Vilniaus dailės akademijos Klaipėdos

vizualinio dizaino fakulteto

# DIZAINO PROGRAMOS (62402M115, 621W20004) VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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# EVALUATION REPORT

# Visual Design Masters (62402M115, 621W20004)) STUDY PROGRAMME

at Vilnius Academy of Art

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

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|---|---|
| Studijų programos pavadinimas | *Vizualinis dizainas* |
| Valstybinis kodas | 62402M115, 621W20004 |
| Studijų sritis | Dizainas |
| Studijų kryptis | Dailė |
| Studijų programos rūšis | Universitetinės studijos |
| Studijų pakopa | Antroji |
| Studijų forma (trukmė metais) | nuolatinės (2) |
| Studijų programos apimtis kreditais[1] | 80 |
| Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija | Menų magistro laipsnis |
| Studijų programos įregistravimo data | 1995 |

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[1] – vienas kreditas laikomas lygiu 40 studento darbo valandų

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## INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

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|---|---|
| Name of the study programme | *Visual Design* |
| State code | 62402M115, 621W20004 |
| Study area | Design |
| Study field | Fine Art |
| Kind of the study programme | University Studies |
| Level of studies | Second |
| Study mode  (length in years) | Continuous (2) |
| Scope of the study programme in national credits | 80 |
| Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded | Master of Art |
| Date of registration of the study programme | 1995 |

# CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Vilnius Academy of Art offers two programmes from its campus in Klaipėda: a first level bachelor and a second level masters. This was the first evaluation by an International Peer Review Team.

The Master of Arts in Visual Design is delivered on a two-year cycle for whole-time students. It corresponds to similar programmes across Europe and the study programme is designed to deliver 80 national credits or 120 credits based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The programme is designed to broaden the students' vision, to stimulate their creativity, critical and systemic thinking. It also seeks to instil the motivation to work at the highest professional competence comparable to the best EU standard and continue to engage in the process of life-long learning.

The International Peer Review Team prepared a preliminary report based on the Self Evaluation Report (SER) and supplementary appendices provided by the Academy. This was followed a one-day visit to the campus in Klaipėda during which the Review Team met with the Vice Rector of the Academy, teaching and administrative staff, students and a selection of employers. In addition, there was an opportunity to observe the facilities and resources available to the Academy. In addition, final project work of students and examination materials were reviewed.

The Review Team notes that the actual delivery of the programme goes a long way to meeting the expected quality standards but this was not always thoroughly reflected in the documentation.

This final report was prepared following a series of private meetings of the Review Team to discuss its findings and present the analysis and conclusions given below. As the BA and the MA programmes are the only two delivered on the Klaipėda campus and delivery is largely by the same team many of the comments and recommendations are similar to those made in the report on the BA.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

*1. Programme aims and learning outcomes*

**1.1. Programme demand, purpose and aims**

*1.1.1. Uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme*
Satisfactory. The SER identifies the need for this programme to meet the growing need "for higher university and specialised art education." There is demand for professionals in the field both in the EU and across Lithuania. In Klaipėda, in particular, companies such as Design Centre, Business for Commercial Advertising 'Drukos' Printing House among others work collaborate with the programme team. "The programme is in high demand (on average 1.5 candidates compete for a single placement)."

*1.1.2. Conformity of the programme purpose with institutional, state and international directives*
Satisfactory. The purpose and aims of the programme comply with national and international directives and match those of similar programmes across Europe. They satisfy the requirements

for programmes at masters level. It is clear to the Review Team that much thought has been given to the development of the programme and, in particular, to the writing of the aims and learning outcomes.

### 1.1.3. Relevance of the programme aims

Satisfactory. The programme aims are coherent, relevant and appropriate. They are divided into cognitive, practical and transferable competencies and each area is described in considerable detail. The aim is to produce a well-rounded professional with a highly-developed awareness of the context within which design operates underpinning their subject/discipline knowledge.

## 1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme

### 1.2.1. Comprehensibility and attainability of the learning outcomes

Satisfactory. The learning outcomes for the programme derive from the overall aims and have been given equally lengthy consideration. They are comprehensive and appropriate to masters level study and take account of a student's further development as a professional practitioner and/or academic and educator. Additionally, the SER describes how "to ensure that desired outcomes are reached" and outlines requirements of the lecturers to support this.

### 1.2.2. Consistency of the learning outcomes

Satisfactory. The learning outcomes are coherent and consistent in addition to being appropriate for the programme. The Review team noted that all staff were clearly aware of the contents of the SER and were able to expand on them in discussion. It was also noted that the students had a clear understanding.

The learning outcomes are also broadly comparable with those of masters programmes generally throughout Europe.

### 1.2.3. Transformation of the learning outcomes

Satisfactory. "The programme is designed to broaden its students' vision, to stimulate their creativity, critical and systematic thinking." It was obvious from meeting the students that this process was taking place during the programme. Students are aware of the purpose of studying at Masters level and they are enthusiastic and able to engage at this level.

It is also obvious from the discussions and meetings that the programme team is engaged in a process of self-reflection and continuing improvement of the programme.

## 2. Curriculum design

## 2.1. Programme structure

### 2.1.1. Sufficiency of the study volume

Satisfactory. The range and volume of subjects is broadly in line with European norms however, 58% of the students time allocated to independent learning is somewhat low for masters level studies. The programme team should consider ways to encourage greater independent practice.

### 2.1.2. Consistency of the study subjects

Satisfactory. An appropriate range of subjects is listed for this programme. They are consistent with what is expected at masters level in a design programme. Discussion with the students suggested that foreign languages and presentation skills should be included in the programme.

## 2.2. Programme content

### 2.2.1. Compliance of the contents of the studies with legal acts

Satisfactory. According to the submitted self-assessment material and information obtained during the meetings, the experts understand that Visual Design program is generally consistent with the General Requirements for Master's Study programs. The program consisits of 80 credits, final work is 20 credits, 58 % of study program consists of student independent work. Although it seems that number of subjects per semester (including alternatives or free elective subjects) is more than 5. The new study plan which should be introduced for 1 year students (based on the General Requirements for the Degree conferring Second Cycle study programs) was not presented.

### 2.2.2. Comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content

Satisfactory. The range of subjects making up the programme is comprehensive and rational. They match what is found in masters programmes across Europe. The SER gives full details about the logical sequence and linking of course units and correctly identifies that "as a second cycle programme of university studies, the MA programme is orientated towards professional work of high expertise."

However, it was noticed that some of the modules listed in the self-assessment document do not have descriptors in the appendix, for example: Digital Press; Creating a Website; Conceptualism in Design; Aspects of Communication; and this should be amended.

## 3. Staff

### 3.1. Staff composition and turnover

### 3.1.1. Rationality of the staff composition

Satisfactory. The staff satisfies the legal requirnments that not less than 20% of major study field subjects' volume is taught by teachers holding a Professors academic degree. Most off study subjects teachers have scientific degree or are recognized artists and their research activity complies with subjects they taught.

### 3.1.2. Turnover of teachers

The rate of turnover of lecturers has been very low. As found on the BA programme, where there is a turnover of staff it is due to teachers taking up professional appointments in order to keep up to date with developments in the design sector and the selection of replacement staff "is implemented by open contest."

The Review Team suggests that some of the positive proposals for programme development coming from newer staff members be given consideration.

### 3.2. Staff competence

### 3.2.1. Compliance of staff experience with the study programme

Satisfactory. There is a broad range of experience evident among staff. They are actively engaged in the design profession both at home and abroad and, indeed, are so encouraged by the Academy. For example, in 2008 the lecturers have held eight personal exhibitions including one abroad; they have curated a futrher eight; participated in 17 exhibitions including seven abroad. They have also prepared and carried out 40 architecture, sculpture, advertising and interior design and other major projects; and have received awards in six monument contests.

The Review Team notes also that members of staff are engaged with scholarly activity in addition to their professional work.

3.2.2. *Consistency of teachers' professional development*
Satisfactory. As evident from the previous point the Academy is supportive of lecturers' professional practice and development. The staff engagement with the local design community and participation in applied design projects is invaluable. These projects include students and provide an opportunity to experience professional practice at first hand.

Staff are also "not only active in creating, but also in attending seminars, educational trips, they are constantly exploring innovations, studying experiences and programmes of similar type of academic institutions. All of that is executed in order to raise their qualifications."

The Review Team would encourage staff to work more internationally to ensure the student experience is not solely local.

## *4. Facilities and learning resources*

### 4.1. Facilities

4.1.1. *Sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies*
Unsatisfactory. Neither of the two buildings from which the programme is delivered are fully fit for purpose. As outlined in the SER "both buildings require renovation, ie, isolation of windows and doors, cosmetic reconstruction or walls and ceilings". The Review Team notes that the Academy has identified alternative accommodation and is in the process of planning refurbishment.

4.1.2. *Suitability and sufficiency of equipment for studies*
Unsatisfactory. Similarly, the equipment is not fully fit for purpose. The tables and chairs in the auditoriums are not suitable for design studies, the table-tops are not adjustable and are too small. The furniture is more appropriate for theoretical studies. There is insufficient storage space for students' work. The SER states that according to health and safety regulations the computer classroom "is not suitable for work is there are more than eight people in a group stationed at computers due to monitor radiation and sound levels" despite there being 20 seats. Updating of computer equipment is required for "the harmful effects should decrease. The furniture in computer auditorium is completely unsuitable for computer work. The Review Team recommends that new accommodation plans should include appropriate upgrading of equipment..

4.1.3. *Suitability and accessibility of the resources for practical training*
Satisfactory. "Two auditoriums are equipped for theoretical studies. They have excellent image projection equipment." This equipment is also mobile which allows for flexibility. Students also have access photocopying, traditional photography equipment, some computers, a scanner and sound system. The plan is to upgrade the computer facilities from seven workspaces to ten.

The development of new premises is expected to address the shortcomings..

### 4.2. Learning resources

4.2.1. *Suitability and accessibility of books, textbooks and periodical publications*
Unsatisfactory. There is a small library, which gives the best service it can. The quantity of books is small, with very few recent purchases: "considering the difficult financial state of Klaipėda Design Faculty found itself in, the growth of the library funds was limited." Nevertheless, the quality of what is in the library is good.

The Review Team is concerned by the lack of subscriptions to online/print journals, periodicals or databases and the lack of computers and internet access. This situation is particularly unsatisfactory at masters level study.

4.2.2. *Suitability and accessibility of learning materials*
Satisfactory. The suitability and accessibility of learning materials, other than the library, is not addressed in the SER but the Review Team found this situation to be better. Members of staff are very supportive and helpful, students have access to the school until late in the evening. However, "computers are insufficient and there is no internet accessibility."

## 5. *Study process and student assessment*

### 5.1. Student admission

5.1.1. *Rationality of requirements for admission to the studies*
Satisfactory. There is a thorough admissions procedure that takes account of applicant's performance at BA level and includes an interview that seeks to assess his/her particular ability for masters level study. In common with normal European practice anonymous portfolio review should be implemented rather than personal portfolio presentation. This would support the selection of the best students. And also it would be more appropriate for international students.

5.1.2. *Efficiency of enhancing the motivation of applicants and new students*
Satisfactory. The motivational interview described in the SER establishes a professional dialogue. This ensures appropriate new students are accepted onto the programme and has resulted in the best students from other cities, including Vilnius, being part of the intake. Nevertheless, the Review Team noticed a difficulty in finding information about Klaipėda Faculty on the web.

### 5.2. Study process

5.2.1. *Rationality of the programme schedule*
Satisfactory. The study plan places an appropriate emphasis on the student's independent learning and therefore there is much less class contact hours than in the BA programme. In addition, the students may negotiate their own timetable to some extent. The flexibility to coordinate a timetable that allows students to pursue internships and have part-time work is to be commended. Examinations are distributed equally over the period of the programme.

5.2.2. *Student academic performance*
Satisfactory. Students at this level of study are normally highly motivated and this was found to be be true at Klaipėda also. A small number of students sometimes are forced to interrupt their studies due to personal reasons but over the last four years only two students discontinued due to poor performance. The Review Team found the students to be confident in their ability and clear in their goals.

5.2.3. *Mobility of teachers and students*
Unsatisfactory. There is insufficient staff and student mobility. The Review Team found this to be the case both for the BA programme and for this MA and encourage the school to develop an exchange programme so that international experience can be brought to Klaipėda in addition to staff and students travelling abroad. The programme would be well able to accept students from other universities across Europe and this would also help open the global perspective.

### 5.3. Student support

5.3.1. *Usefulness of academic support*
Satisfactory. The description of the assessment of student achievements, evaluation criteria, the final project, effectiveness of feedback, and the evaluation of independent learning is comprehensively described in the SER. There is clear evidence of excellent communication between staff and students. Students were aware of all issues affecting their studies and the range of opportunities available to them. They can also address teachers for additional information regarding their assessment when there is a need for such clarification.

The requirements for graduation projects are set out by the Senate of the Academy and the supervisor then provides individual tuition.

5.3.2. *Efficiency of social support*
Satisfactory. Due to the small size of the campus and its distance from the main campus in Vilnius there is little formal social support. However, this has resulted in an excellent structure of informal support systems that appear to function very well.

### 5.4. Student achievement assessment

5.4.1. *Suitability of assessment criteria and their publicity*
Satisfactory. Students are given information at the commencement of the semester and must discuss progress with their tutor on four occasions during the programme. The Review Team would like to see a greater written description of the assessment criteria for the record but found that both staff and students were sufficiently familiar with the assessment processes and criteria.

5.4.2. *Feedback efficiency*
Satisfactory. The approach to feedback is effective and it is clear that the student achievement is improved on this basis. Feedback is given at several levels of reviews and discussions including the introduction of assignments, mid-session reviews and the final presentation. It takes the form of collective discussion of work involving all students and individual meetings between the students and lecturers.

5.4.3. *Efficiency of final thesis assessment*
Satisfactory. The requirements for final thesis assessment are appropriate and the procedures are clear and transparent. The requirements are set by the Senate of the Academy and then themes and supervisors are approved by the Faculty Board. The requirements are refined at the end of the year when the Programme Management Committee submits conclusions to the revision work. The final project is thoroughly evaluated by a commission appointed by the Dean of the Faculty and approved by the Rector.

5.4.4. *Functionality of the system for assessment and recognition of achievements acquired in non-formal and self-education*
Satisfactory. The SER states that: "many MA students are improving their knowledge in practice, that is, they research their subject practically while working in companies. Thusly gained knowledge is important to students, it is purposeful to improve their work results." Students are also required to report to their tutor the practical results of their experience on four occasions. Therefore the Review Team concludes that non-formal and self-directed learning is built into the programme structure.

### 5.5. Graduates placement

#### 5.5.1. *Expediency of graduate placement*
Satisfactory. The Faculty maintains contact with graduates inviting them to events and activities. Employment records for 2008 and 2009 show all graduates working in the design profession or education except for one, who is unemployed due to illness. This is a very strong record and deserves commendation.

## *6. Programme management*

### 6.1. Programme administration

#### 6.1.1. *Efficiency of the programme management activities*
Satisfactory. It is clear that the programme is efficiently and effectively managed. The required information is readily available and members of staff were able to comment activities with knowledge. The SER gives full details of the Programme Management Committee, which includes a student and representatives of social partners. This committee is responsible for the quality of the delivery of the curriculum. Over the last seven years it has maintained records on student mobility statistics, student achievement, final projects, graduate placement and contact details.

### 6.2. Internal quality assurance

#### 6.2.1. *Suitability of the programme quality evaluation*
Satisfactory. Although the process requires more formalisation the Review Team was satisfied that staff are engaged in a process of continuous evaluation and improvement of the quality of this programme. This was echoed in the comments of the students, graduates and employers. Currently, an updated approach based on the Tuning project of the EU and the General Directorate for Culutre and Education is being tested.

#### 6.2.2. *Efficiency of the programme quality improvement*
Satisfactory. The SER reports that the results of the students' survey taken in 2007 are used to enhance the quality of delivery and to increase the clarity and transparency of the assessment process. An internal conference of MA students is being organised this year to review the practice of academic work in the school. The results are visible in the stronger motivation of students.

#### 6.2.3. *Efficiency of stakeholders participation.*
Satisfactory. The Review Team was impressed with the level of cooperation with local industry. This provides a very strong industrial and professional context to the student experience in addition to opportunities for summer work experience and employments following graduation. There was significant evidence of this process to be seen throughout the city. Nevertheless, the Review Team received the impression that the school needs to develop a more formal and integrated interaction with local business.

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1.
Full descriptors must be provided for all modules.

3.2.

Criteria describing how each of the individual learning outcomes will be assessed must be written for each module descriptor.

3.3.

Students at Masters level should be engaged in a significant element of independent and self-directed learning. While there is evidence of this in the SER more space could be made on the programme to encourage this and therefore prepare students for lifelong learning.

3.4.

Staff and student mobility is not sufficient. In the current global context professional designers operate across international boundaries therefore their experience must reflect an understanding of European and world issues. This is particularly important at Masters level. Exchange programmes, joint projects, short visits, delivering conference papers and so on should be an integral part of the curriculum.

3.5.

The Review Team was given to understand that a move to new and more suitable premises is being planned. The opportunity should also be taken to ensure contemporary learning materials and equipment are put in place and the required upgrading of the library is completed.

3.6.

Foreign language skills and self-presentation skills for students need to be given more emphasis in the curriculum.

3.7.

The school should develop a formal strategy for interacting with local business and provide a forum to contribute their proposals for cooperation.

3.8.

Clearer information should be provided on the web about the range of programmes and other offerings at the Klaipėda campus.

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Visual Design* (state code – 62402M115, 621W20004) is given **positive** evaluation.

Table. *Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment*.

| No. | Evaluation Area | Evaluation Area in Points* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Programme aims and learning outcomes | 4 |
| 2 | Curriculum design | 3 |
| 3 | Staff | 3 |
| 4 | Material resources | 2 |
| 5 | Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment) | 3 |
| 6 | Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance) | 3 |
| | **Total:** | 18 |

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

2 (poor) - Meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement

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

4 (very good) - The field is exceptionally good