



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos (Telšių fakulteto)
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS „SKULPTŪRA“
(*valstybinis kodas - 612W10004*)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF "SCULPTURE" (*state code - 612W10004*)
STUDY PROGRAMME**
at Vilnius Art Academy (Telšiai Faculty)

Review' team:

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Skulptūra</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612W10004
Studijų sritis	Menai
Studijų kryptis	Dailė
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (4 metai)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Dailės bakalaurus
Studijų programos įrengavimo data	1997-05-19

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Sculpture</i>
State code	612W10004
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 Arts
Date of registration of the study programme	1997-05-19

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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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.

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

Telšiai Faculty of VAA (VAA TF) is an integral structural part of Vilnius Academy of Arts. VAA is a state school of higher education of arts organising university first-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 Telšiai Faculty, VAA Vilnius Faculty, VAA Kaunas 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.

VAA TF implements the study programmes of the first cycle studies of art and design field, although there is an intention to implement second cycle study in the future. VAA TF develops experimental, cultural and artistic activity, stores science knowledge, and enables the values and traditions of the academic community to flourish. VAA TF has three departments - Design, Metal plastic, and Basics of art and theory - and has been part of VAA since 1998 but its roots are in the Telšiai trade school, which was established in 1931. The BA Sculpture study programme is located in the Department of Metal plastic at VAA TF.

In 2008 the BA Sculpture Study Programme was accredited by an international review team for three years; in 2011 the next review team accredited it for 6 years. Students on the study programme are taught by teachers from the Department of Metal Plastic and from the Department of Basics of art and theory. Students can also take electives from the Design Department.

The evaluation of the Programme 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 TF, and the observations made during the site visit to the TF. 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 3/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

The Sculpture BA study programme conforms to the legal requirements and the Descriptor of the Study Field of Art (SER p16). During the meetings and through evidence in the SER, the review team was confirmed that the BA Sculpture programme aims and learning outcomes satisfy the needs of the students, graduates and social stakeholders at a high level and also correspond to the mission and operational objectives of the higher education school. The committee initiates discussions and activities related to the study programme improvement and renewal of learning outcomes. The main objective of the programme – *to foster sculptors who are able to adequately evaluate art processes taking place in the modern world and participate in them* – is evidenced in the breadth of creative activities the students and graduates undertake, and the contribution they make to the cultural life of the region, as evidenced by the high percentage of graduates working in the art fields (SER p34), the endorsement of the social partners during the meeting with the review team, and the information collected for the SER (p7) that states that graduates work as e.g. restorers, metal artists, 3D sculpture designers. The review team is confirmed that informal links with social partners positively impact the programme aims, and also acknowledge the important role that the more formal and strategic relationships play such as the Art Incubator. The review team commends the programme for the symbiotic quality of the relationships with social partners as well as the programme's significance in relation to the region whereby many graduates remain living and working in the Samogitia region (SER, p7).

Regarding the balance between traditional and contemporary approaches within the sculpture programme, the review team commends the department's tradition of stone processing and thus uniqueness of the programme among other Sculpture programmes in the VAA as well as the plans to establish a regional restoration centre. However, the review team recommends that the staff team expand the aims of the programme to incorporate a more contemporary understanding of form and materials, in order to secure the future of its traditional focus and strength, i.e. that they think of the traditional with a renewed perspective (see 2.2 below for more detail). This would also enable the programme to continue to make incremental headway with more contemporary and conceptual focus at the same time.

The review team welcomes the recent developments in 3D and digital technologies within the curriculum, supported by extending the skillsets of the younger staff, and recommends that the programme also now investigate how it might gradually introduce new material processes to compliment its principal materials and techniques.

The title of the programme as defined in the SER and its public presentation on the website have some inconsistency which should be addressed. The information provided on the website clearly defines the programme as Applied Sculpture, whereas the description given in the SER (p8) presents it as Sculpture programme that trains in traditional and contemporary sculpture. The programme itself, intended learning outcomes, the content of the programme and the qualification to be obtained are in accordance. The viewing of the artworks combined with meetings with students and alumni confirm that the graduates gain good technical and artistic skills and learn to work independently. The programme also corresponds to the type and first cycle of studies at BA.

2.2. Curriculum design

The BA Sculpture programme structure is in line with the legislative requirements. The programme offers: 24 credits in General university study subjects and the legal requirement is 15 or more; 189 credits in study field subjects and the legal requirement is 165 or more; 18 credits in speciality practical trainings and the legal requirement is 15 or more; 24 credits in Final BA project and the legal requirement is 15 or more; 27 credits in elective subjects and the legal requirement is 12 or more (SER p. 17).

The review team saw that subjects of study (modules) are taught in a consistent manner in the studio and practical training, though one would expect that the particularity of the practical training setting would result in some valuable *inconsistencies* that relate to the real world context of the setting. Subjects are introduced incrementally, with opportunities to consolidate learning rather than involving repetition. The content of subjects corresponds to the type and cycle of studies in that the

study area, according to the university first cycle (BA) includes 240 ECTS credit points over 8 semesters with 30 credits being achieved in each semester. The number of the subjects does not exceed 7 per semester (SER p16). Through the SER, the meetings and viewing the students' work the review team found that the subjects of the study programme incrementally support the acquisition of skills in traditional sculpture processes, as well as some contemporary approaches, which are at a level consistent with first cycle study in the arts. The subjects give students appropriate opportunities for increased independent learning throughout the programme of study (SER p17). Practical Training provides a rich component of the student experience (LO D1), supported unequivocally by the social partners, and the review team encourage further exploration of methods of 'social engagement' as a way to extend this strong aspect of the programme.

In response to the previous evaluation the review team noted that in addition to the study subjects and practical training, both of which enable students to achieve the stated learning outcomes in relation to the field of sculpture (LO C1 and C2), there are a number of new electives on offer in the curriculum that enhance students' capacity in the professional realm, notably HB 0201 *Management of Culture*. The increased number of elective subjects has been well received by the students and these offer an economical way to extend the student choice. However the review team recommend the programme keeps the appropriateness of the electives under review, in order to be able to enable students to respond to changing external and internal contexts (LO B3). The review team did not see any written work (LO D3) but students were able to communicate verbally and the majority spoke in English as well as their mother tongue having taken the mandatory subjects HB0132 *Foreign Language/English*.

The review team agree that the scope of the programme is sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes. Through both mandatory and elective subjects such as MB1239 *Sculpture project* and MB1238 *Ephemeral Art* and MB 1654 *Experimental Sculpture* students are introduced to a variety of approaches to sculptural practices at different points in their artistic development, gradually moving towards greater understanding of the social and interdisciplinary implications of their role as artists (LO E2). Research skills (LO B1) are integrated into subjects but are most in evidence in the final projects that the review team saw, and that evidence the quality of the sculpture programme. In terms of the programme's stated ambition for 'internationality' (SER p9) there is welcome evidence of some opportunities, such as field trips, that support students to recognise their place in a global art context, but the review team recommends that these opportunities should be expanded to increase opportunities for learning (LO A2) including more visiting artists invited.

The content of the programme corresponds to appropriate academic and artistic methods and technological approaches. An example of this is seen in the two subjects HB0931 *Contemporary Culture and Art*, and MB1241 *History of Contemporary Sculpture* which introduce students to contemporary art and its debates and contexts - evidenced in the range student work. However, the review team saw a divide between the traditional (or classical) approaches to sculpture and contemporary approaches and suggest that these separate approaches can be synthesised through attention by teaching staff to recent developments in contemporary theory relating to international developments relating to, for example, New Materialism, the Ready Made/Upcycling, Socially Engagement and Neo Primitivism (amongst others) which would enable a conceptual position to be further embedded into the educational and artistic development of sculpture i.e. approaches that view process/material via a conceptual and/or contextual lens. This would enable the traditional to be viewed through the lens of contemporary theory and should be supported by professional development of subject knowledge and increased access to current theoretical texts, therefore the review team recommends that staff update their subject knowledge in relation to contemporary sculpture and theory. The review team welcomed the additional subjects MB0921 3D *Computer Modelling* and MB 1305 *The Basics of Video* and MB1304 *Practical Training of Contemporary Art Technologies* through which students are able to make work that employs new technologies alongside the principal traditional processes that are the foundation of this BA Sculpture programme and recommend further progress through the professional development support (see 2.3 below).

2.3 Teaching Staff

The review team agree that the study programme meets the legal requirements, (SER p19). From the Annex no.3 the review team confirms that no less than half of study field subjects must be taught by recognised artists because 60% of lecturers of study field subjects are established artists. The total number of teachers working for *Sculpture study programme* are 16; among them: 4 professors one of them is PhD), 4 associate professors (among them 2 with a doctor's degree), 8 lecturers (among them 1 with a doctor's degree). The general university study subjects are taught by: 2 permanent lecturers and 7 visiting lecturers (2 art critics, a lawyer, 1 professor, 2 PhDs). 25% of the programme lecturers obtain a PhD degree, the turnover is mainly in the electives, as the study staff are constant (SER p20).

On p20 of the SER the review team read that VAA TF has the following teaching positions: professor, associate professor (docent), lecturer and assistant. These are subject to the minimum qualification requirements applicable throughout the tenure of five years. Also the review team read

on SER p20 that 25% of the programme lecturers have obtained a PhD degree, and 60% of lecturers of study field subjects are established artists. The review team met the many of the staff on the review visit and saw examples of the work their students produce. The majority of the academic staff hold academic titles or research degrees and their research and professional competences are evaluated through the systematic professional development annual reporting and their pedagogic performances during the certification procedures. Hence, the review team considers that the qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure the learning outcomes. The review team saw that the production of the mainly high quality artworks in both the practical training subjects and in the sculpture subjects that run through the three years of the programme are supported by knowledgeable staff with subject expertise in the key areas of the curriculum, particularly in traditional sculpture but increasingly in contemporary modes and they support the students in their research processes (LOs B1 and B3). There is one area of skills acquisition where an increase in staff competences could improve the ability of students to meet learning outcomes C1 and C3, i.e. if students choose to work with new technologies or use 3D modelling (MB0921 3D computer modelling). Recent staff appointments are already making good headway in learning new software packages and up-skilling but they need the continued support of VAA and the Faculty to ensure skills are updated speedily plus access to the apposite technologies.

The total number of teachers working for Sculpture study programme are 16; among them: 4 professors one of them is PhD), 4 associate professors (among them 2 with a doctor's degree), 8 lecturers (among them 1 with a doctor's degree). The general university study subjects are taught by: 2 permanent lecturers and 7 visiting lecturers (2 art critics, a lawyer, 1 professor, 2 PhDs). 25% of the programme lecturers obtain a PhD degree, 60% of lecturers of study field subjects are established artists. Therefore, with only 12 students admitted from 2013-2016 the review team agrees that the number of teaching staff on the BA Sculpture programme is more than adequate to ensure learning outcomes and within that number the composition of staff closely aligns with the needs of students' learning. One area that should be given attention in terms of staff composition and turnover is in the programme's stated ambition for 'internationality' (SER p9). There is evidence of some opportunities, such as field trips, that support students to recognise their place in a global context, but these opportunities should be expanded through an increase in visiting artists and substantive staff undertaking more international study visits. Equally, integral to the study of contemporary art is the need to look at examples of artists from a wide global context and this can take place within the curriculum (MB1241 *Contemporary Sculpture*) as well as through visits to exhibitions, on line, and through library texts. In terms of the range of contemporary practice the review team saw there is evidence in the study programme of students experiencing contemporary

artworks but would like to see this enriched through staff updating their subject knowledge (see 2.2 above).

The review team congratulate the Faculty and VAA that the systematic professional development of staff has been introduced and implemented since the previous evaluation. The review team saw that it needs to embed further in the Faculty and sculpture programme before evidence of its impact would be seen in the student experience. However the younger staff are keen to benefit from opportunities for training and the review team encourage that this continues. So far the teachers improved their qualifications through participation in activities of various associations and confederations, professional traineeships, courses and training organised by VAA, and the activities of the Lecturers 'Club under the Educational Art Centre established in 2016. They are planning more twinning events and mobility exchanges as part of the department actions for improvement, which can be supported by the Professional Development process.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

On the evidence of the SER (p 22-25) information and the observations made by the review team during the site visit, facilities for studies clearly support students' learning through sculptural practice and are adequate both in size and quality. The buildings are old but kept in good condition and investments have been made in renovation of premises to meet hygiene and technical requirements and in expansion of computer workplaces and the Applied Cultural Heritage Research and Conservation centre.

However, the review team recommend that the Faculty and Programme ensure that the facilities are kept up to date and that consideration is given to introducing new material processes in order to enhance the distinctive nature of the provision, and welcome the planned future Centre for contemporary technologies and media. The review team also encourage the development of the open access centre laboratories in collaboration with Telšiai municipality.

On the evidence of the range and quality of the student artworks presented during the visit it is clear that the programme offers students a wide variety of techniques and processes and the review team found the teaching and learning equipment adequate in size and quality, although not extensive. Students have access to electrical power tools for working with wood, metal and stone and are introduced to safety regulations. Students also have access to digital 3D modelling/printing equipment and it is clear that the programme is committed to introducing new technologies, as and when funding can be committed. The review team encourage the development of the planned digital laboratory. It is possible to use the 3D facilities in VAA Vilnius (SER p24), but when asked, the

student group said none had made use of it so far. The review team encourage the VAA administration to facilitate staff and students to visit Vilnius and get acquainted with 3D/CNC possibilities. Students have access to basic materials (plaster, clay) but for more expensive materials, social partners are asked for financial support. Especially BA projects are implemented with the help of social partners.

During the meetings with all groups the review team was introduced to numerous collaborations with local social partners (SER p24), which give students ample opportunities for practice but also emphasised the strong bonds between the programme and the local cultural institutions and the municipality. There were diverse examples of mutual beneficial projects and a deep-rooted understanding of the bridging role of art in the community. The student group mentioned these opportunities teach them organisation and processes in commissioned work and will subsequently help them secure employment. Students can use and exhibit in the newly renovated VAA Telšiai gallery and the programme collaborates with Telšiai Art Incubator - the last project was part of an ephemeral subject course presented while Telšiai was “capital of culture” in Lithuania 2016.

Teachers and students have access to VAA library in Vilnius and to its several subscribed international and national databases (SER p25) www.labt.lt, www.oxfordreference.com, <http://link.springer.com>, www.ebscohost.com, oxfordartonline.com, and Lithuanian databases LIBIS and lnb.lt

Students can use the www.vda.lt website for project implementation (SER p22). The review team applaud the website and are interested to see how it can develop further. The local library at VAA TF has been refurbished with 5 new computer workplaces and provides course books and specialized literature and publications, with 18% in foreign language (SER p25). The programme stores its main publications in the methodical room, but viewing the selection during the visit, the review team recommend that the faculty and programme maintain a tight focus on keeping library stock up to date and also as mentioned in SER (subject to improvement), increase the number of foreign publications.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Admission requirements of VAA are well set, consistent and transparent. Students can be admitted for the BA studies after high school. 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 (www.lamabpo.lt). Admission to the BA studies of VAA KF first-cycle study programme of Sculpture are performed

by way of competition which consists of two parts: 1) maturity examinations - Lithuanian and a foreign language; 2) art education exams - composition and visual expression assignments. In 2011 the procedure was revised considering The Description of the Order of Best Secondary School Graduates' Rank Formation to the art field study programmes, approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (Nr. V-13) and edited (Order 08/01/2016). Since 2015 applicants must submit the portfolio of creative works as a compulsory component, in order to provide information about study achievements and evidence of professional competencies, which makes 20% of the examination assessment. The admission procedure was updated in 2016, and additional points are given to applicants who aim at 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. Due to the implemented changes in the entrance procedure, in 2016 Telsiai Faculty received two places of targeted funding. This provides a possibility to approve two additional applicants for state-funding study programme, whose competition grades were insufficiently high. As an outcome, talented and gifted young people with lower evaluation of secondary education can be enrolled in VAA TF Sculpture BA study programme (SER p27). Between 2012 and 2016 the programme admitted an average of three students per annum (though none were admitted in 2015). Three students graduated in 2016 and 2014, and five graduated in 2012. The numbers of drop-outs was two in all the years between 2012 and 2016, and the programme is keen that this is a rare occurrence, as small cohorts are negatively affected by the loss of just one student (SER p28).

The review team commends work done by VAA towards attaining an exemption from the New State Admissions Regulation, which if successful, will greatly enhance admissions for the arts programmes. However, the review team also recommends that the programme revisit their marketing strategy in order to stabilise admissions - with the aim of achieving a critical mass of students to ensure student peer learning.

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 Sculpture. Lectures and practical training take place in accordance with the approved study schedule. The admitted students are introduced to the study process and the principles of evaluation. The flexible study timetable combines compulsory and elective study subjects, work with professors and individual work, public mid-term and final reviews, where the students' progress is analysed; good relations and support of social partners also provide a productive study process (SER p28).

Students of the Sculpture Department TF are encouraged to take part in artistic activities. The statistical data of students' achievements in this area are well documented and provide convincing and transparent overview, as it is mentioned in SER (p29). Students' achievements can be divided into 5 groups: 1) "The exhibitions of Sculpture programme and general TF exhibitions" with a detailed information about 8 organised exhibitions. 2) "Art projects and creative camps in Lithuania" include data about more than 20 camps and projects where students have taken part. 3) Students' participation in 4 "Interdisciplinary projects". 4) "International projects" area that covers 4 international projects in Lithuania and 5 projects (exhibitions) abroad, for instance in Poland, Germany and Bulgaria. 5) "Works for public space". TF has very good relations with the City Council and other social partners. Thanks to the support of social partners it is possible to execute works for public spaces. During the analysed period students made 10 sculptures-art objects for public space and most of them - eight sculptures - were final BA projects.

Students are informed about the possibilities of mobility within Erasmus+, Kuno un Cirrus programmes. During the last five years, four students (SER, Table 11, p29) have taken advantage of it and cooperated with Art Academy of Athens, (Greece 2016), Art Academy of Latvia (2016) and NORDPLUS internship Society "Dore" (Latvia 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, p29). The review team were reassured that Telšiai Sculpture Department has good relations with some neighbouring countries – Poland and Germany. Several international projects are implemented without any official support through private contacts. The review team advises the administration to provide more support to students' official mobility.

VAA TF ensures proper academic and social support for students, as it is described in SER (6.3., pp30-31). Students can make use of many possibilities provided by the TF in various spheres. Primarily it is informative support, by e-mail, website (www.vda.lt, www.tdf.lt) and the Department's notice-board. Ordinary forms of consulting and conversation are lectures, workshops and individual consultations, mid-term and final assessment shows, and discussions.

Of great value is a friendly and positive atmosphere in the Telšiai Sculpture Department, as a result students can visit the teachers of the Department in their studios after classes, use books and other informative or professional literature from private libraries. TF is the part of VAA and the review team recommend closer collaboration with Vilnius Faculty (VF), so that students could use new, modern, contemporary technical equipment in the new technical laboratory located in Vilnius. 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, p31)

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. At the beginning of a semester the Department's teachers inform 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 necessary. According to the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on the Adoption of the Description of the Fine Arts Field of Study of 27 August 2015, No. V-927 (Vilnius) a 10-point criterion grading scale is used (SER, Table 12, p31). Throughout the listed period, the average grade of BA final project in the Sculpture Department was 9.33. The Descriptor of the Study Field of Arts gives more detailed information on the assessment system: levels of the learning outcomes of the first-cycle studies are – excellent, typical and threshold.

Professional activities of the majority of programme graduates meet the expectations of programme operators and employers. According to the graduate survey distributed in 2016, 80 % the graduates work in the art-related fields (SER, Table 13, p34). Some of them are studying for a Master's degree, and some are studying or working abroad. In a conversation with the alumni it was mentioned that the graduates were satisfied and appreciated universal basic skills obtained at the TF Sculpture Department. It helped in their employment path for art-related jobs: applied sculpture, art education, stage design, interior design, restoration, etc. During the conversation with the review team the employers highly valued professionalism of the graduates. In the conversations with alumni and social partners, the review team were convinced that all graduates are in demand and are working in the art-related branches, which proves that the programme Sculpture BA meets all the state economic, social, cultural, and future development needs.

Feedback is provided throughout the study time, during the classes or individually, and a fair learning environment is ensured. The feedback is an integral part of studies, it is regular and based on the *Description of the Academic Feedback System of VAA* (approved by the Senate of VAA in 2015) (SER, p33). 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, they evaluated this process as ineffective. Students appreciate the positive atmosphere in the Sculpture Department TF, they also prefer friendly discussions and meetings in the Department with the participation of all students and professors to resolve all issues. The review team recommend that the administration of the Academy should find a more effective way to feedback to students on the anonymous online survey.

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, p5). There is an Ethics Committee in VAA, which ensures a 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. An 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*. To ensure the quality of studies the *Sculpture study programme committee* was established and approved by the order of VAA Rector in 2011 (SER, p33). Throughout the analysed period, the Department of Sculpture TF has not received any complaints from the students.

2.6 Programme management

The study programme administration and quality assurance is regulated by the Study Regulations of VAA, (approved by Order No. SI-527 of 11 May 2011 of the Rector) (SER p35). The department implements the programme in accordance with the work plans of VAA TF approved by the Council of the Faculty and the department is lead by the Head of Department and a coordinator. Students have influence through a system of elected representatives and participate at all levels; committees, faculty, senate. The structure of the 6-person study committee is composed by 2 members of staff, one student, one alumni and one social stakeholder and they have meetings at least twice a year and form the main system of quality assessment of studies in the department. The work is guided by the *Regulations of Study Programme Committees* approved by the Rector of VAA (SER p35). The Study Programme Committee is a rather new area, so it will take some time to embed fully but the review team congratulate the Academy for its implementation thus far.

It should be noted that the New State Admission regulation process, which did not function favourably for the higher arts education in Lithuania but potentially would be damaging to the quality and standard (previous evaluation p19), has been an area of attention for the VAA

administration the last 3 years. They have proposed that higher arts programmes should not participate in the general admissions, and the review team was told that a new law should be prepared by June 2017 to change the situation. It was noted that the VAA signed an agreement to help solve the issue by embarking on a status of `Centre of Innovations` (see commendation in 2.1).

Data and information regarding programme implementation are collected and analysed periodically. During the visit the review team was shown a chart with a very thorough list of focus areas for the Faculty, designed in different colours, by the VAA QA committee, which gave clarity of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. Staff told the review team that they found it useful to have a visual overview and expressed that the QA process was mobilising their effort of improvements and renewal. The VAA study committee prepare questionnaires for students once a semester, and TF study committee also prepare student surveys (see 2.5 above Study process and students' performance assessment; students finds the process ineffective). Feedback to students is given through the student representatives and the evaluation results are made public during the department's meetings. The quality of studies, in terms of both the programme and subjects, are discussed. Evaluation outcome are used for the improvements of the programme. Comments noted by the study committee are taken into account when improving the study programme; including new subjects and changing or replacing study subjects. Opinions and complaints of students and teachers are also taken into account when analysing the study programme and its implementation.

The systematic cooperation with the social stakeholders is a well-established practice with an active involvement of stakeholders (SER p38). The list covers a large range of municipalities, museums and companies. The department seek to involve social stakeholders in the development of the programme, in the evaluation of the final BA projects and in the evaluation of the programme, though at the meeting with the social partners, none were formally contributing to designing the curriculum. The involvement and the discussions about the programme are done through practical collaborations and informal talk. Some social partners have major official agreements, for instance the municipality of Telšiai which contributes financially to the final BA projects and the realisation of the Art Incubator that help students find graduate jobs and get settled as professional practitioners. A local museum started a collaboration 15 years ago (social partners meeting) and has since applied to the Cultural Ministry to sponsor student works in the museum as an educational tool, and referred very positively to the project. Another example noted to the review team was about a Polish friendship town of Telšiai municipality that invited students to Poland to realise work in public space.

Social partners offer internships for the students with regards to art in public space and restoration of cultural heritage. It was clear during the interviews with different groups that there is an active collaboration between social partners and the department, which was beneficial both ways. The social partners supported the involvement of students in professional development as early as possible and the Alumni noted they had benefited from the process and it had subsequently led to employment (alumni meeting). Social partners emphasised, in the meetings the role of the programme and its teachers in supporting the development of the city. To reiterate, the review team commend the relationships with social partners and notice the extent to which the students' work is located in public spaces.

The review team read (SER p28) about ways in which outcomes of internal evaluations are used for the improvement of the programme, such as the function of the study programme committee in which students can ask for improvements in resources or other aspects of the programme (SER p21), and staff ongoingly review the programme e.g. the subjects, learning outcomes. In terms of external evaluation recommendations from 2011, listed in Annex no.6, the VAA have implemented the QA process and Systematic Professional Development for all the faculties, and these are ongoingly being embedded into TF at department and programme level, and there are benefits seen already by the review team e.g. the spreadsheet of staff professional standing was a positive outcome. Other examples of how recommendations of 2011 were addressed are that formal collaborations with the stakeholders have been developed and are very successful aspect of the provision, independent learning time has increased but despite the recommendation to increase visiting international artists, the programme has not been able to address that recommendation fully.

Information about the study programme is public and available through various sources. It is found on the web-site of VAA and the Department produce leaflets and contact schools and high schools, as well as having a yearly open day. The final work of students were published in a calendar which was shared with social stakeholders and schools. The department also advertise for the programme in Latvia where metal art is popular, but they have yet not had any international applicants. There has been a concern about the low admission, in 2015 there were no students taken into the programme, but the reason has not been identified. It was said (SER meeting) that it could be due to the demographic of Lithuania and another reason could be the New State Admission regulations.

2.7. Examples of excellence

1. The review team commends the department's tradition of stone processing and thus uniqueness of the programme among other Sculpture programmes in VAA.

2. The review team commends work done by VAA towards attaining an exemption from the New State Admissions Regulation, which if successful, will greatly enhance admissions for the arts programmes.
3. The review team note that Practical Training provides a rich component of the student experience supported unequivocally by excellent relationships with the social partners.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The review team recommends that the staff team expand the aims of the programme to incorporate a more contemporary understanding of form and materials, in order to secure the future of its traditional focus and strength, i.e. that they think of the traditional with a renewed perspective.
2. The review team recommends that the programme revisits their marketing strategy in order to stabilise admissions - with the aim of achieving a critical mass of students to ensure student peer learning.
3. The review team recommends that the programme investigates how it might gradually introduce new material processes to compliment its principal materials and techniques.
4. The review team recommends that the public website is revised to accord with the description of the programme in the SER.
5. The review team recommends the programme keeps the appropriateness of the electives under regular review, in order to be able to enable students to respond to changing external and internal contexts.
6. The review team recommends that staff update their subject knowledge in relation to contemporary sculpture supported by Professional Development.
7. The review team recommends that the programme should increase opportunities for students to position themselves in relation to a global context, including Lithuania as a global context. This should include staff undertaking international study visits and an increase in international visiting artists.
8. The review team recommends that staff should continue to be supported through the systematic professional development to acquire skills in new technologies including 3D modelling.
9. The review team recommend that the Faculty and Programme ensure that the facilities are kept up to date.
10. The review team recommend that the faculty and programme maintain a tight focus on keeping library stock up to date and also as mentioned in SER (subject to improvement), and increase the number of foreign publications.

11. The review team recommend closer collaboration with Vilnius Faculty (VAA VF), so that students might use new, modern, contemporary technical equipment in the new technical laboratory located in Vilnius.
12. The review team recommend that the administration of Academy should find a more effective way to feedback to students on the anonymous online survey.

IV. SUMMARY

During the meetings the review team was confirmed that the BA Sculpture programme aims and learning outcomes satisfy the needs of the students, graduates and social stakeholders at a high level and also correspond to the mission and operational objectives of the higher education school. The main objectives of the programme are evidenced in the quality of student artwork and the breadth of creative careers and activities the students undertake after graduation. The review team commends the programme for the symbiotic quality of these partnerships with social partners as well as programme's significance in relation to the region. The review team commends the department's tradition of stone processing and thus uniqueness of the programme as well as the plans to establish a regional restoration centre. However, the team recommends that the staff team expand the aims of the programme to incorporate a more contemporary understanding of form and materials, in order to secure the future of its traditional focus and strength, that is, to consider the traditional with a renewed perspective. The review team welcomes the recent developments in 3D and digital technologies, supported by extending the skillsets of the younger staff, and recommends that the programme also now investigates how it might gradually introduce new material processes to compliment its principal materials and techniques.

The BA Sculpture programme structure is in line with the legislative requirements, and subjects are taught in a consistent manner. Study subjects are introduced gradually, with opportunities to consolidate learning rather than involving repetition. Subjects of the study programme incrementally support independent learning and technical skills acquisition in traditional sculpture processes, as well as some contemporary approaches, which are contextualised through new subjects relating to contemporary arts. The review team support the continuation of traditional sculpture in addition to developments in contemporary approaches and recommend that staff consider ways to re position the 'traditional' through a contemporary lens. Practical Training provides a rich component of the student experience supported unequivocally by the social partners and these projects support greater understanding of the social and interdisciplinary implications of graduates' roles as artists. Research skills are integrated into the curriculum but are most notable in the final projects, the quality of which was generally high. There are a number of new electives on offer in the curriculum that enhance students' capacity in the professional realm and the review team recommend the programme to keep the appropriateness of the electives under review, in order to be able to enable students to respond to changing external and internal contexts. The stated internationality agenda is addressed through field trips, but the review team recommends that these opportunities should be expanded.

The review team agree that the study programme meets the legal requirements and confirms that the qualifications of the teaching staff ensure the agreed learning outcomes. The majority of the academic staff hold academic titles or research degrees, and 60% are established artists. The production of the mainly high quality artworks in both the practical training and in the sculpture study subjects are supported by staff with sound subject expertise, skills and knowledge in the key areas of the curriculum, particularly in traditional sculpture materials and processes but increasingly in contemporary approaches. The review team congratulate the Faculty and VAA on the implementation of the systematic professional development for staff and recommend that this is deployed to support the younger staff who are proactively up-skilling in new and digital technologies. Equally, the review team recommend the staff engage in repositioning the renowned traditional approaches through the lenses of contemporary art theory. The department staff are developing ways to extend students' understanding of their place in a global art context, as well as the perspective of Lithuanian art as part of a global network and this should be expanded through an increase in international visiting artists and study visits for staff and students.

Facilities for studies clearly support students' learning however the review team recommend that the facilities are continuously kept up to date and consideration is given to introducing new material processes. The review team encourage the development of Centre for contemporary technologies and media and the open access centre laboratories. Teaching and learning equipment are adequate in size and quality and it is clear that the programme is committed to introducing new technologies. Students have ample opportunities for practice and there are strong bonds between the programme and the local social partners: cultural institutions and the municipality. The review team recommend that the faculty and programme maintain a tight focus on keeping library stock up to date

Admission requirements of Vilnius Academy of Arts (VAA) are well set. They 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. For the BA studies students can be admitted after high school, by way of competition. Overall, the study process is organised well. Existing regulations and procedures ensure proper implementation of the programme. Assessment system is clear and students are able to get a feedback. The review team recommend that the administration of Academy should find a more effective way to feedback to students on the anonymous online survey. Also Ethics Committee in VAA ensures fair learning environment. The statistical data of students' achievements in artistic activities are well documented and provide convincing and transparent overview in this study part. Students willingly make use of the possibilities of mobility within Erasmus+, Kuno un Cirrus programme, but all applicants are not covered. Many international projects are implemented through private contacts without any

official support. As students confirmed, there is an adequate academic and social support provided for them by VAA TF as well as by various social partners. The review team recommend closer collaboration with Vilnius Faculty (VF), so that students could use the new technical laboratory. Awarding of scholarships and benefits is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, however, Self Evaluation Report observes that financing is not adequate to satisfy students' requirement for benefits thus it remains an aspect for improvement. The review team discovered that all graduates are in demand. 80 % the graduates work in the art-related fields, others continue studying for a Master's degree.

The Study Programme Committee is a rather new area, so it will take some time to embed fully but the review team commend the Academy for its implementation thus far. Concerning the New State Admission regulation process, the review team support the VAA administration for its work to change this, which hopefully will have an important positive impact on the future admission process. The review team found that the new QA chart is useful for staff as it helps identify focus areas and the professional development process mobilised their efforts for improvements and renewal. Social partners offer internships for students with regards to art in public space and restoration of cultural heritage. It was clear to the review team during the evaluation visit that there is an active collaboration between social partners and the department, which was beneficial both ways. The review team commend the relationships with social partners and notice the extent to which the students' work is located in public spaces. Information about the study programme is public and available through various sources: web-site of VAA; leaflets to schools and high schools; as well as during a yearly open day. There has been a concern about the low admissions, not yet resolved.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Sculpture* (state code – 612W10004) 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	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	4
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.

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