

VILNIUS ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS

Design Programmes

FINAL REPORT

Telsiai Art Faculty

61202M110 BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS (COSTUME DESIGN)

62402M106 BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS (DESIGN)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Title of Programme: Bachelor of Fine Arts (Design) Bachelor of Fine Arts (Costume Design)

1. The Panel of Experts visited the Telsiai Faculty of Arts on Monday December 1st accompanied by Daiva Buvydiene from the Lithuanian Centre of Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

2. The timetable for the visit is set out below and the group met with the Administrative Staff of the Faculty, the combined SER and lecturing staff on both programmes, present students, former graduates and employers.

3. Timetable of Visit:

10.00 – 10.30 Introductory meeting with administrative staff of the Faculty

10.30 – 11.15 Meeting with staff responsible for preparation of self-evaluation report and teaching staff (Design)

11.15 – 12.00 Meeting with staff responsible for preparation of self-evaluation report and teaching staff (Costume Design)

12.15 – 13.15 Meeting with students (both programs)

13.15 – 14.00 Observation of various support services (studios, teaching spaces, workshops, library, computer services, etc.)

15.00 – 16.00 Familiarization with students' final works

16.00 – 16.45 Meeting with graduates and employers

16.45 – 17.15 Discussions, observation of the visit (peer team only)

17.15 – 17.30 Introduction of general remarks of the visit

4. Even though there were 2 programmes the SERs were produced separately for the specialisations in the BA Design . A separate SER was produced for the Jewellery and Blacksmithing specialisation and another for the Product Design and Furniture Design and Restoration . The BA in Costume Design had a separate SER .

5. It was quite clear that the Design department staff intended to set up the Jewellery and Blacksmithing specialisation as a separate BA degree programme in the very near future . The other BA in Design would have specialisations in Product Design , Furniture Design and Furniture Restoration.The BA in Costume Design would remain separate with an emphasis on Knitwear . The panel supported the proposed restructuring as it would lead to much greater clarity in the overall direction of the bothcourses . However , this meant that the panel would not be able to offer full accreditation to the existing BA Design as the new programme documentation had not been made available to the panel. It was not possible for the panel to offer accreditation without the proper official documentation regardless of the quality of the existing course.

6. It was quite clear that the preparation of the SER and the organisation of the visit involved all key constituents – management , lecturing staff , students , graduates and employers . Staff and students were clearly aware of the purpose and nature of the visit by the panel and understood that it was part of a Quality Assurance / Enhancement process .

7. The SER reports described how all the programmes in Telsiai Art Faculty

based on three sets or blocks of studies.

- 1) Block A Professional specialised
- 2) Block B General Art subjects
- 2) Block C Humanities/general/university subjects

This model of programme design may create conflict between Humanities and specialisations about the ‘ownership’ of programmes and who can determine change or development of the programme as an integrated whole. This will become evident when the panel’s recommendations about the introduction of new subjects like Professional Practice and Business Studies and the expansion of provision in existing subjects like software applications be expanded.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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The programme has 2 specialisations and each had its own SER.

1. Jewellery and Blacksmithing

2. Product Design and Furniture Design and Furniture Restoration

The Self Evaluation Reports clearly identified a different set of aims and objectives for each specialisation. The Jewellery specialisation had a more aesthetic orientation while the 2nd specialisation was aimed at meeting the challenge as identified in the SER of how Lithuania can become a competitive European country through the production of innovative services and products and “ stimulate the creation of workplaces ,tourism and investments”(SER, pg7).

As a result the programme team are proposing to restructure the programme into 2 distinct design programmes.

The programme team felt that this would reflect more accurately the specific activity of jewellery design and metalworking and the relationship between product design and furniture design .The panel felt that this proposal should be supported as the division was more logical and more appropriate to market and employment possibilities . The Product / Furniture Design aims and objectives should also include a detailed section on the importance of innovation and the creation of a graduate capable of working independently with a wide range of transferrable skills

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The SER identified the main aim of the programme as the production of graduates in Costume Design with a particular specialisation in Knitwear. The SER describes how graduates of the programme will also have a wide range of design and styling skills which will allow them develop attractive designs which will be ready to go into small scale production . Each graduate will be able to produce a full knitwear collection at the end of the programme and will be able to participate in exhibitions ,fashion shows and creative contests .However, the programme is very narrowly focused on knitwear and the panel felt that this focus could be broadened by concentrating on new materials and new directions in costume design. The SER identifies television,cinema and theatre as possible employment areas for graduates which might allow the programme broaden its narrow base.

3. ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMMES

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3.1 Structure , Content and Study Methods

The SER describes how the programme of studies is divided into 3 blocks. Block A deals with Core specialist subjects, Block B deals with general art subjects while Block C focuses on the Humanities. The first and second years provide a thorough foundation in the basics of art and design while choice of specialisation takes place in Year 3. The structure which emphasises a generalist and skill based approach in years 1 and 2 before actually working in the specialist area is a feature of many design programmes in Lithuania and while it does result in a high level of competence and achievement in general art and design skills it can lead to a somewhat underdeveloped understanding of Design in the final years. This structure also mitigates against the development of an integrated approach to the development of the graduate designer as it encourages students to regard individual subjects in isolation from each

other. On the other hand the strong emphasis on a general foundation in art and design does seem to be appropriate for the multi skilled graduate required by the national Lithuanian job market.

The Tripartite structure – A, B and C – seems to reduce the amount of time available for the teaching of new technology and software. There is also a lack of emphasis on Creativity and Innovation as distinct subjects in the Product design specialisation and no instruction on the key subject of Intellectual Property.

The position of Furniture Restoration within the programme as a specialisation needs to be examined. It is not clear how it relates to Furniture Design or how much demand there is from students for this specialisation.

3.2 Execution of studies and support for students

The SER describes how Assessment takes place in 3 stages for the Jewellery/Blacksmithing specialisation. There is an intermediary assessment, a final assessment and an assessment based on a display of the work from the summer practices. The assessment criteria used are: 1 Response to a given task; 2. Originality of a solution; 3. Organisation of Work; 4. Technical and Performance; 5. Independent work . The panel felt that a much clearer explanation of the relationship of the midsemester assessment to the final assessment needed to be supplied .Such questions ,for example, as what happens if a student does very badly in the midsemester assessment , what effect has this on the final assessment, are the provisions in place for the resubmission of midsemester work etc. In Product /Furniture there are 2 stages, an intermediary assessment and a final assessment. In both specialisations, the SER describes how assessment is done primarily in teams. The SER describes how both specialisations have a wide range of informal supports available for students and these include the provision of professional literature , international catalogues and information about relevant international exhibitions and competitions.

Students and graduates however , reported that they were unhappy with the level of instruction in new technology , in particular, new and relevant software. They also requested that the course should include more emphasis on business methods and professional practice and a greater involvement in the Erasmus programme. The panel were encouraged by proposals to develop the Arts Incubator programme through the assistance of past graduates and the Local Enterprise board .

3.3 Variation in the number of students

The SER describes the entrance procedure which includes a portfolio review and then a formal examination in visual expression and composition which includes

drawing , painting ,jewellery project,a metal making exercise a sculptural model and a written test .As a result the entrance procedures are quite rigorous and result in a student intake with a high level of basic art and design skills.Demand for the programme is strong with a majority of female applicants.

3.4 Teaching Staff

Staff are highly committed to the development of their programme despite the very difficult conditions in studios and workshops. However, there are not enough specialist staff in Furniture Design and the number of Associate Professors in some areas is below the recommended limit. In Product Design , the number of staff teaching General University Education subjects does not fulfil the requirement of “Regulations for undergraduate , specialised and integrated study programmes” that “no less than the volume of every study programme part should be taught by the higher education institution’s regular teachers who have a scientific degree or are recognised artists(for teaching art subjects). In Furniture Design and Restoration there is a lack of teachers with the appropriate scientific degree in all study blocks while in the Jewellery and Blacksmithing specialisation there is a lack of suitabley qualified lecturers in Blocks A and B.

3.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of Programme

Advantages:

1. The programme has a very strong foundation in traditional design skills a very high level of craft skills.
2. Staff have a strong commitment to the programme and are planning for its future development.
3. Students are highly articulate and have a critical understanding of many of the issues that affect the development of their course
4. There is a good debate on the relationship between craft skills and creativity among staff and students.
5. The plan to develop an Arts Incubator Unit for recent graduates is a positive initiative.

Disadvantages:

1. There is a lack of focus on new technology both in the curriculum and in teaching methods.
2. There is no provision for lectures on Professional Practice and Business studies despite a clear demand from students, graduates and employers
3. There is not enough contact with the Design industry through talks from visiting professionals or visits to industry workshops or studios.
4. There is not enough subject specific relevant theoretical lectures in Jewellery, Product and Furniture design.
5. The programme does not devote enough time to forming skills related to the basics of entrepreneurship which will make graduates more adaptable to changing market conditions.
6. A programme at this level should have a formal mechanism for developing links with industry either through a Industry Advisory panel or an extensive series of lectures/workshops by established industry professionals. This series of visiting lectures could begin by inviting past successful graduates of the programme in to talk to students about their work and careers.

4. Material Conditions

1. The workshops are very poorly equipped
2. The furniture workshop is very badly ventilated. This can be solved with a minimal investment of resources.
3. The heating of Furniture workshop is poor
4. The SER identifies “an insufficient material base, lack of rooms and teaching tools and means “ as major impediments It is a credit to the lecturing staff and students that they have managed to produce a high level work with such poor facilities .

5. External Relations

The SER provided a comprehensive list of contacts with colleges in Latvia, Estonia and Germany and a list of national and international exhibitions and competitions in which the lecturing staff had participated over the last decade .

most contacts are with countries in the Baltic area.

However, students identified the Erasmus Exchange programme as being underdeveloped and would like to see the list of partner institutions improved.

6. Feedback

There is clear evidence of timely feedback to students from lecturing staff. identified in the SER .It is essential that there is a formal mechanism for collecting feedback from employers , graduates an other industry representative organisations about the programme and use their suggestions to ensure that the programme continues to be relevant is very rapidly changing industry and society.

7. Internal Assurance of Study Quality

There is an awareness among the staff of the importance of QA and these procedures i.e student feedback need to be more formal .In order to develop staff awareness of QA it is necessary to arrange formal information sessions which will help familiarise staff with current developments in Quality Assurance/Enhancement. The mechanisms available for student feedback have to be re-examined

and a more formalised approach to this important aspect of Quality Assurance/ Enhancement should be developed..

8. Compulsory Recommendations

1. Rewrite course documents for the new programmes in BA Jewellery and Metalmaking and BA Design (Product / Furniture) .
2. Clearly identify specialisations and course structure.
3. Introduce more subject specific theoretical lectures.
4. There should be a greater focus on new technology both in the curriculum and teaching methods.

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3.1 Structure , contents and study methods

The SER describes how the programme of studies is divided in to blocks.Block A deals with Core specialist subjects, Block B deals with general art subjects while Block C focuses on the Humanities. The first and second years provide a thorough foundation in the basics of art and design while the emphasis on Knitwear begins in semester 3. During the summer internship in year 3 students produce a mini collection and in the final year students produce a full knitwear collection as part of their final thesis .

The programme is structured so that there is an attempt to have a balance between creativity and technological skills. However, students would not be able to go as far as manufacturing but are able to present creative ideas to technicians who can then produce them .

3.2 Execution of studies and supports for students.

While physical facilities are very poor there is strong support for students from the lecturing team . The programme team tries to overcome the problem of poor facilities by arranging placements for students during the summer courses which allows them to familiarise themselves with equipment and workshop practices . There is an interim and final assessment and a 10 point grading system is used with 8 – 10 representing the highest level of achievement. Students reported that they participated fully in the final assessment and could make a written submission of their defense. They were aware of the criteria used to assess their work and received immediate feedback at the final assessment.

The SER describes how the lecturing staff are all active in their fields in art and design and provide students with information on contemporary developments in fashion design through catalogues, professional literature and other information sources. Over the years the programme has built up its own library containing the best examples of previous students' work on video and DVD .

3.3 Variation in the number of students

The SER describes the entrance procedure which includes a portfolio review and then a formal examination in visual expression and composition which includes drawing , painting , general composition, and a written test .As a result the entrance procedures are quite rigorous and result in a student intake with a high level of basic art and design skills. Demand for the programme is strong with a majority of female applicants and while the overall number of students is small the SER identifies a good retention rate.

3.4 Teaching Staff

There is a small but committed staff group who are actively involved in the development of the programme. A notable feature of staff involvement are the regular Methodological Meetings which focus on student feedback and are designed to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and up to date. However , the number of staff teaching General University Education subjects and General Art Education subjects does not fulfil the requirement of “Regulations for undergraduate, specialised professional and integrated study programmes” that “ no less than half of the volume in every study programme part should be taught by regular teachers from the higher education institution who have a scientific degree or are recognised artists (for teaching art subjects)”.

3.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of Programme

Advantages:

1. The programme has a very strong foundation in fundamental art and design skills. Craft skills are highly developed.
2. Very high level of skill in knitwear design because of single specialisation
3. Very interesting production of 3 dimensional sculptured forms

4. A small but committed staff team who are clearly involved in development of the course through their “Methodological Meetings “

Disadvantages :

1. There is a very narrow focus on knitwear which could be augmented by looking at new and different materials
2. There should be more contact with the Fashion industry either through student work placements or visiting industry professionals
3. There is a lack of focus on new technology both in the curriculum and in teaching methods
4. There is no provision for lectures on Professional Practice and Business despite a clear demand from students, graduates and employer
5. There should be more emphasis on instruction on production methods
6. There is a real need for more specialised and relevant software
7. There is not enough time is devoted in the curriculum to the speciality subject
8. The workshops and equipment are below an acceptable standard.
9. There are 7 subjects in one term in 1st year.

4. Material Conditions

1. The workshops are very poorly equipped.
2. It is a credit to the lecturing staff and students that they have managed to produce a high level work with such poor facilities .

5. External Relations

A comprehensive list of contacts was supplied for all specialisations and most contacts are within Lithuania.

Students identified the Erasmus Exchange programme as being underdeveloped and would like to see the list of partner institutions improved.

6. Feedback

There is clear evidence of timely feedback to students from lecturing staff. identified in the SER .It is essential that there is a formal mechanism for collecting feedback from employers , graduates and other industry representative organisations about the programme and use their suggestions to ensure that the programme continues to be relevant is very rapidly changing industry and society.

7. Internal Assurance of Study Quality

There is an awareness among the staff of the importance of QA and these procedures i.e student feedback need to be more formal .In order to develop staff awareness of QA it is necessary to arrange formal information sessions which will help familiarise staff with current developments in Quality Assurance/ Enhancement. The mechanisms available for student feedback have to be re-examined and a more formalised approach to this important aspect of Quality Assurance / Enhancement should be developed.

8. Compulsory Recommendations:

1. Broaden focus of programme and introduce new materials.
2. Explore new directions in Costume Design and new types of textiles.
3. Correct credit allocation of subjects in accordance with legislation.
4. There should be more emphasis on instruction on production methods.
5. There must be a greater focus on new technology both in the curriculum and in teaching methods.

General Recommendations

1. Develop modules in Business, Management Studies, Professional Practice and Entrepreneurship
2. Develop a Software Instruction Policy for the Academy
3. Conduct a review of assessment practices and procedures as part of Staff Development
4. Develop formal procedures for involving the Lithuanian Design Industry in course development – formation of External Advisory board for each programme.
5. Professional Development courses in learning and teaching and new developments in technology should be provided for all staff.
6. Develop a Quality Assurance system for the Academy
7. The Academy should develop a common framework for distinguishing BA from MA .The Academy should consult the CUMULUS Tuning Report for Design.
8. All final assessment panels must include at least one senior external representative from the relevant section of the Design industry.