resources do not become over stretched.

IV. SUMMARY

During the evaluation meetings the review team confirmed that the BA programme aims and learning outcomes are well-defined, clear and meet the needs of the students, graduates and social partners to a high level of satisfaction. This is evidenced in the quality and breadth of student work as well as exhibitions. The staff are to be highly commended that individual development and independent learning are supported to a high level and this clearly enables students to find their artistic and/or design direction during their BA studies which corresponds to first cycle of studies in the arts. The review team totally supports the Faculty staff's approach that the programme presents two fields - artistic ceramics and ceramics design and that these are regarded as equal in terms of the allocation of study resources. The review team recommends that the programme consider that BA students produce a reflective critical text and visual on their Bachelor exam project. The review team welcome that the Faculty is already implementing new technology equipment that will further support the BA programme learning outcomes. Overall the review team consider that the BA Applied Ceramics study programme fosters high quality artistic output, delivers professional education and aspires to a unique place in the cultural life of Lithuania.

The curriculum fully complies with the laws and regulations of the Lithuanian Republic legislation. The study programme is based on the combination of individual, yet interconnected blocks of subjects taught in a consistent manner, and subjects or topics are not repeated. The programme is organised in accordance with the study goals, logically enhancing the level of difficulty of assignments. The strength of VAA KF in maintaining classical traditions whilst also taking a contemporary direction. The review team was informed of the greater diversification of the curriculum which was supplemented with some theoretical and practical classes to promote creative thinking and critical analysis through art projects. The review team value the increased numbers of electives. The introduction of the Business/Marketing and Digital Media subjects has enhanced BA students' preparation for future alongside study skills. The review team commend the Portfolio preparation as good practice. Having reviewed the completed graduation works the review team considers that the programme is above the craft level, many works reveal a deep philosophical meaning which is visualised in a new form - it is new, contemporary ceramics art which evidences good practice. The above mentioned improvements since the previous evaluation supplement the programme and provide a good starting point to achieve the highest quality results. The review team is valuably informed about achievements of the graduates, and follow their development as well as critically assessing their training results and professional viability.

The review team confirm that the number of staff and their professional standing meet the legal requirements for the BA Applied Ceramics study programme. The qualifications of the teaching staff and the quality of student work evidence the high standards of teaching and ensures that the learning outcomes are achievable. Students are well supported in finding their artistic direction between applied and artistic approaches and in developing independent learning. The review team note that some younger have joined the staff team who compliment the pedagogical experience of the professors and have benefited the contemporary possibilities while maintaining the technical principals. The review team commend all the Department staff for the strength of their professional activities, which contributes to the dynamic cultural and arts sector, and their international activities providing valuable insights into the global context for BA students. The review team recommends that the success of the international workshop is extended into an annual event or workshop series. The review team congratulate VAA and KF on the Systematic Professional Development of staff, which ensures upgrading of staff necessary to implement the programme, and supports internal and external funding bids that extends the scope of staff research into other institutional and international contexts. The relationships with social partners are highly valuable and play a very positive and complimentary role in the students learning, especially in the Practical Training.

The review team are pleased to see the improvements in the department facilities and the future plans regarding the renovation of the former hospital. The review team commend the Faculty administration for the ambition of the project. The premises for studies are now adequate both in size and quality with improved health and safety installations. The review team support a confirmed plan to check health and safety responsibilities. The review team support the purchase of a ceramic 3D printer and related 3D modelling courses. The extent of students' possibilities for practice is adequate and rests on the close collaborations with a variety of social partners and their sponsorship of resources. The consequences of copyright or IPR, is an issue that the review team recommends should be addressed through a written protocol. The review team was impressed by the new location for the library but, recommend that the Faculty remain vigilant regarding relevant library stock for the BA Applied Ceramics programmes to ensure the literature remains current, and improves as budget become available. Likewise the Faculty should invest further in technical equipment.

Entrance requirements of VAA are well set, consistent and transparent though under review. Students can be enrolled after high school, by way of competition. Existing regulations and procedures ensure proper implementation of the programme to achieve intended learning outcomes. The assessment system is clear and students are able to get a appropriate feedback. Students' artistic activities are an integral part of the study process and the review team recognised students' positive

participation in exhibitions and symposia in Lithuania and abroad. A praiseworthy initiative is the International Kaunas Porcelain Symposium which advances international contacts, and students' and professors' mobility. Students willingly use the possibilities of mobility within Erasmus+, Kuno un Cirrus programme, but the review team advises the administration to provide more support to students' mobility opportunities. KF ensures proper academic and social support for students, however, the review team recommends a closer collaboration with VAA VF so that students can access the contemporary technical equipment in Vilnius more frequently. The review team recognised that graduates from the study programme are in demand and are working in the ceramic-related careers, which proves that the programme Applied Ceramic BA corresponds to the state economic, social and cultural and future development needs. The review team recommends that the administration of VAA, whilst using anonymous questionnaires, should maintain more effective ways of official feedback.

In regard to the Quality Assessment Assurance Policy the review team note that previous recommendations have been addressed in regard to quality and contexts and an alternative to the numerical system is now in place: an academic survey for the students which is more individualised is undertaken - each professor does a questionnaire at end of each course resulting from face-to-face discussion. There is also a meeting to review the previous semester. The review team note that responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated, according to the criteria. The panel commend the department for their successful admissions strategies that ensures a critical mass of students on the BA. The review team recognise that the devotion of the staff is contagious, encouraging student application, which is also further promoted via high school internships, and BA students' visits. The review team recommend that the Faculty remain attentive to maintain the quality of delivery of the BA study programme in terms of resourcing - in line with a potential increase in student numbers to approximately 20 students in total. The review team applauds the formal relationships and collaborations with Social Stakeholders and encourages more partnerships, both formal and informal. The Social Partners found it very beneficial that more business skills have been introduced, which the review team commends.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Applied Ceramics* (state code – 612W10007) at Vilnius Art Academy 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	4
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	4
6.	Programme management	4
	Total:	21

*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:	Sarah Bennett
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Eugenia Loginova
	Karen Harsbo
	Richard Launder
	Ms Asta Vaičiulytė
	Ms Rūta Stankutė