

VILNIUS ACADEMY OF THE ARTS

DESIGN PROGRAMMES

FINAL REPORT

VILNIUS ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS

61202M106 BACHELOR OF DESIGN
62102M102 MASTER OF DESIGN
61202M120 BACHELOR OF INTERIOR DESIGN
61202M110 BACHELOR OF COSTUME DESIGN
62402M105 MASTER OF COSTUME DESIGN

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VILNIUS 2008

I. INTRODUCTION

Title of Programmes : BA Design
MA Design
BA Interior Design
BA Costume Design
MA Costume Design

1. The panel of experts visited the Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts on Wednesday December 3rd and 4th accompanied by Daiva Buivydiene from the Lithuanian Centre of Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

2. The timetable for the visit is set out below and the panel met with the Administrative staff of the Faculty, the SER groups and the lecturing staff for all programmes, present students and former graduates and employers.

3. Timetable of Visit

December 3rd

8.45-9.15 Introductory meeting with administrative staff of the Faculty

9.30-10.30 Meeting with SER group and lecturing staff (Costume Design)

10.30-11.30 Meeting with SER group and teaching staff (Interior Design)

11.45-12.45 Meeting with students from both programmes

12.45-13.30 Observation of various support services (studios, teaching spaces, workshops, library, computer services and familiarisation with students final works, examination material (Costume Design)

15.00-15.45 Observation of various support services (studios ,teaching spaces , workshops, library, computer services, and familiarisation with students' final works, examination material, (Interior design)

15.45-16.30 Meeting with graduates and employers

December 4th

9.00-9.45 Meeting with SER group (BA /MA Design)

9.45-10.30 Meeting with lecturing staff

10.45-11.45 Meeting with students

11.45-12.45 Observation of various support services (studios teaching spaces, workshops, library, computer services, and familiarisation with students' final works, examination material.

14.00-14.45 Meeting with graduates and employers

14.45-15.15 Panel Discussion

15.15-15.45 General Remarks on the visit .

4. A detailed SER was submitted for all courses and it was quite clear that the preparation of the SER for all courses 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 nature and purpose of the visit by the panel and understood that it was part of a Quality Assurance/Enhancement process.

5. The programmes in the Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts are based on 3 sets or blocks of studies.

1. Block A: Professional Specialised Studies
2. Block B: General Arts Subjects
3. Block C: Humanities/General /University

This model of programme may create conflict between Humanities and Specialist subjects and create problems about ownership of the programme and who can determine change or development of the programme as a whole. This has been identified by the SER for the BA Costume Design as a particular problem. This will also become evident when the panel's recommendations about the introduction of new subjects such as Professional Practice, Business Studies and the expansion of provision on an existing subject like software applications for design are implemented.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY PROGRAMS

2.1 BACHELOR OF DESIGN (61202M10)

The programme has 3 main areas of study

1. Graphic Design
2. Product Design
3. Environmental Design

The aims and learning outcomes for the programme are very clearly stated and described in a very detailed manner in the SER. The SER describes the knowledge, competences and skills graduates of this programme can expect to have upon graduation and describes how the main elements of the curriculum are organised so as to achieve those aims. It states that upon successful completion of the course students will understand how their specialisation relates to the consumer, be able to solve design problems, be able to apply the skills in a practical and creative manner, demonstrate a competence in relevant new technologies and software and have a mastery of a range of key skills such as teamworking and public communication. The SER also identifies a number of issues in relation to the aims and goals of the programme which need to be discussed and changed. These include the provision of instruction in Professional Practice and Business studies, greater integration of studio subjects and projects and a greater emphasis on tailoring the students learning experience with a view to a more thorough preparation for their choice of specialisation. Currently, the programme has a very clear focus but how students choose their specialist area from either Furniture/ Product, Graphic and Environmental design needs to be explained more clearly in the SER.

2.2. MASTER OF DESIGN (62102M102)

The programme has 4 main areas of study:

1. Product Design
2. Environmental Design
3. Graphic Design
4. Jewellery Design

The purpose of a MA programme is to provide a deepening in the students knowledge but there is a difficulty with some of the stated learning outcomes which are more suited to either BA level or are at an introductory level. The SER acknowledges this difficulty when it refers to the recruitment of students from different disciplines who have “different bachelors degrees in other programmes(for example, Costume Design Ceramics, Textiles etc)” The SER states that “ students studying other programmes do not possess the basics of the Design programme and they do not fully understand its specifics (3D Composition, Designing, Draftmanship cause problems)”.This is particularly evident with those students opting to specialise in Jewellery design and it means that certain subjects are more appropriate to an undergraduate level.

The SER does not fully describe the process of specialisation and it would appear that students work across all areas before choosing a specialisation in the final year. The SER should indicate clearly how students choose their specialisation for the 4 subject areas and would advise that early choice of specialisation is essential to the process of deepening the students knowledge .This level of specialisation would also be more relevant to market conditions and produce a more employable graduate.

2.3. BACHELOR OF INTERIOR DESIGN (61202M120)

The programme has very clearly stated aims and objectives and is focused on producing a fully qualified professional interior/spatial designer. The SER clearly describes the knowledge, competences and skills graduates will have on successful completion of the programme It states that graduates will “have proficiency in architectural design, colour theory and knowledge in the sphere of lighting ,structural constructions and service systems of buildings”. It identifies such skills as being able “to read complex data in technical drawings, use computerised designing methods and techniques” as well as the possession of such key skills as teamwork, planning in a team environment as part of the profile of a successful graduate of this programme. The SER describes how this set of aims and objectives is geared to producing g a graduate capable of immediately working in the field of professional design practice. The only question raised by the panel in relation to the programme’s aims and objectives is its relationship with Architecture and the programme team may need to investigate the advantages/disadvantages of renaming the programme as a BA in Interior Architecture. A number of Interior Design programmes in the United Kingdom of Great Britain have gone down this route by receiving accreditation from RIBA.

2.4. BACHELOR OF COSTUME DESIGN (61202M110)

The programme has very clearly stated aims and objectives. The SER states that its primary aim is to train professional costume and fashion designers “ who are capable of putting their knowledge and practical skills to creative use and are ready to exploit scientific and technological innovations”. The programme also provides a sufficient level of knowledge , skills and competence to allow graduates “ to pursue other job opportunities related to the fashion industry” including theatre, cinema, advertising and mass media. Other graduates have also worked as stylists and as fashion journalists. The SER identifies a number of challenges facing the programme including developing international contacts with other fashion programmes, the provision of new technology and greater synchronisation between the three study

blocks. The main problem facing the programme identified by the SER has been a reduction in the time allocated to Core Specialist subjects in order to accommodate general university subjects.

2.5. MASTER OF COSTUME DESIGN (2402M105)

The aims and objectives of the programme are clearly stated. The programme aims to produce a high level specialist designer with an in depth knowledge in a particular area of fashion. Other fields of employment open to graduates of the programme include teaching, garment manufacturing and working as designers/stylists in cinema, theatre and television. Graduates of the programme must produce a substantial public collection and also a research report.

The SER identifies a number of issues which the programme team wish to address including developing contacts with other international fashion courses, developing the use of new technology and “interaction and synchronisation of objectives followed by teachers of different subjects” and providing a greater choice of creative/practical elective subjects. A recent student survey also identified the provision of photography, art management and psychology as important additions to the programme.

3. ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMMES

3.1. 61202M106 BACHELOR OF DESIGN

3.1.1. Structure, Content and Study Methods

The SER describes how the programme of studies is divided into 3 blocks. Block A deals with core specialist areas and is the basis of the design programme. Block B deals with general arts subjects and is focused on skill provision while Block C deals with general Humanities subjects. The programme is wide ranging and aims to create a graduate with a wide range of skills. However, unlike other design courses reviewed by the panel, the choice of specialisation is made by the end of Year 2 which helps students develop a greater specialist knowledge. The SER describes how the first year provides a thorough grounding in the basics of art and design – 2d and 3d composition etc – and students are introduced to their specialisations in year 2. Choice of specialisation is complete by the end of this year and the final project is undertaken in the last semester of year 4. The selection of the final project is done in close consultation with the lecturers and are formally approved by the department. The panel felt that Design for Screen (design made on screen for viewing and use on screen) had to be addressed in the Graphic Design specialisation at some stage as this was key to their employment prospects in the new economy. In addition to this during the panel meeting students identified a lack of provision of instruction in new technologies and software and expressed a preference for new courses in Professional Practice and Business Methods.

3.1. 2. Execution of studies and support for students

Assessment takes place in two stages – an in between revision and a final assessment. There are 5 assessment criteria: 1) theme 2) originality 3) study process

4) project development.

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. The SER outlines a wide range of informal supports offered to students including information about new developments internationally, internships and important conferences and exhibitions. The SER describes how wireless internet has been provided in the VAA reading hall and students can access this service at no extra charge. The regular course of instruction is also supplemented by short term creative workshops which allows students deepen their knowledge of particular areas and these workshops are often run in cooperation with private companies from the Lithuanian design industry.

3.1.3 Variation in number of students

Demand for the programme is improving over 2002-2006 and the SER claims that the retention rate is quite good. The SER describes how a proposal to have a part time course in 2005 was rejected and the recruitment on to the full time programme increased to 53. The main reason for students not completing the course is financial with students dropping out of the course to take up full time employment. The selection procedures for entry are quite rigorous and exhaustive and combine a range of measures – academic achievement, portfolio submission and practical examination which results in a student cohort with a high level of basic art and design skills

3.1.4 Teaching Staff

Staff is highly committed to the development of their programme and a good proportion have active design practices. A number have also been active in CUMULUS- the International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media- and have participated in several CUMULUS conferences. The panel recommends very highly that this participation continue as this development of an international perspective is important for the future development of the programme. The SER explains that new staff is recruited on the basis of their creative and professional practice and all staff have active practices in the design industry and are encouraged to participate in exhibitions and conferences both in Lithuania and internationally. The SER does not clearly indicate the number of Professors, Associate Professors/Docents and lecturers on the programme and this should be addressed.

3.1.5 Advantages/Disadvantages of programme

Advantages:

1. The programme has a very strong foundation in traditional art and design skills. The exercises in 2d and 3d composition from 1st and 2nd year were very impressive.
2. Staff has a very strong commitment to the programme and its future development and are trying to plan strategically for the future development of the programme.
3. The programme has developed excellent contacts with the international design community and should continue to develop these relationships. The Dutch Design weekend initiative was an excellent project and should be used as a source of new ideas for improving the design and delivery of the overall programme.

4. The programme has a particular strength in the area of product design with a very interesting set of briefs and projects.

Disadvantages:

1. There is no provision for instruction on **Design for Screen** – design made on screen for use and viewing on screen- which puts graduates of the programme at a disadvantage in comparison with their peers internationally.
2. There is not enough provision in the programme for instruction in **digital technology and new software packages and applications.**
3. There is no provision for lectures on **Professional Practice and business studies** despite a clear demand from students, graduates and employers. The SER does identify this deficiency as an area that the lecturing team wish to address.
4. In the Graphic design specialisation there should be some **instruction on prepress technology** as this will be extremely useful for those graduates who make a career in the area of Design for Print.
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. The SER does identify a number of practical creative workshops sometime with visiting industry professionals and this practice should be developed and expanded.

4.1. Material conditions

The SER identifies a number of problems with material conditions most notably with the **Digital Design facilities.** There are an insufficient number of digital design workstations given the number of students and an **insufficient** range of up to date software. The SER notes that this may be alleviated through laptop provision and there are plans to open a new digital design laboratory with 8 computers with relevant software. The 3D workshops are small and compact but fairly well equipped and have technical support from 2 lecturers.

5.1. External Relations

The SER gives an exhaustive list of staff participation in exhibitions, workshops , professional consultancy and television programmes in Lithuania . Staff and students have participated in a number of international workshops and a full list of international guest lecturers is provided. The participation of the programme in the CUMULUS network is to be highly commended and the participation of the programme with international partners to be developed and continued .Initiatives such as Dutch Design weekend should to be encouraged **but the lessons learned from these seminars should be incorporated in to new developments in the curriculum .**

6.1. 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 in a very rapidly changing industry and society. The SER does indicate that this issue was discussed during the preparation of the report.

7.1. Internal Assurance of Study Quality

There is an awareness among staff of the importance of Quality Assurance. 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.

8.1. General Recommendations

1. Introduce Design for Screen as part of the Graphic Design specialisation
2. Introduce lectures on Professional practice and Business Studies
3. Develop a greater interaction with the Lithuanian design industry
4. Introduce students on the Graphic Design specialisation to Prepress technology
5. Engage in formal consultation with external partners re appropriateness of the skill/knowledge set for a career in a rapidly changing industry.
6. Clarify the role of instruction in key skills in the curriculum i.e. preparing design reports, writing a design brief etc .

3.2. 3162102M102 MASTER OF DESIGN

3.2.1. Structure, Content and Study Methods

The SER describes how the programme is delivered in 2 blocks. Block A covers core design subjects, Block B provides instruction in general arts subjects including subjects which are at an introductory level such as Photography and Architecture. The programme aims to create design specialists in a number of areas: Product Design, Graphic Design, Design for Public Spaces and Jewellery Design .It is not clear how students decide to specialise in a certain area and the present structure does raise questions about the deepening of knowledge offered by the MA programme.

The time allocated to Core Problematic Designing seems somewhat short for an MA level programme. There are difficulties with the level of some subjects on offer and the problem with different entry requirements and standards needs to be addressed .There is also some doubt about whether the programme is aimed at deepening or widening a student's knowledge as the programme recruits students from different undergraduate degree programmes. The SER does not clearly identify the Research Methods subject which is a key component of a MA programme.

3.2.2. Execution of studies and support for students

An individual study plan is created for each student but there is very little detail provided in the SER about this process. The creation of the study plan needs to be linked to the process followed in choosing a specialisation. A 10 point grade system is used and there are 3 main assessment criteria identified which need to be explained in

greater detail in the SER. It is unclear what role if any the research methods element of the programme plays in the final submission by the student.

The information provided for students about employment possibilities in the market place needs to be explained in greater detail in the SER.

3.2. 3 Variation in number of students

The SER indicates that demand for the course has been satisfactory in the past but recently there has been a slight reduction in demand over the last few years. The usual intake averaged at 20 but in 2006 the number dropped to 17 .However, the panel felt that this was broadly in line with comparable international MA courses in countries with growing economies. The SER identifies a difficulty where students apply with a qualification in a very different discipline and have a different skill and knowledge set. This requires the provision of a number of modules which are at an undergraduate level. This situation needs to be addressed so as to ensure that the required deepening of knowledge is achieved on this course.

3.2. 4 Teaching Staff

Staff is highly committed to the development of their programme and a good proportion have active design practices. A number have also been active in CUMULUS and this development of an international perspective is important for the future development of the programme. The SER provides a very detailed list of exhibitions, workshops, consultancies and conference presentations made by the programme staff both in Lithuania and abroad.

3.2. 5. Advantages/Disadvantages of programme

Advantages:

1. Some final projects reflected a level of depth and sophistication appropriate to MA level.
2. Some projects were very well presented

Disadvantages:

1. The Research Methods module is not clearly identified as compulsory for all students
2. Some final projects are not always accompanied by a written research report with abstract and full bibliography The structure and purpose of the final dissertation/report needs to be reviewed The research question needs to be clearly identified , a literature review has to be included and all reports should have an extensive bibliography.
3. The written report not integrated into main studio project.
4. There is not enough clarity in relation choice of specialisation.
5. There are insufficient links with industry. 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.
6. A decision has to be made about whether the aim of the programme is to enable greater creative self development for the student or to produce a more professional and employable designer capable of entering the design industry at a relatively senior level.

7. 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

4.2. Material conditions

The SER identifies a number of problems with material conditions most notably with the **Digital Design** facilities. There are an insufficient number of digital design workstations given the number of students and an insufficient range of up-to-date software. The SER notes that this may be alleviated through laptop provision and there are plans to open a new digital design laboratory with 8 computers with relevant software. The 3D workshops are small and compact but fairly well equipped and have technical support from 2 lecturers.

5.2. External Relations

The SER gives an exhaustive list of staff participation in exhibitions, workshops, professional consultancy and television programmes in Lithuania. Staff and students have participated in a number of international workshops and a full list of international guest lecturers is provided. The participation of the programme in the CUMULUS network is to be highly recommended and the participation of the programme with international partners to be developed and continued. Initiatives such as Dutch Design should be encouraged but the lessons learned from these seminars should be incorporated into new developments in the curriculum.

6.2. Feedback

There is evidence in the SER of timely feedback to students from lecturers about their work. However, the relationship between lecturer/thesis supervisor must be set out formally. It is essential that representatives from the design industry are involved in the assessment of the final thesis. The SER does indicate whether this is the case or not.

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 in very rapidly changing industry and society. The SER does indicate that this issue was discussed during the preparation of the report.

7.2. Internal Assurance of Study Quality

There is an awareness among staff of the importance of Quality Assurance. 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.

8.2. General Recommendations

1. **Research methods module must be clearly identified and made compulsory.**
2. All final submissions **must** be accompanied by a written report produced to a **recognised academic standard format i.e literature review, extensive bibliography etc.**
3. Introduce **modules on Professional Practice and Business studies.**
4. Create a formal structure for **greater links with the design industry.**

through an external advisory industry board and a series of lectures by visiting industry professionals.

3.3. 61202M120 BACHELOR OF INTERIOR DESIGN

3.3.1. Structure, Content and Study Methods

The SER describes how the programme aims to create a highly qualified interior design professional who can operate independently as an interior designer or as part of a team operating in the field of architecture. The programme is divided into 3 blocks of study 1) general university subjects 2) core specialist subjects 3) general design subjects. Despite this tripartite division the SER shows how the programme displays a very high level of integration between all 3 blocks and students are introduced to spatial design in a domestic setting from the 2nd semester. This puts interior/spatial design at the heart of the programme and gives the course a proper focus and encourages students to see that there is an important and relevant connection between the 3 blocks of studies. This, in turn, facilitates the development of a very high level of specialist knowledge over the course of the programme.

3.3.2. Execution of studies and support for students

Assessment takes place in a number of stages. Students receive feedback as they develop their projects but there are 2 main assessment events – interim assessment and final assessment. The final assessment involves a representative from the field of architecture which is essential to guarantee the quality of the final submission. However, all students must have the opportunity to discuss their work with staff during the final assessment.

Students have access to a very well designed studio space which is also properly equipped with specially designed desks and seating. The SER identifies a problem with acoustics when separate classes are held in the studio at the same time. The SER describes how the staff made a successful application for European Union support and also cite cooperation between different departments as one of the ways in which the space resources for students could be improved. In addition, a new initiative to introduce team working and group projects has been introduced especially in first year. The panel believe that this is a most worthwhile initiative which deserves support from the Academy.

Lecturing staff are all practicing in their respective fields and always allow students to consult their own collection of catalogues on, for example, new materials and where possible they arrange temporary work placements for the students in their own offices.

3.3.3. Variation in number of students

The programme is extremely popular and receives a large number of applications each year. Student recruitment has shown an annual increase in each successive year. The SER describes how the department decided not to increase the number of students despite the increase in applications so as to prevent overcrowding of the existing studio space.

The student retention rate is excellent and is nowhere near the norm of 20% attrition as found in other art and design courses.

3.3.4 Teaching Staff

The lecturing staff is clearly committed to the development of their programme. All present senior staff are practicing architects but it would be desirable to recruit a specialist interior designer, perhaps a successful past graduate.

The SER explains that the strength of the present staff is based on their record as creative practitioners in the field of Architecture and that they are aware of the need to boost their academic qualifications over the next number of years. In addition a number of key promotions and appointments will be made which will ensure that the quality of delivery on the programme continues to improve.

3.3. 5 Advantages/Disadvantages of programme

Advantages:

1. The programme has a very clear focus on interior/spatial design.
2. There is a very high level of traditional design skills evident in all years of the programme.
3. There is an excellent understanding of the concept of spatial design in years 1 and 2
4. The vertical integration of design projects through all years is excellent.
5. The integration of the specialised and general art subjects in years 1-3 is excellent.
6. The final year projects are very challenging and sophisticated.
7. The standard of presentation of projects especially in years 3 and 4 is superb.

Disadvantages :

1. There is a need to review assessment procedures for the final assessment at the end of the year.
2. Some employers indicated that graduates needed a greater technical awareness in relation to building structures.

4.3. Material conditions

The studios have been very carefully designed and the furniture and fittings i.e. desks and chairs are excellent. However, the overall space (just 130 sq mtrs according to the SER) is quite restricted for the number of students enrolled on this very popular programme and the main studio has to double up for other classes. In particular, students have to use the studio for Painting which is an inappropriate use for the studio.

The SER identifies a real problem with digital design facilities with an insufficient number of workstations which also have to be shared with Architecture students. In 2006, the programme received some funding from the European Structural Funds which allowed it to purchase some extra digital workstations and more importantly, purchase the relevant software packages i.e. ArciCad Version 11. The panel felt that this deficiency should be addressed as quickly as possible so as to ensure that this excellent programme continues to develop and thrive.

5.3. External Relations

The SER provides a detailed list of international initiatives which have been undertaken by this relatively new programme. It also gives details of a number of very interesting collaborations with the other departments in the Vilnius Academy and of a number of collaborations with enterprises that specialise in the production of furniture, lighting fixtures etc. The programme was also represented at the CUMULUS conferences in Oslo and Lisbon and the panel felt that this participation by staff must be encouraged and supported. The SER identifies the development of

greater participation in the Erasmus programme as a major priority and this was echoed by comments from the students and graduates.

6.3. Feedback

There is clear evidence of timely feedback to students from lecturing staff but care must be taken to involve students fully in the final assessment at the end of each year. 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 develop in a very rapidly changing industry and society.

7.3. Internal Assurance of Study Quality

There is awareness among staff of the importance of Quality Assurance. 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.

8.3. General Recommendations

1. The programme team should review the final assessment procedure with regard to full student involvement.
2. The programme team should consider position of the programme in relation to interior architecture.
3. The programme team should meet with industry representatives to discuss changes and improvements to the course.

3.4. 61202M110 BACHELOR OF COSTUME DESIGN

3.4.1. Structure, Content and Study Methods

The aim of the programme is to educate and train students to become costume and fashion designers and also develop careers in the general fashion retail industry in Lithuania. The programme is organised in to 3 study blocks. Block A covers Core Specialist subjects. Block B covers general art and design subjects and Block C covers the Humanities. This tripartite division can cause difficulties in relation to changes in the curriculum or it can limit changes to the curriculum because of issues of programme ownership .The SER reports that there is a problem with the position of foreign languages in Block B and there has been an increase in the credits assigned to Block C at the expense of core specialised subjects .The SER clearly states that “In the opinion of the Department, foreign languages should not be grouped with art subjects. They do not belong to the field and clearly belong in the general university block”

In order to ensure that subjects examined in any one semester does not exceed 7, core specialised subjects have had to be amalgamated which reduces the amount of instruction students receive. The SER notes “ that the Department has exhausted this avenue because further reduction of the speciality part and general part of art and technological disciplines threatens to compromise their key objective to train professional costume and fashion designers” On the other hand , the SER recognises that the programme is part of university level education and states that” unthinkable to eliminate general university subjects from the curriculum”.

3.4.2. Execution of studies and support for students

Assessment takes place in 2 parts – there is an intermediate assessment and a final assessment. The criteria used are stated in the SER and students in their final year must produce a comprehensive fashion collection supported by drawings, photographs and a written report.

The SER outlines a wide range of informal supports for students such as a specialised library formed from the resources of the lecturing staff and because most of the staff are active in the Fashion industry they are able to arrange workplacements for the best students in Lithuanian fashion companies and in galleries.

The panel felt that there could be more help for the lecturing staff in ensuring that a major fashion show featuring the final collections of the students could be organised in a public city center location.

3.4.3. Variation in number of student numbers

The SER reports that the demand for places on the course is quite strong with an average of 2.3 – 2.9 candidates competing for each place. Student numbers have remained around the same level for the last 5 years with between 11 and 13 graduating each year. Retention has been something of a problem due to competition from other private colleges and the panel felt that the department must develop a strategy for dealing with this problem.

3.4.4. Teaching Staff

The teaching staff are clearly committed to the development of the course and are actively involved in improving their knowledge of contemporary fashion design. However, a programme of lectures by visiting experts from the Fashion industry would be very beneficial to the programme i.e. past graduates who have achieved success in Lithuania or abroad.

3.4.5. Advantages/Disadvantages of programme

Advantages

1. The programme provides a very strong foundation in traditional art and design skills.
2. Students display a very high level of visualisation skills in a variety of media in the early years.
3. There are strong craft skills evident throughout all years of the programme.
4. The final collections of the best students were comparable with other international BA programmes in Fashion Design.

Disadvantages:

1. The programme needs to be focused more on contemporary fashion.
2. New materials should be introduced to the programme.
3. There is not enough contact with the wider Lithuanian community, both the fashion industry and the general public. The final fashion show should take place in a prominent venue in city centre Vilnius and be promoted through the mass media as a major cultural and economic event
4. There is not enough contact with the Fashion and clothing industry.

5. There is no provision for lectures on Professional Practice despite a clear demand from students, graduates and employers .

6. 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.

7. 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.

4.4. Material conditions

The studios and workshops are quite small but the reorganisation of the main Vilnius academy should result in major improvements in workshop provision. The SER identifies the lack of a dedicated computer facility as a problem and students have to share the digital design facilities of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design.

Since 2006 a number of laptops have been purchased for specific use in the Department with relevant software. Mannequins and sewing machines are supplied 2nd hand through an arrangement with a number of commercial firms in Vilnius.

5.4. External Relations

The SER lists a number of collaborations with among others the Lithuanian Apparel and Textile Association and a number of clothing companies in Vilnius. A special arrangement to allow students and lecturers access to the WGSN website has also been established. Despite these positive collaborations, the panel felt that the programme needs to engage more fully with the Lithuanian fashion industry and the international fashion industry in a more formal and structured way. One very important way of establishing these external relationships would be through a more public presentation of the final fashion show in a prestigious city centre venue. The list of companies as detailed in the SER who have cooperated with the Department over the last number of years should be able to assist in terms of logistics and sponsorship in kind for an event of this kind.

6.4 Feedback

There is clear evidence of timely feedback to students from lecturing staff but care must be taken to involve students in the final assessment at the end of each year. 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 develop in a very rapidly changing industry and society.

7.4. Internal Assurance of Study Quality

There is an awareness among staff of the importance of Quality Assurance..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.

8.4. General Recommendations

- 1 The programme needs to be focused more on contemporary fashion.
- 2 New materials should be introduced.
- 3 The final fashion show should take place in a prominent venue in city centre Vilnius.
- 4 There should be more formal contact with the Fashion and clothing industry.
- 5 There should be extra provision in the curriculum for lectures on Professional Practice and Business Studies.

3.5. 62402M105 MASTER OF COSTUME DESIGN

3.5.1 Structure, Content and Study Methods

The aim of the MA programme is to train a high level fashion designer who can operate independently in the national and international fashion industry. The MA offers students the opportunity to specialise in a particular area of fashion design and with extensive research training allow the student to develop a unique and creative style as a fashion artist. A key element of the degree is the presentation of a paper outlining the theme of their fashion studies as part of the entrance examination. The SER explains that the “provision of MA study programme involves methods similar as those used to deliver the BA programme, though focus is on student’s ability to study independently, to select a theme and analyze it, to collect, process and present information adequately”. The SER must explain how this contributes to the deepening of knowledge of fashion design as these skills and abilities are fairly general.

3.5.2 Execution of studies and support for students

There are two intermediate assessments and a final assessment and students work and progress are monitored monthly through regular meetings with lecturers. In the final assessment students make a public presentation of their work to all the staff and are involved in the debate about the quality of their final submission. The SER outlines the main assessment criteria and students must also submit a theoretical research paper which “must be an analytical work based on the data of independent scholarly and applied research”. The SER notes that a number of students have been invited to read for their doctoral degree on the strength of the quality of their final paper.

The SER outlines a wide range of informal supports for students such as a specialised library formed from the resources of the lecturing staff and because most of the staff are active in the Fashion industry they are able to arrange work placements for the best students in Lithuanian fashion companies and in galleries.

The panel felt that there could be more help for the lecturing staff in ensuring that a major fashion show featuring the final collections of the students could be organised in a public city centre location

3.5.3. Variation in number of students

Numbers are quite small and there has been a marked reduction since 2005 which is quite serious. Part of the reason is that student retention in a successful economy is difficult but the Department must develop a strategy to counter this drop in student numbers. Student retention has obviously been difficult and steps must be taken to identify the causes of this problem and to ensure greater rates of completion.

3.5.4. Teaching Staff

The teaching staff is clearly committed to the development of the course and are actively involved in improving their knowledge of contemporary fashion design. However, a programme of lectures by visiting experts from the Fashion industry would be very beneficial to the programme i.e past graduates who have achieved success in Lithuania or abroad.

3.5.5. Advantages/Disadvantages of programme

Advantages :

1. Some final projects reflected a level of depth and sophistication appropriate to MA level.
2. Some projects were very well presented.
3. There was evidence that the best graduates of this programme could compete with the level of other international Fashion Design MA programmes.
4. There is a clear requirement for a written research paper which demonstrates the students ability to undertake scholarly research work. The structure of the research paper has been clearly described in the SER.

Disadvantages :

1. The programme needs to be focused more on contemporary fashion.
2. A wider range of new materials should be introduced.
3. There is not enough contact with the wider Lithuanian community - the final fashion show should take place in a prominent venue in city centre Vilnius .
4. There is not enough contact with the Fashion and clothing industry.
5. There is no provision for lectures on Professional Practice despite a clear demand from students, graduates and employers.
6. 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.
7. 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.

4.5. Material conditions

The studios and workshops are quite small but the reorganisation of the main Vilnius academy should result in major improvements in workshop provision. The SER identifies the lack of a dedicated computer facility as a problem and students have to share the digital design facilities of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design.

Since 2006 a number of laptops have been purchased for specific use in the Department with relevant software. Mannequins and sewing machines are supplied 2nd hand through an arrangement with a number of commercial firms in Vilnius.

5.5. External Relations

The SER lists a number of collaborations with among others the Lithuanian Apparel and Textile Association and a number of clothing companies in Vilnius. A special

arrangement to allow students and lecturers access to the WGSN website has also been established. Despite these positive collaborations, the panel felt that the programme needs to engage more fully with the Lithuanian fashion industry and the international fashion industry in a more formal and structured way. One very important way of establishing these external relationships would be through a more public presentation of the final fashion show in a prestigious city centre venue. The list of companies as detailed in the SER who have cooperated with the Department over the last number of years should be able to assist in terms of logistics and sponsorship in kind for an event of this kind.

6.5. Feedback

There is clear evidence of timely feedback to students from lecturing staff but care must be taken to involve students in the final assessment at the end of each year. 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 develop in a very rapidly changing industry and society.

7.5. Internal Assurance of Study Quality

There is an awareness among staff of the importance of Quality Assurance. 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.

8.5. General Recommendations

1. The programme needs to be focused more on contemporary fashion.
2. The SER should explain in greater detail how the programme contributes to a deepening of the students knowledge of fashion design
3. The final fashion show should take place in a prominent venue in city centre Vilnius.
4. There should be more formal contact with the Fashion and clothing industry.

Compulsory Recommendations

1. Introduce Design for Screen as part of the Graphic Design specialisation in the BA Design
2. Research methods module must be clearly identified and made compulsory in the MA Design
3. All final submissions must be accompanied by a written report produced to a recognised academic standard format i.e. literature review, extensive bibliography in the MA Design.
4. The programme needs to be focused more on contemporary fashion in both the BA and MA in Costume Design
5. The SER for the MA in Costume Design should explain in greater detail how the programme contributes to a deepening of the students knowledge of fashion design.

General Recommendations for University

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/ELIA Tuning Report for Design which was compiled as part of the Interartes Thematic Network.
8. All final assessment panels must include at least one senior external representative from the relevant section of the Design industry.