



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos
PROGRAMOS *ARCHITEKTŪRA, vykdomos Kaune*
(612K10002)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF STUDY PROGRAMME
ARCHITECTURE, organized in Kaunas (612K10002)
At Vilnius Academy of Arts

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Architektūra</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612K10002
Studijų sritis	menai
Studijų kryptis	architektūra
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Architektūros bakalauras, architektas
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	02/08/2001, No. 1187

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Architecture</i>
State code	612K10002
Study area	arts
Study field	architecture
Kind of the study programme	university studies
Cycle of studies	first
Study mode (length in years)	full time (4)
Scope of the study programme in credits	240
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Architecture, Architect
Date of registration of the study programme	02/08/2001, No. 1187

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I. INTRODUCTION

The expert team Members visited the Vilnius Academy of Arts Kaunas Faculty on the 21 of May 2013. During the visit met with the administration, the committee that prepared the self evaluation report, teaching staff and visited all the facilities and the exhibition of the student projects, taking particular notice of the more recent work. In addition the Team met with representatives of the students, as well as a number of alumni, employers and social partners.

The Team was very pleased to observe the significant improvements of the facilities and furniture and equipment of the main building used by the Architecture Department.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. *Programme aims and learning outcomes*

It seems that the main aim of the programme is to educate people who will enter the profession of Architects, as it is written in p.14 of the self-evaluation report “The aim of the bachelor study programme of architectur ...[is] to successfully finish the studies and **acquire the qualification degree in architecture and the professional qualifications of architect**“. This places an obligation to provide a balanced education through training in a number of subjects essential to be able to design and supervise the construction of a building. Undoubtedly must also obtain a broader education through the history of buildings and the various phases of civilization and influences shaping and dealing with the built environment.

Regarding the focus of the programme there are various references such in the Self-evaluation Report, that stress the importance of humanities, art and the role of the Kaunas Faculty (KF) page 12, paragraph 5 “...one of the **most significant missions of the KF is maintain and foster the art level of the region**another equally important aim is raise, i.e. the school of architecture has to **possess an individual face** recognized in the whole of Lithuania.“ The notions **artistic** and **creativity** seem to be not only a proccupation in the report but is also reflected in the structure of the curriculum.

There are programmes offered for example in the United States that one can obtain a broader education in architecture leading to a Bachelors of Arts (BA) that does not lead to a professional degree (B Arch.), but gaining a broader education about architecture so that they may become historians or critics of architecture. If someone with such a degree wants to become a professional architect then has to continue studying 3,5 more years in order to supplement their education. It seems that Academy is trying to do both in one programme in four years.

The aims of the program as stated in the report should state more clearly that the program aims to train professional architects. The statement in paragraph 2.1 of the report page 11 it mentions “**the aim of the programme is to prepare highly-qualified specialists** who are able to work professionally **in the fields of building architecture, interior architecture and small architecture**” (the last “small architecture” is not clear it maybe it is a problem of the translation into English). All the previous listed areas are part of the general knowledge of an Architect! The reference “highly – qualified specialist” is also misleading, as the Bachelors in Architecture should provide a basic rounded knowledge in Architecture, and not of a specialist.

The Team Members appreciate the conscientious efforts made by the Department to prepare the Report and to describe in greater detail the specific learning outcomes (pages 17-19) and the related courses (paragraphs 2.2.1-2-3, however it would have been more efficient and less confusing for the reader, and potentially to students as well if next to each course were listed the **key learning outcomes** at the completion of each course, that is the main areas of knowledge acquired in order to design buildings and supervise the construction of buildings i.e. structural

systems, building materials, construction methods, environmental factors, health, physiological requirements and sociological needs of humans etc etc.

The name of the program “architecture” is correct while the program aims and learning outcomes are not consistent with the curriculum contents of generally accepted international best practices , as this is analysed further with the comments regarding the curriculum .

1.5.The aims of a programme training professional architects are the same anywhere , the method may vary, as is indicated in the previous paragraph 1.1.

2. Curriculum design

The programme meet state formal requirements for the first cycle university type of studies in Lithuania. The total number of credits is 240. The number of subjects taught per semester does not exceed 7. General university subjects consist of 15 credits, study filed subjects – 174, elective courses – 12, practice is given 15 credits, final work – 18.

The curriculum deviates from prevailing international practices, in the following areas:

- Art course are almost as many as the Architecture courses.
- More specifically Visual Art is taught 6 semesters, total 33 credits, or a total of 466 semesters Practice hours while.
 - Architectural Design is taught 7 semesters plus one for the Bachelors degree project, total 47 credits or a total of 424 semesters Practice hours.
 - History of Architecture is 1 semester, and History of Architecture and Art are 3 more semesters, while there are 3 more courses of History of Art, with additional ones listed under specialty items category.
 - Construction are 4 semesters, two of which combined with Computer-Aided design.
 - Building Technology are 4 semesters, if these are to teach structures, then are missing the following courses: (a)Building Materials and Specification, (b)Mechanical installations, (c) Electrical installations, and (d) Lighting.

The above imbalances of the curriculum is to the detriment of technology subjects which are more and more becoming essential due to safety , cost , energy conservation and environmental factors.

The architecture design exercises should be more each semester so that the students are exposed to a variety of typological problems i.e. residential, offices, commercial, schools, medical etc. as well as to a variety of scales from small buildings , to mixed uses buildings, and to an urban design scale, as well as designing details of an interior problem. The 7 design projects are not enough to cover the range and scale of problems that they should be exposed.

Elective courses should be grouped in general categories supportive or enhancing the core courses.

English as a foreign language, or in fact any other foreign language must be taught more vigorously learning to handle the business language as well as the professional vocabulary.

In conclusion the curriculum reflects the bias to art training as opposed to architectural design.

Art is free of constraints of reality, while Architecture is accountable to realities, from the safety of a structure, the cost of construction, the maintenance, the response to the health

conditions and needs of the users, their emotional appreciation of the quality of the spaces and the response to the natural and cultural environment.

Creativity that is mentioned in the report can not be taught, it can be cultivated. Each individual has different abilities, those who are more imaginative will develop more and those that are less should learn what they should not do.

The design training of the students is based on a trial and error process through numerous design exercises while they should obtain as well a good technical background. There is no doubt that humanities courses are essential as they cultivate the personality, but within a reasonable measure as also technical subjects are essential for the architectural profession.

3. Teaching staff

The teaching staff is adequate for the Bachelors level programme, the staff fully meet legal formal act requirements, 4 professors, 17 associate professors, 3 doctors of sciences and 10 lecturers teach at the programme. 88 percent of the study field subjects are taught by scientists or recognized artists.

Neither the Administration or the faculty complained about the teaching staff numbers, while there was mention that there are no funds regarding professional development of the teaching staff.

Most of the teaching staff are practicing architects and the Team understands they are well known professionals, members of professional associations. Their practical experience related to the taught subjects.

Efforts must be made to develop some faculty exchange ties with universities in other countries as well as promoting student exchanges.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The university has dramatically improved the main building of the Architecture Department and is anticipating soon to begin building construction work for housing the library.

New library acquisitions deal mostly with basic information on buildings rather than scholarly publications.

It is advisable and more efficient to team with the libraries of the Kaunas Technical University and the other universities for electronic magazines.

Previous expert team, which evaluated the programme in 2010 recommended to seek more student practice places with architects, who are not teaching at the academy. Self evaluation report, 2.4.16 p. explains that „The supervisor of practice of the students of the third year is a practicing teacher. He organises the process and evaluates the results; therefore, during practice students have a possibility to communicate professionally with other architects of the studio, who do not work in the Department of Architecture of Kaunas Faculty.” Expert team recommends continue seeking opportunities for students to give external experience, in various forms of education.

5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The Team met with a group of students, who were invited to meet with the experts.

The students are admitted through a national system, the requirements for architecture studies are set by the Academy, following the general provisions of Ministry of Education and Science. Entrance exam allows to admit students who are more motivated and are better prepared for future profession. Meeting with prospective students and additional classes held for those interested in studies, help to maintain a stable number of students.

The students were aware of the questionnaires and the process, which is a positive feature. The evaluation forms are issued once a year.

Students appear not to be using the library, which is something that they should be encouraged to do.

Students participate in projects and events outside the academy, however, mobility of students, going for practice or exchange semester abroad, allocating Erasmus positions, must be increased.

The assessment system is clear, introduced to the students.

Opportunities for professional practice by the students must be increased. This remark was made in the previous expert team report as well.

6. Programme management

The internal evaluation process is based on an annual report by the „Methodic Commission“ to the „Faculty Assembly“. Also internal evaluation of the „courses“ by the students were distributed only once a year.

Internal evaluation report was made available to the students after its completion.

The evaluation process must encourage the participation of all interested parties. It should be used each year as a process for making progress, rather than preparing a report when it is time to have an external evaluation.

Efforts must be made to attract more applications to allow more choices in selecting future Students.

The Department is functioning more evenly than previous evaluations and it appears it enjoys the support of the central administration, several improvements of the facilities visible.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. The main problem that holds the Department back from developing and strengthening the curriculum is the concern of the “identity” of the programme and the notion of being a Department within an “Academy of Art”. The faculty should accept the fact that it is educating Architects AND NOT exclusively Fine Art majors. That does not mean that the students must not have aesthetic sensitivities or not being creative. Therefore **appropriate adjustments must be made in the curriculum towards this end.**

3.2. The resolution of the above mentioned problem of the identity concept would also reflect in more focused aims and the clarification and the learning outcomes. More specific and clearer statements would be easier for the teaching faculty to apply and for the students to learn

3.4. Efforts must be made to continue with the improvements of the facilities and particularly with the library resources.

3.5. Efforts must be made to create possibilities for faculty and student exchanges with universities abroad.

IV. SUMMARY

The Department is taking time to adjust to the new role of an Academy of Art in the 21st Century from the dominance of fine arts to the development of applied arts and architecture. The synergy of related subject areas, with distinct role each, is the strength of a "thematic" university such as an Academy of Art. Changing perceptions of people takes time and the sooner a problem is recognized the easier will be the transition. Getting to study next to each others Fine Arts students and Applied arts and Architecture students they don't need all to go through the same path but by working parallel with each other they benefit by observing/ learning what each other are doing. When the above distinctions are accepted then the clarity of the aims of the Architecture programme and the curriculum will be easier and accordingly improved.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Architecture, organized in Kaunas* (state code – 612K10002) of Vilnius Academy of Arts is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	2
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	15

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

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

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

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

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