STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VILNIAUS DAILĖS AKADEMIJOS
TAPYBOS PROGRAMOS (612W10009)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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EVALUATION REPORT
of *PAINTING* (612W10009)
STUDY PROGRAMME

at VILNIUS ART ACADEMY

Grupės vadovas:
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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
2011

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	*Tapyba*
Valstybiniai kodai	612W10009
Studijų sritis	meno studijos
Studijų kryptis	dailė
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais[1]	160
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	dailės bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19

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

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INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	*Painting*
State code	612W10009
Study area	Arts
Study field	Fine Arts
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Level of studies	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (4)
Scope of the study programme in national credits[1]	160
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Fine Arts
Date of registration of the study programme	19 May 1997 No. 565

[1] – one credit is equal to 40 hours of student work

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I. INTRODUCTION

On Monday 21st March 2011 - following analysis of the programme's Self Evaluation Report (SER), the previous Accreditation Reports of 2008 and the preparation of Preliminary Reports - the Accreditation Team (Professor John Butler, Professor George Houliaras, Atis Kampars, Krzysztof Stanislawski, Kirke Kangro and Saulius Valius) visited Vilnius Academy of Arts: BA Painting.

The visit to the University and Faculty involved meetings with the following groups:

1.   The Senior Management (Administrative Staff)
2.   The SER preparatory team
3.   The Teaching team
4.   The Students
5.   The Employers and Graduates.

Site visits to the physical resources (studios, workshops, library, galleries etc.) were conducted during the course of the day. The Accreditation Team also had the opportunity to view studio work and theses produced by the students to assess the level and quality of the work.

All the people involved in the accreditation process were very positive, co-operative and engaged fully in the process and the team was fully supported by a competent translator for all our sessions. The Accreditation Team were accorded a professional and very hospitable welcome. The team wished to encourage an open, constructively critical discussion with all concerned, and the level of involvement by those they encountered during the visit greatly enhanced the efficiency of the work that was carried out.

Three members of the team were involved in the previous accreditation exercise in 2008 and were pleased to see that the general state of affairs in Lithuanian higher art education has improved considerably.

The Accreditation Team would like to extend its appreciation and warm thanks to everyone involved in organising the event and those participating in the meetings.

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

"The exceptionality of the demand for the programme is based on the linkage between the mastering of the classical principles of painting and the new trends of artistic images' creation". (SER p7)

As the SER states the popularity of studying painting in Vilnius is determined by a number of factors including: located in the capital with the concentration of the country's artistic life being in Vilnius; access to the painting heritage (the Museum of

Lithuanian Fine Arts and the National Gallery); opportunities to work with private galleries and closer ties with foreign schools of art. Additionally, in recent years the studies of painting in Vilnius have been supplemented by interdisciplinary subjects, in which students take great interest and which broaden painters' creative practice.

The Painting Department of the Vilnius Academy of Art has a long and esteemed history dating back to 1797, when the Department of Drawing and Painting was established in the Vilnius University. The Painting Department is considered as one of the most important divisions of the Academy and is committed to fostering visual culture in Lithuania.

The accreditation team commends the programme for developing a culture of change involving both teachers and students, but recommends the programme team rethink what is the vision, the distinctiveness of this programme at a strategic level. The SER clearly expresses the reasons for its popularity and its esteemed history, but it doesn't really express what is unique about it and what makes it different to all the other BA Painting courses. The students were better able to describe this distinctiveness!

The demand for the programme is fairly healthy with the number of applicants steadily increasing each year and approximately between 2 and 3 applicants for every place, which should ensure the quality of enrolment.

1.1.2. Conformity of the programme purpose with institutional, state and international directives

The Study Programme for Bachelor of Painting has been drawn up in accordance with the Republic of Lithuania Law on Science and Studies (Official Gazette, 30-04-2009 No. XI-242), the Procedure for External Assessment and Accrediting of Study Programmes (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 96-4083), the Methodological Guidance on the Drawing up of Descriptions of Study Programmes and on Determining Their Compliance with the General and Special Requirements Approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette, 2010, No. 27-1286), the Description of and the Methodological Guidance on Assessment of Current Study Programmes (approved by order of the Director of CAQS No. 1-94 of 30-10-2009), the Study Regulations of the Vilnius Academy of Art (11-01-2006), order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania "Concerning approval of the General Requirements for the First Degree and Integrated Study Programmes" (Official Gazette, 17-04-2010 No. 44 -2139), and decrees issued by the Senate and Rector of the Academy. The first-degree study programme is related to the missions and objectives of the Academy as set out in the VAA Statutes, which has been approved by the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette, 29-07-2004, No. 117-4377"). (SER pp6&7)

1.1.3. Relevance of the programme aims

The programme aims include:
* to train specialists with professional skills of painting and individual artistic outlook;
* to enable graduates to independently manage and apply different means of visual expression and their technical and creative opportunities;

- to be erudite in the area of arts and the humanities, be able to create independently, be aware of the modern art issues, and have personal experience in organising exhibitions and presenting their works to the public;
- to instil a strong inner motivation and confidence;
- to enable a comprehensive presentation of the opportunities of expression provided by the means of painting and their specificity in the modern art context and at teaching how to manage and creatively apply these means;
- to realise artistic ideas through the process of artistic creation to the final result – to create a work of art;
- to ensure painting remains one of the most active and dynamic practices of modern art that manifests itself in different forms, from material to conceptual, while expression through colour remains a unique way of self-expression;
- to increase the employability of its students whether in the professional field, education or other cognate professions;
- to gain experience in public relations and presenting themselves to the public and, at the same time, in competing in the art market;
- to enable graduates to start independent creative work.

This is a comprehensive set of clear aims, which are appropriate to this level of study and designates the main focus of the undergraduate programme: to provide fundamental skills of the core specialty, public activities as well as the erudition in area of arts and humanities. The SER (page 8) also indicates Masters' study as a logical continuation of the BA programme.

The Programme complies with the general principles of the Bologna Declaration (1999) in terms of the credit system, social aspect, mobility, skills improvement, European cooperation etc. (SER p8)

1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme

1.2.1. Comprehensibility and attainability of the learning outcomes

"The Programme also complies with the main criteria laid down in the Tuning Document (2006) of Paradox (The Fine Art European Forum) intended for the studies of visual arts at higher educational establishments". (SER p8)

The team found that the principles of learning outcomes and competences according to the Bologna directives have been elaborated and described on a good level. The general principles and compliancy of the programme content and study volume are introduced however more rigorous implementation of Learning outcome's to study courses is required. The accreditation team recommend the programme staff present the LOs and the Assessment Grading Criteria similar to their colleagues at Kaunas BA Painting as these are very transparent and accessible.

It is very positive that the students were fully aware of learning outcomes and understood their function, how they were developed through the course and their direct relationship to the assessment criteria.

1.2.2. Consistency of the learning outcomes

There is a strong correlation between the programme's aims and the learning outcomes and the student have the appropriate practical, analytical, critical and transferable competences for this level of study in Fine Art. The SER describes the development of the student's learning through the four years clearly.

The LOs are achievable with this programme structure. The majority of the programme and quality of its objectives are of a good level to satisfy requirements of a BA level programme.

The study content in each year consists of the basic subjects of painting, creative project, inter-disciplinary expression and drawing, which complement each other. Both formal and creative tasks become gradually more complex during the four years of the Bachelor's Studies. (SER p10)

Following the 2008 review the programme team responded to the experts recommendations and restructured the course to give students more choice and take greater responsibility for their learning. The programme team should be congratulated for the major changes it has introduced and shows how self-evaluation can lead to enhancement of the programmes.

The team recommends the programme staff should increase the critical theory (including contemporary philosophy) component of the programme. This would not only support better understanding of contemporary practice by students but would also help develop there 'low level of literacy' (SER p14).

The LOs are mapped through the courses to ensure a development to the students learning where the intellectual and practical skills and competences come together to establish a holistic learning.

1.2.3. Transformation of the learning outcomes

There is clear evidence of curriculum development taking place since the review in 2008 and a focussing on developing broader more contemporary competences appropriate for the market place and the professional world.

2. Curriculum design

2.1. Programme structure

2.1.1. Sufficiency of the study volume

The volume of the programme is sufficient for undergraduate studies in fine art (160 credits) and the character of its objectives correlate with the content. The programme is compliant with the laws and acts - Republic of Lithuania Law on Education and Science (Official Gazette, 2009 05 12, nr. 54-2140) - orders of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania "Concerning approval of the General Requirements for the First Degree and Integrated Study Programmes" and "Concerning the general requirements for study programmes" (Official Gazette, 2 August 2005, No. 93-3461) - The Study Regulations of the Academy (2006).

The programme structure and timetable develops the range of skills and competences in a fluid a developmental manner that is appropriate to fine art study. The specialist practical and theoretical skills and knowledge are developed in parallel with the broader educational professional skills.

2.1.2. Consistency of the study subjects

The programme content has recently undergone major changes to facilitate more diversity of contemporary practice. The delivery of courses is carefully planned to develop a strong skill base at the start of the programme and supports individual directions as student's progress through their studies. The restructuring of the programme's structure is relevant for the painting studies and helps address the problems created by the new admission regulations in Lithuania – the necessity for foundation studies is determined by the comparatively lower preparatory level of accepted students and *"…quite low literacy levels of the candidates ... not sufficient knowledge of the history of both Lithuanian and foreign art history*" (SER page 12).

2.2. Programme content

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

The Study Programme for Bachelor of Painting meets the requirements of the Description of and the Methodological Guidance on Assessment of Current Study Programmes (approved by order of the Director of CAQS No. 1-94 of 30-10-2009), the Study Regulations of the Vilnius Academy of Art (11-01-2006), order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania "Concerning approval of the General Requirements for the First Degree and Integrated Study Programmes" (Official Gazette, 17-04-2010 No. 44 -2139)

Sections of the Programme	Credits
General subjects of the university level studies	14
Compulsory general subjects of the study field	130
Optional subjects of the study field	16
Total scope of the Programme	**160**
Preparation of final thesis and its defence	12

2.2.2. Comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content

The accreditation team perceived major changes in the curriculum taking place over the past three years, engaging with the 2008 review recommendations:
- greater flexibility with the study programme
- support for interdisciplinary practice
- more emphasis on the main study
- closer integration of theory and practice resulting in a more holistic learning
- greater choice of courses

The programme content is now much better balanced and the programme staff have addressed the major concerns of the review panel of 2008.

Criticism on the lack of integration of these elements and a more holistic consideration of the curriculum and greater flexibility for more interdisciplinary

practices was made at the last review in 2008. The programme should be congratulated that post the 2008 review considerable curriculum development has taken place addressing issues raised and in 2009/2010 BA Painting was updated by introducing a course on *Inter-disciplinary Expression* with a well-known Lithuanian graphic artist E. Vertelkaitė invited to deliver it. This is aimed at expanding the content of the basic painting subjects. Also The *Creative Project* subject taught in Year 1 was updated replacing the narrower subject of *Composition* - focusing on the student's individual artistic motivation. Now the entire study of painting in Year 1 is being directed towards more conceptual understanding of painting instead of a narrower perception of the plastic. This change is also related to the specificity of the presentation of modern art, which requires justification of the painting expression (formulation of a concept, presentation, holding of an exhibition).

It is a good learning practice for students to experience course study visits – in 2009/2010 there were 3 international visits (SER page 9) to see important exhibitions in the region – Poland and Estonia.

Students are taught by a range of staff offering a different voices and practices in the painting studios. They also have the oportunity to work in photography and video as optional subjects and it is permitted to present artefacts in these media as final works – broadening the student's visual vocabulary for professional exhibitions and increasing employability oportunities.

3. Staff

3.1. Staff composition and turnover

3.1.1. Rationality of the staff composition

Currently the Department has eight teachers of painting specialist subjects: 1 professor, 4 associated professors, 2 lecturers - doctoral students and 1 lecturer. Teachers are selected for the Department through competition according to the Regulations for Pedagogue Certification and Competitions of the Vilnius Academy of Art. The team of pedagogues is formed taking account of pedagogical, creative and personal advantages, professional skills, and role in art life of Lithuania.

Teachers from the Departments of: Drawing; Monument Management; Art History and Theory and the Language Teaching Centre also teach into the Department of Painting.

The Department has minimal technical staff: two secretaries (0.5 staff each) and a technical assistant, whose main task is to teach the students to prime the canvas and to prepare the means necessary for entrance examinations (paper, primed cardboards, drawing boards etc.)

Until 2009 the Department had a methodology assistant who was in charge for the materials necessary for teaching, but this post was terminated - this is considered to be a big loss to the programme.

The students are very positive about the teaching staff and the team found a majority of very good teachers who are also good artists, very active in art projects.

The team recommends the programme and the Academy should try to find ways to improve the gender balance of the staff to better reflect the student body.

The team would also recommend the programme to engage more national and international visiting teachers where possible. This would be more likely if the Academy's policy towards inviting external teachers for short specialist courses should be more flexible: currently it is only possible for the invitation of foreign teachers to be financed from the Rector's Fund, but not Lithuanian artist/teachers.

3.1.2. Turnover of teachers

Two Professors of painting have recently retired (2007-09). The loss of the two Professors had 'little direct effect' on the programme; in fact it has resulted in the reorganisation of the programme with new subjects introduced and the direction of the study emphasis moved towards openness to artistic innovations.

The Department has a strategy to bring in new young teachers with new innovative teaching methods, which is to be supported.

3.2. Staff competence

3.2.1. Compliance of staff experience with the study programme

The Department is seeking to link the introduction of younger teachers with the achievement of the Department's objectives and targets so that the new teachers contribute to the content of the Programme, bring new teaching methods and other innovations, and make a substantial contribution to the improvement of speciality skills of the Bachelors of Painting. Therefore there is a balance between the experience of staff with many years of service and the new teachers in the Department.

The Department should be congratulated in seeking to focus on contemporary painting practice, *'bring new teaching methods and other innovations'* with the replacement of retired staff with younger artists.

The Academy may need to think how it can support its teaching staff in developing their ability to speak a foreign language as this appears to be the biggest obstacle in their participating in staff mobility, limiting their development and impacting on the programme.

The Head of the Painting Department is an internationally recognised artist with the experience and expertise to lead this programme.

3.2.2. Consistency of teachers' professional development

Teachers working with the Department are artists actively participating in the art life both in Lithuania and abroad, curators of exhibitions, members of different commissions of art experts, therefore, their knowledge and experience have direct influence over the quality of implementation of the Programme.

The Painting staff have a strong research profile of international and national exhibitions, curatorial projects, national awards, published papers and conference

scientific presentations; as well as holding prominent professional and civic positions and membership.

Improvement of professional activities is regulated by certification of teachers performed on a regular basis, assessments at the Centre for Assessment of Quality of Studies, and financial incentives for the results of artistic and research activities. At the end of the academic year, the teachers write reports on artistic and research activities for the year; the reports are published in the Rector's reports and considered at meetings of the Department. As contributions differ from teacher to teacher, the meeting of the Department decides on the allocation of funds received for the teachers' activities.

The impetus for staff development lies largely with the member of staff, but the Academy should introduce a formal policy and strategy to support all staff in developing new skills to increase their knowledge and understanding of the latest developments learning, teaching and assessment.

4. Facilities and learning resources

4.1. Facilities

4.1.1. Sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies

10 auditoria (studios) with the total area of approx. 480 s. m. are used for the Studies of Bachelor of Painting. This means approx. 7 sq. m. of study area per Bachelor student. In recent years, the Department received two additional studios. Larger premises are allotted to Year I and II students as their numbers are the largest. Each teacher working with Year III and IV students has his own studio.

This allocation is comparable with many good high-level international institutions. The new 'Titanic' building is a new valuable asset to the programme providing new, well equipped workshops and an excellent gallery space to present student work

"The hygienic condition of the Department's premises is mediocre as they are in the Academy's Old Building, which has not been repaired for several decades already ……heating equipment is in a very poor state, which is particularly apparent in the winter season". (SER p18) As this is a Health and Safety issue this must be resolved by the institution as soon as possible.

4.1.2. Suitability and sufficiency of equipment for studies

The programme has access to very good printmaking facilities (etching and silkscreen), as well as access to scanners, printers and cameras for still and video production.

4.1.3. Suitability and accessibility of the resources for practical training

The resources for practical training are appropriate and very accessible for students studying on this programme.

4.2. Learning resources

4.2.1. Suitability and accessibility of books, textbooks and periodical publications

Students have access to two very good libraries, the content of which are available and accessible on-line.

The 'modern' library including a comprehensive data-base *(over 23,000 entries of bibliographic publications and over 39,000 items of publications* SAR pp18&19*) and* well stocked with 4128 titles on Painting. In addition the library has 2000 titles that have not been included in the electronic catalogue. Since 2001, an electronic catalogue of the library has been available (http://vda.library.lt) and additionally, a national virtual library www.library.lt can be used as a search tool. There is also a substantial collection of contemporary art magazines with back copies. As a member of the Lithuanian Association of Academic Libraries, the Academy's library subscribes to the following database: EBSCO Publishing http://search.epnet.com/ (eIFL.net database package of 10 databases); Oxford Art Online http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/. The library also stores exhibition catalogues, methodological materials prepared and published by its teachers and DVD on famous artists. There is a large archive of over 3,000 paintings by past students.

The team think this is a good resource with the appropriate texts and on-line packages.

4.2.2. Suitability and accessibility of learning materials

The programme now has access to central computing services, which train students on appropriate software (Photoshop etc.) They also have 5 'open access computers for word-processing and internet searches.

5. Study process and student assessment

5.1. Student admission

5.1.1. Rationality of requirements for admission to the studies

The accreditation team finds the recently adopted national admission system (according to the Lithuanian Law on Higher Education and Research [Official Gazette Valstybės žinios No.54-2140, 2009]) potentially damaging to the quality and standards of higher arts education in Lithuania. Removing the teaching staff's ability to select and choose their students based not just their past academic record but also their creative attributes, skills and their passion for the subject - realised through the portfolio and at interview - greatly reduces their ability to sustain the high standards. This process also challenges the principles of the Bologna process - of equal opportunity, transparency and accessibility for all potential applicants - and is greatly undermining the expertise of its Professors and artists.

However as it is stated in the self-evaluation report the Department still can provide necessary competences at the undergraduate level but there is a definite risk of losing out on mostly talented applicants because of the non-transparent and indiscriminate character of the admission process.

Year	Admitted	Interrupted	Terminated	Graduated

		studies	studies	
2006/2007	17			19
2007/2008	14	1	1	13
2008/2009	18	1		19
2009/2010	20	1	1	15
2010/2011	19	1		-

Student Admission & Achievement

5.1.2. Efficiency of enhancing the motivation of applicants and new students

Each spring Open Days of the Academy are held, during which those interested in the studies of painting are acquainted with the nature of studies and admission requirements and works (paintings and drawings) of students admitted in recent years are shown. Potential students are shown the studios and told about the conditions of studying and measures organised (exhibitions, visits). The Department organises paid weekend courses on painting and provides other consultations for potential students.

A good induction programme provides students with knowledge of the study programme (core & options) and what choices are available, examination procedures (retaking failed exams etc.), what resources are available (library, computing, workshops etc.) and student exchanges etc.

5.2. Study process

5.2.1. Rationality of the programme schedule

The programme schedule is rational and balanced and gives good opportunity for the students to realise their personal study plans. The general direction of the painting specialty has been emphasised by the reorganisation of the content – approximately 80% of subjects have compulsory content related to the field of studies (SER page 11). Teaching attitudes in the Painting Department show significant levels of artistic tolerance – although the programme stresses traditional teaching methods of plastic expression; study projects including bachelor's graduation work in other media (like photography, video or installations) are supported and accepted.

The assessment exam sessions take place over a three-week period and students have a clear understanding of the timetable and what is required for them.

The team think that students should be introduced to international contemporary theoretical discourse early in their programme.

There is a very high level of engagement with the professional field (external galleries, museums and professional bodies) for both staff and students, which is to be supported.

5.2.2. Student academic performance

The programme has consistently achieved good assessment results and the quality of work presented to the team was of a good to very good standard demonstrating a breadth of artistic practice utilising a range of artistic media.

The grades presented in the SER show student achievement over a 5-year period and demonstrates a consistency of achievement (average 8 point score) and positively shows a slight improvement as students' progress through their study.

The student work is built upon good traditional painting skills and is generally strong in content and social context.

The accreditation team observed student work where the standard was largely in the good to very good range.

5.2.3. Mobility of teachers and students

Year	Number of teachers	% of all permanent teaching staff of the Department	Institution and country
2007/2008	1	10% (of 10)	Latvian Academy of Art
2008/2009	2	25% (of 8)	Estonian Academy of Art; Umea Academy of Fine Arts, Sweden; Bergen National Academy of the Arts
2009/1010	2	25% (of 8)	The Finnish Academy of Fine Arts; Estonian Academy of Art

<u>Mobility of staff</u>

As the programme team acknowledges, mobility of teachers is currently is one of the weakest points in the pedagogical work of the Department. Half of the teachers cannot travel abroad for exchange at other schools or for participation in conferences etc. because they do not speak foreign languages, English in particular.

The students don't appear to have the same problem as shown by the number of students studying at foreign art schools under international exchange programmes (such as Erasmus and Nordplus) as well as in comparison with the achievements of foreign students (from Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden) who studied at the Painting Department in Vilnius".

The team support this action and hope the programme can increase the number of students participating in the future.

Academic year	Students left abroad		Institution and country
	Number	% of total number in the Programme	

2007/2008	3	5 % (of 61 students)	Bologna Academy of Art (Italy); Grenoble Academy of Art (France) – ERASMUS
2008/2009	6	10 % (of 65 students)	Willem de Kooning Academy of Art (the Netherlands); Castilla - La Mancha University (Spain); Miguel Hernandes University (Spain); Stuttgart Academy of Art (Germany) - ERASMUS
2009/2010	6	9 % (of 66 students)	Utrecht School of Arts (the Netherlands); Willem de Kooning Academy of Art (the Netherlands); Grenoble Academy of Art (France); Vienna University of Applied Art (Austria) – ERASMUS; Helsinki Academy of Art (Finland); Umea Academy of Art (Sweden) – NORDPLUS

Student mobility

5.3. Student support

5.3.1. Usefulness of academic support

The programme claims studies at the Academy's Department of Painting are based on intensive individual work and closer communication with teachers, which the students agree with and support.

The accreditation team fully support the programme teaching staff's teaching approach – *"while the process of studio work is focussed on the most talented students, the aim is to ensure that the less talented ones can work in this environment learning from the quality of work of the more talented ones".*-and discussions with the teachers has created an atmosphere of mutual understanding. It is good practice to see this form of support.

Basic information on the Study Programme for the Department of Painting – specialisations; objectives of the studies; evaluation of achievements study subjects; schedules; mobility opportunities etc. can be found in the Academy's website (www.vda.lt); the Study Programme can be found in the section "Study Programmes" of the website". Students say the web-site is very informative about their programme and has career information useful for life after the academy.

Career advice and guidance is primarily provided by the academic teachers, but there is promotion of peer support and sharing of experiences.

Student are advised and supported in repeating courses and retaking exams within the time limit stated in the Study Regulations (within two weeks from the start of the term).

5.3.2. Efficiency of social support

It is good that the Study Programme provides study opportunities for disabled persons. The Department has a history of supporting deaf-mute students who take part in the presentations and evaluation of works together with other students. They are supported through the assistance of an interpreter and teachers explain the tasks to them in writing or graphically. There have been cases when individual

students having health disorders were granted separate premises without chemicals.

Social grants based on the assessment of income and one-off grants are provided in individual cases. The grant application is evaluated by the Department, which subsequently makes a proposal to the Rector. 25 students (39%) received grants in the autumn of 2010.

There are a number of grants and awards given to good/outstanding students.

The Academy offers opportunities for sport and amateur art activities.

Approximately 25% of the painting students live in the student hostel provided by the Social Care Division.

5.4. Student achievement assessment

5.4.1. Suitability of assessment criteria and their publicity

Prior to commencing their studies all students are informed about what study results are going to be attained, what will be the focus of this stage of studies, which criteria will be applied to evaluate performance etc.

Evaluation of students' achievements takes place at the end of each term with presentations of students' works - two presentations are held in every academic year. At these sessions the level of quality achieved, student's preparedness and motivation, participation in discussing the works, independence of work and strengths and weaknesses are discussed.

An interim presentation is also held during the term where teachers and students discuss the study process, achievements, prospects and if there are any issues. Interim presentations are focussed on the direction of the tasks' execution process and on the discussion of options and means of execution and further prospects of the student's skills development.

The programme assessment criteria are presented as follows:
Effectiveness of evaluation of final works and requirements set for final works. The final works of the Study Programme for Bachelor of Painting are evaluated based on the following criteria:
(a) mastering of special skills and execution of the work in a way which is imposing artistically;
(b) level of creative thinking and artistic coherence of the work (idea – means of expression – work of art);
(c) quality of visual result of realisation of an idea.
Other requirements include:
the ability to present one's works in a space (exposition),
appropriateness of techniques used,
ability to present the concept of a work of art,
the execution process and the set objectives in a justified way,
ability to answer the questions asked by the evaluation commission".
(SER p27)

In all sections of the SER there is little reference to the Criteria of Assessment for each course and how they map to the *Paradox* Learning Outcomes (the evaluation of final works is explained above). How do the teachers know that the students have achieved all the learning outcomes?

The team is concerned by what criteria can the Faculty Commission or Faculty Council 'correct the evaluation score'?

5.4.2. Feedback efficiency

Feedback takes place throughout the teaching process including interim and final presentations and summer practice periods. Students present their creative ideas and explain their motivation and means of realisation of the idea. Students are encouraged to learn to justify and defend their creative ideas. Teachers and students as well as other persons invited to discussions express their comments; the aim is to hold a creative discussion involving diverse views so that an evaluation does not become mere criticism. The student receives justified overall opinion on his/her work and potential development prospects and hears comparisons and references to phenomena of art life.

The team finds this a thorough process but is concerned how external commission members are prepared for assessment, how aware of the assessment criteria are they?

5.4.3. Efficiency of final thesis assessment

The Final Work of Bachelor Studies is evaluated by the Faculty Commission approved by the Rector; the decision by this Commission is final.

The programme states *"The scores of evaluation of final works in 2009 and 2010 show quite different learning results as the range of evaluation varies from 5 to 10. In the opinion of the Department, in addition to demonstrating varying levels of students' abilities, this also shows that the achievements are not equalised and the evaluations objectively reflect the actual level achieved".* (SAR p28)

The team is not trying to challenge the commission but this could also be interpreted as a lack of consistency in the application of criteria and/or subjectivity of the panel; that is why the team consistently refer to the need for transparent criteria related to the learning outcomes.

5.4.4. Functionality of the system for assessment and recognition of achievements acquired in non-formal and self-education

The Department supports the students' initiatives for acquiring knowledge and experience in informal ways, using "non-Academy" means, i.e. e. visiting exhibitions and painters' studios, screenings of educational films at the National Gallery, visits to museums abroad, visits to presentations of students' works at the Kaunas Faculty, exhibitions of students' works etc".... Self-study is considered to be one of the indicators of motivation and learning efforts of a student. This activity is usually discussed during presentations of works, when the evaluation of works involves the knowledge gained by the student through taking interest in the art life and art

literature, the overall cultural erudition, and the increase in the independent thinking and reasoning capabilities.

This is good practice and should be developed.

5.5. Graduates placement

5.5.1. Expediency of graduate placement

As with many Fine Art programmes students don't generally start their studies conscious or anxious of career opportunities, but succeed in a variety of positions. The team can see that the programme is committed to preparing students for professional practice and the place of work. The programme must continue to build on its already strong links with the profession (galleries, museums, studios, critics etc.) and build in professional development into its curriculum.

6. Programme management

6.1. Programme administration

6.1.1. Efficiency of the programme management activities

As part of the review process the Department established a committee responsible for the content, execution and monitoring of the programme to lead on the preparations of the evaluation.

The committee consisted of eight people: five teachers, one student, one graduate and one employer representative. The programme is led by Assoc. Prof. J. Gasiūnas, Head of the Department (responsible for overall management of the programme and matters related to painting), Prof. A. Šaltenis (responsible for relations with the Rector's office, Faculty Council and commissions of the Academy and for integration of the Department's actions into the creative activities of the Academy), Assoc. Prof. K. Bogdanas (responsible for mobility of teachers and students, skills improvement and international relations), teacher V. Liutkus (responsible for the theoretical subjects taught at the Department, research activities, educational projects and public relations), teacher E. Vertelkaitė (inter-disciplinary expression). The Committee also includes student R. Merkliopaitė (responsible for dissemination of information and student relations), licensee K. Gaitanži (responsible for graduate relations), and Dr. M. Žvirblytė, curator of the National Gallery (responsible for social partner relations).

All staff were invited to be engaged in the process to form a collective outcome.

Quality Assurance and enhancement management and process is being introduced and developed by the programme, but as yet it is not fully embedded. The panel fully supports the introduction of student year committees to inform the quality planning.

Currently a mixture of formal and informal engagement with stakeholders exists , but the programme should improve these engagements in the evaluation and development of the programme

6.2. Internal quality assurance

6.2.1. Suitability of the programme quality evaluation

Control over the quality of the Programme includes the assessment of the content of studies, organisation of control over studies, and ratio between competences in general and speciality subjects within the Study Programme.

The SAR is a very good example of a programme undergoing an in depth critical evaluation and should be complimented on the rigour of their process.

Through the SAR the Faculty identified strengths and weaknesses of the Programme:

Strengths**:**
1. consistent teaching process, with a movement from simple to complicated things; teaching tasks are presented in stages, using nearly full calendar year for teaching and learning (autumn and spring terms plus summer practice period and independent work;
2. interaction between painting practice and theoretical knowledge;
3. integration between painting and other subjects;
4. interaction between artistic and general cultural education throughout the teaching process; stability of the tradition and image of painting as a branch of art in the eyes of the public, which influences the motivation for studies;
5. the Programme forms the framework for independent professional activities.

Weaknesses:
1. the system of entrance examinations established by legal acts of the Lithuanian Government, which does not allow duly determining of artistic prospects of the candidates: common admission to the art specialities (including painting) is not acceptable;
2. quite low literacy levels of the candidates is noticed, i.e. e. not sufficient knowledge of the history of both Lithuanian and foreign art history;
3. the quality of teaching is deteriorated by a too large number of students as the time spent by the teacher for the student is reduced;
4. the Academy's policy towards inviting external teachers for short speciality courses should be more flexible: invitation of foreign teachers but not Lithuanian ones is financed from the Rector's Fund, which is a short-sighted policy with respect to both Painting Programme and other Programmes. The Department has limited financial opportunities for inviting teachers.

The Department is still in the process of developing a unified information base, which is to include all components of its work.

6.2.2. Efficiency of the programme quality improvement

It is evident from the changes brought about since the last accreditation review in 2008 that the programme team have responded to the recommendations and taken on board stakeholder comments to bring about major changes to the programme. There is clearly quality enhancement happening through this process and the accreditation panel recommend this is an ongoing process.

6.2.3. Efficiency of stakeholders participation

The programme team have a good and strong collaboration with the students and engage them in its review and development process.

"In general, however, participation of stakeholders in the quality assessment process is not consistent and it is difficult to manage the scope and regularity of these relations". (SER p32)

As acknowledged the relationship with graduates and employers is much more informal and should be improved to more engage them in developing the programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The accreditation team recommends the programme team rethink what is the vision and the distinctiveness of this programme at a strategic level;

2. The Academy needs the quality assurance policy and strategy fully devolved and embedded in its faculties; organised into an efficient transparent process with faster communication and decision making at both Faculty and Department levels where both staff and students may have a meaningful effect. There must be clear and effective mechanisms to check and test if this is happening;

3. The accreditation team recommend the programme team review the LOs and the Assessment Grading Criteria and look to other Painting programmes in the Academy who have described them in a very transparent and accessible way;

4. The Academy should introduce a formal policy and programme of staff development to support all staff to increase their knowledge and understanding and develop new skills in learning, teaching and assessment;

5. The team recommends the programme and the Academy should try to find ways to improve the gender balance of the staff to better reflect the student body;

6. The team would also recommend the programme to engage more national and international visiting teachers where possible, this would be more likely if the Academy's policy towards inviting external teachers for short specialist courses was more flexible;

7. Support to the teaching staff in developing their ability to speak a foreign language and to support them participating in international exchange would be highly advisable for development of external relationships and the content of the programme;

8. The team recommends the programme staff should increase the international critical theory (including contemporary philosophy) component of the programme and introduce it early in their studies;

9. The programme should improve engagements with graduates and employers in the evaluation and development of the programme;

10. The poor hygienic conditions of the Department's premises in the Academy's old building must be resolved by the Academy as soon as possible;

11. The Academy needs to use its authority and expertise to make a strong case for changing the new State admission regulation to minimise its impact of potentially damaging the quality and standards of higher arts education in Lithuania.