

Vilnius Academy of Fine Art

Applied Arts Programmes

Final Accreditation Report

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Vilnius

2008

Vilnius Academy of Fine Art
APPLIED ARTS PROGRAMMES

Study Program	Type of Studies	University
62402M104 Ceramics	Master's	Vilnius Art Academy (Vilnius)
61202M109 Ceramics	Bachelor's	Vilnius Art Academy (Vilnius)
61202M118 Textile	Bachelors's	Vilnius Art Academy (Vilnius)
62402M107 Textile	Master's	Vilnius Art Academy (Vilnius)

Key Parameters of Study Quality. ¹

- *aims and goals indicated in the study programme meets the expectations of students who live in a very dynamic world where professional qualities are valued more and more;*
- *content of the programme is in conformity with the aims and goals of the programme;*
- *content of the study programme is in conformity with the level of knowledge in the area (field) of science (arts)*
- *acquired knowledge, skills and abilities are in conformity with the requirements for professional activities*

¹ Page 2 External Assessment of Study Programmes, STUDIJU KOKYBES VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilnius, Visual Arts Faculty

Introduction

- The visiting group of experts had the opportunity to spend time with students, graduates, teaching staff and employers related to the study programmes mentioned above. The experts were made to feel welcome by the Rector and the Vice-Rector of the Academy and the Faculty of Visual Art. The experts held discussions, conducted interviews, visited the relevant premises and were shown samples of current and previous students work.
- The Applied Arts programmes display a good level of craftsmanship and a great focus on technical expertise.
- The Experts found that there is some evidence that the Applied Arts programmes are beginning to reflect on the coming needs of society and the market and a burgeoning consumer society.
- The establishment of colleges has resulted in a new competitive context in the area of higher education in Lithuania. The fact that colleges successfully centre on (traditional) handicraft skills and technical training should lead to a refocusing within the Academy towards developing the higher registers of cognitive and creative skills and a critical, research oriented mind set.
- The work of this team of experts was complicated and hampered by the quality some of Self Evaluation Reports that were not fluently and accurately translated into the English language. This added to the workload of team members, when reading and trying to understand the Self Evaluation Reports and heightened stress unnecessarily.
- The Self Evaluation Reports for the programmes were not only in general poorly translated but also not constructed and written satisfactorily. Many of them were rhetorical and inconclusive. Written in descriptive terms they do not meet the standards of information, analysis and evaluation that are normally expected for assessment by an international peer group. The Experts recommend that before any decisions are made about the future of any of the programmes that have been reviewed and before any further documents are written literary research is required, with particular reference to the following. (Compare: European Higher Education Area², Qualifications Framework³, Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills⁴, Arts

² www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

³ [Ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/eqf/index_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/eqf/index_en.html)

⁴ www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html

Tuning Documents- inter}artes⁵).

- None of the SERs provided included a complete set of module descriptions. Mostly the modules of Bloc A and some of Bloc B were provided, Bloc C (humanities etc.) were usually missing. During the visit the Experts confirmed that nobody in the departments offering the programmes was in full command and ownership of the programme. Bloc C was usually seen as a separate entity both by staff and students. This entails many difficulties, one of them being that students are not offered history and theory courses closely related to their core field of study.

Aims and goals of the study programmes:

- In general there is a lack of coherence between the stated aims and the programmes provided. Better consideration at institutional level could be given to how the programme aims are reflected in the course elements, learning outcomes and assignments set.
- The Experts found that generally the Applied Arts programmes are oriented towards the development of individual artists with a 'fine art' base; the profile aimed for combines the traditional concepts of a 'master of handicraft' and an 'artist', which is deeply rooted in art education in some parts of Europe. Yet it should be considered that present day European universities and HEI's are responsible for training graduates who are able to create and apply creative/artistic knowledge and problem solving skills not only in the state subsidised and commercially limited sector of (fine) arts but in the rapidly developing adjacent fields of enterprise (or research). Forthcoming changes to the consumer market mean that there is a need to relate Applied Arts education and training more to design education with the inclusion of the development of teamwork skills, project management and entrepreneurial/marketing/business skills. The positioning of Applied Arts within Faculty structures should be very carefully considered and based on accurate research of future needs.
- According to standard benchmark documents such as the European Qualifications Framework⁶ it is essential that both Bachelor but more importantly Master students are prepared to handle complexity, uncertainty and contradictions and are able to work successfully in open ended situations. This is not visible enough in the current curricula which are built on chronology and comprehensiveness. This should be urgently addressed when revising the programmes in the future.
- In all programmes visited there existed a canonical set of exercises which seem to have been employed for many years if not decades. This makes

⁵ Inter}artes, Tapping into the Potential of Higher Arts Education in Europe ELIA 2008

⁶ ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/eqf/index_en.html

staff and students jaded and bored. Despite different intentions, it leads to repetition, stereotype and cliché. It focuses on ‘learning’ on a right/wrong scale rather than problem solving on an individual scale.

- The recurring prevalence to aim for the ‘universal specialist’ is not feasible in the long term and is a false premise. It is ill informed and not properly grounded in market research or an accurate analysis of future requirements. It is also highly ill-advised as it lacks integrity of purpose both in the Experts’ experience and knowledge and when considering the ‘Key Parameters’⁷ of study quality.

61202M118 Textile Bachelors (Vilnius)
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Aims and goals of the study programme:

- The Experts found it difficult to identify and assess the stated goals and aims of the programme as they are inconsistently described and heterogeneously included throughout the SER document in various chapters. This communicated an impression of a hit or miss approach and of being unpredictable in outcome. The Experts found that his perception was confirmed during the visit.
- The Experts recommend that the Faculty and Department formulate the aims of the programme in a concise and consistent format (as numbered statements, not in descriptive narrative) that reflects the European standards⁸ of achievement of learning in Higher Education makes a clear distinction of the achievements and career opportunities of a BA and an MA graduate are addressed in one section of the SER, namely the “Aims and Objectives of the Programme”
- The main rationale and ethos of the programme is fragmented and lacks focus, it is presently unclear as to whether this is an ‘art’, ‘craft’ or ‘design’ programme.
- The aims and objectives of the programme as they are presented are dichotomous⁹, whilst they may be highly laudable they present a confusing set of intentions, aims, objectives and possible outcomes.
- The profile aimed for appears to be the development of individual artists with a ‘fine art’ base; this profile attempts to combine the traditional concepts of a ‘master of handicraft’ with those of an ‘artist’.

⁷ ibid

⁸ ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/eqf/index_en.html

⁹ SER P 7

- If the traditional concepts of a 'master of handicraft' is the profile aimed for, forthcoming changes to the consumer market mean that there is a need to relate education and training in Textiles more to design education with the inclusion of the development of teamwork skills, project management and entrepreneurial/marketing/business skills.
- If the profile aimed for is the development of individual artists with a 'fine art' base, it will be necessary to commit the Textiles programme(s) to a focussed 'fine art' ethos and the development of a rigorous conceptual approach, perhaps sculptural, including constructed textiles and installation etc.

3 Analyses of programme

3.1.1. Structure, contents and study methods

- Credit weightings must meet the requirements of the law with regard to credit allocations and the number of subjects, at present there are more subjects than allowed and the Study Plan includes 1 credit units, not only breaking regulations but indicating a fragmented, over complicated study plan in the opinion of the experts.
- At present there is an excessive quantity of subjects in the Study Plan that also includes an excessive number of 2 credit units. It is the opinion of the experts that this indicates a fragmented, over complicated study plan that is not producing a coherent holistic student experience of the type that is required to fully meet the *Key Parameters of Study Quality*¹⁰ and is not consistent with standard practice in Higher Arts Education institutions in Europe.
- The Experts were informed that the BA has the goals to educate: "Designers in Industry, free lance artist, artists running galleries" (quote). These different profiles seem rather disparate and arbitrary. The goals are not reflected in the curriculum content or structure. There are no separate strands or pathways defined and no clear sets of electives are provided to meet with each of these profiles).
- The programme is very strongly rooted in two concepts that the Experts perceive as problematic: the "encyclopedic" approach to teaching the foundations of the technological and general art practices (painting, graphic etc.) and the use of "methodological handbooks". Both methods prevent the development of a graduate with individual creativity and a sense of responsibility for his/her artistic decisions. The pedagogy

¹⁰ ibid

employed seems strongly rooted in the idea of "crafts first, creativity second". It is recommended that the programme move towards an approach that focuses on individual problem solving where craft and creativity are simultaneously combined instead of orienting students towards "safe and tested solutions".

- The Experts were informed that "We do so many different things" (quote). A preferable approach would be to focus on several limited topics or areas of expertise building (eg. Interdisciplinary work with other departments, art therapy, textile industry, interior usage...) and build these as distinct modules and electives.
- The experts perceived a worrying tendency to want to include any new innovation or development in practice into the programme without divesting outmoded and unnecessary content. This leads to an over taught, over complex programme and inhibits students from discovering new creative processes and the development of ambitious new ideas and limits independent learning and personal development.
- In order to reduce courses (7 BA subjects) some courses have been combined (with two teachers teaching them more or less independently of each other). The students reported that this has led to unresolved issues of assessment requirements and criteria and generally indicates a difficulty with letting go of content and practices that for one reason or another are no longer possible.

The SER p. 9 also states that:

- *The study programme in applied textiles taught by Kaunas Art Faculty of the Academy appears in closest parallel to our programmes among other textile art programmes offered in Lithuania. Yet this programme is mostly focused on the applied aspects of artwork. They work in a consistent manner with the clients and dedicate a lot of attention to technologies. The Vilnius Textile Department of VAFA focuses primarily on artistic problems. We produce professional artists who are expected to be able to solve complex artistic tasks, versus simply acquiring technological specialization.*
- The experts experience during the visit was that this was incorrect. Rather, it seems that the Applied Textiles programmes in Kaunas are very strongly developing an art-based, even research oriented, conceptual direction and Vilnius more a craft/practice direction (involvement with real world projects, interdisciplinary ideas, art therapy etc.....).
- The programme is very visibly in a state of change and development but remains strongly rooted in traditional beliefs and ways of teaching. "We

are changing but old traditions have to be kept alive" (Quote). The Experts recommend that the programme team take bolder steps to remove the constraints of the old programme profile and objectively reassess the value of its remaining qualities. This is particularly appropriate in the face of rising competition and an increasingly fluid educational environment.

- The Study Plan for Block C does not contain enough opportunity to study the Theory of Contemporary Art and/or Design and is heavily biased towards historical studies. In the view of the Experts the study of Contemporary Art and/or Design Theory and related issues is essential at all stages (years) of this type of programme.
- The Experts consider it excessive to extend the teaching of 'Drawing', 'Painting' and 'Graphics' beyond the first 3 Semesters and the presence of it in Semesters 4,5,6,7 and in the Master's programme does not meet with best practice in Higher Arts Education institutions. It is important that the emphasis be shifted to the independent and autonomous study of studio practice, professional practice and personal development.

3.1.2. Execution of studies and support for students

- The practice of presenting the works of previous cohorts of students and staff to new or current students as models of good practice is a highly questionable practice. It promotes an inward-looking culture, emphasises the achievements of the past as exemplary over the need for future innovations and inhibits incoming students from exploring opportunities for new creative processes and the development of ambitious new ideas that explore uncharted territory.
- Serious consideration should be given to reducing teaching contact time in favour of structured learning time. More self study needs to be introduced into the programme. This would have the positive effect of aiding students to become more responsible for their own learning and adopt a more positive approach to life long learning.
- Students reported that probably between 30 and 40% of them were in employment to support themselves and that those students found it hard to meet the programme requirements. The employed students were dependent on individual teaching staff to be flexible. *"It is difficult to match job and study; cannot manage study and working and reach my own standards."*
- Students expressed the desire to be involved, consulted or present during the 'Final Viewings' at the assessments. They wanted to hear all the arguments and the discussions about their work individually. Pedagogic best practice now considers assessment to be the primary learning

experience for students and therefore it should be exploited as much as possible.

- Students reported that they had not received a “good explanation about the assessment Appeals process” and that it existed “in theory but not in practice”

3.1.3. Variation in the number of students

- The staff team find acceptable the increase in numbers of the annual intake from 5 to 11 but warn that they would not be able to support a bigger number of students due to lack of resources. However the Experts advise that, the student numbers studying at present do not attain the critical mass per year group that is crucial to provide for a rich varied and stimulating learning environment. The experience and value of horizontal learning (students learning from each other) in institutes of art and design is considered to be hugely significant and recognised internationally. Horizontal learning is an internationally appreciated factor that all the best programmes not only strive to encourage but actively seek to achieve.

3.1.4. Teaching staff

- There is an urgent need to review the established methodological basis of the teaching as the experts advise that it is outmoded (and historical) and as a methodology it is highly improbable that it is capable of producing programmes that can sufficiently meet the ‘Key Parameters of Study Quality’¹¹, as defined by the agency. The focus on contemporary practice and on contemporary theory should be developed and enhanced.
- Serious consideration should be given to reducing teaching contact time. This would allow teaching staff more time to involve themselves in professional development as teachers of higher education studies and to engage as researchers in the pedagogies of their discipline
- There is an urgent need to develop a meaningful Staff Professional Development processes in the Department to support and encourage teachers in the enhancement of their role as ‘learning facilitators’ rather than the present established, outmoded (and historical) ‘master’ teachers’ role. In this way the true potential of the intrinsic talent that students possess, and bring with them to the study process, can be fully realised and made available to society on their graduation.

3.1.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the programme

Advantages

- The programme displays a good level of craftsmanship and a great focus on technical expertise
- The Programme team communicated the perception that theirs was a programme in 'transition' and displayed concern at the need for 'change', as they said themselves "they are on a good path". This is particularly valued by the Experts in comparison to the inertia and complacency of other Departments.
- The students perceive themselves as part of a friendly team with the staff and that they are being educated as free and independent artists.
- The students commend the "*strong skills in traditional techniques*" and that there are "*a lot of handicrafts*" and that Textile is "*a very active programme compared to others*".
- The previous success of the Programme centred on (traditional) handicraft skills and technical training should now be refocused and developed towards educating the higher registers of cognitive and creative skills and a critical, research oriented mind set, with the inclusion of teamwork skills, project management and entrepreneurial/marketing/business skills
- The Experts perceive that the capacity exists within the programme and within the department to ensure future development to a satisfactory level that would meet the 'Key Parameters of Study Quality'¹²

Disadvantages

- The financing of the programme is inadequate:
 1. The salaries of teachers are unjustifiably low. Teachers work with great devotion and often at the expense of higher personal well being.
 2. The provision of equipment particularly IT equipment is inadequate to provide for the programme to meet satisfactorily the '*Key Parameters of Study Quality*'¹³
 3. The provision of a satisfactory working environment with adequate heating is essential.

¹² ibid

¹³ Ibid

- The Experts perceive that, the Textiles Programme Team are hindered and constrained by many traditions all of which they are not fully aware of at present.

<p>62402M107 Textile Masters (Vilnius)</p>

Aims and goals of the study programme:

- The borderline and the distinction between Textiles Bachelor and Textiles Masters study programmes needs much better and clearer delineation: defining more clearly the distinct and stand alone quality of the Bachelor and emphasising the research element at MA level and the development of the capacity for conceptual and critical thinking. The research element should not necessarily be limited to History of Art or Artistic Theory but should be broadened to include marketing research, design research, manufacturing and production research, materials and processes research.
- Generally there is a lack of coherence within the stated aims and a lack of coherence between the stated aims and the programme provided. Better consideration could be given to how the programme aims are formed and reflected in the course elements, learning outcomes and assignments set.
- The SER P21 states a variety of aims for the Master programme, the “main” ones being the following:
 - “a) define individually, through consultations with the supervising professor, the theme of his/her MA study;*
 - b) define the scope (limits) of the theme and its context;*
 - c) understand and apply methodical requirements for scholarly work in writing a theoretical thesis;*
 - d) find the optimal form for the visualization of the artistic project;*
 - e) present and introduce his/her work in an articulate, fluent manner.”¹⁴*
- If these are the “main objectives” of the course it is the view of the Experts that they are clearly not ambitious enough for a Master programme; the emphasis on skills like “defining”, “understanding and applying”, “presenting” would be on the lower end of what can be expected from even a Bachelor graduate. (Compare European Higher Education Area¹⁵ -

¹⁴ SER P21

¹⁵ www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

Qualifications Framework¹⁶, Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills¹⁷). Especially when considering that one of the aims for the BA is stated as follows:

"The subsidiary aim of the programme is to educate a versatile professional and intellectual artist who is capable of critical thinking, also, of both raising and solving problems of contemporary art." (SER, p. 6)

- The SER mentions other goals which are more in accordance with the expected norm for Master level, e.g.
- *"The aim of the programme is to produce a versatile specialist of wide humanitarian erudition and critical mindset, capable of raising problems of artistic expression and solving them with the awareness of how they relate to the contemporary context." (SER p. 21)*
- Goals are also stated in the section 2.2.2 on Curriculum Design. Here it says:

"The MA study programme educates a professional, but above, an artist – an individual of unique ideas and capable of realization of them" (SER p. 22)

- The inconsistent and heterogeneous aims that are found throughout the document in various chapters hampered the Experts when identifying and assessing the stated goals and aims of the programme. The impression of being unfocussed was confirmed during the visit.
- The main rationale and ethos of the programme is fragmented and lacks focus, it is presently unclear as to whether this is an 'art', 'craft' or 'design' programme. Study pathways or options could be developed that provide the opportunity to study coherently a 'master of handicraft' profile or a 'fine art' or an 'art therapy', 'education' or a 'textile design' profile
- If a 'master of handicraft' or 'design' is the profile aimed for, forthcoming changes to the consumer market mean that there is a need to relate that option more to design education with the inclusion of the development of teamwork skills, project management and entrepreneurial/marketing/business skills probably in collaboration with other programmes.
- If the profile aimed for is the development of individual artists with a 'fine art' base, it will be necessary to commit that option to a focussed 'fine art' ethos and the development of a rigorous conceptual approach, perhaps

¹⁶ [Ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/eqf/index_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/eqf/index_en.html)

¹⁷ www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html

sculptural, including constructed textiles and installation etc. probably in collaboration with other programmes.

- If a 'art therapy' or 'education' is the profile aimed for, there is a need to relate that option more to education, physiology, psychology, and pedagogic skills probably in collaboration with other programmes.

3. Analyses of programme

3.1.1. Structure, contents and study methods

- Credit weightings must meet the requirements of the law with the number of subjects, at present there are more subjects than allowed in the Study Plan, not only breaking regulations but indicating a fragmented over complicated study plan in opinion of the experts.
- At present there is an excessive quantity subjects in the Study Plan that also includes an excessive number of 2 credit units. It is the opinion of the experts that this indicates a fragmented over complicated study plan that is not producing a coherent holistic student experience of the type that is required to fully meet the *Key Parameters of Study Quality*¹⁸ and is not consistent with standard practice in Higher Arts Education institutions in Europe
- The objectives and learning outcomes in the Module Descriptors are often repetitive and formulaic. "To prepare a qualified textile artist, who is able to create textile works for exhibitions and interior spaces, and has skills in scientific research work." is repeated as an outcome for all courses of „Creative Practice“ and all the courses of „Project Making“.
- The curriculum in the Master's programme is divided into the same three basic blocks (A,B,C) as the Bachelor's Programme, with an additional element of theoretical research. Yet, the courses are divided in only two "subject blocs", namely "Theoretical Studies" and "Analytic Research and Final Project". (Annex Study Plan 2).
- This is confusing and inconsistent, as within the block "Theoretical Subjects" there are the same (practical and aesthetic) courses as are found in blocks A and B in the Bachelor's curriculum. Also within this "block" are the theoretical courses formerly in block C.
- The assessment procedures are formulaic and no assessment criteria are provided in the SER. There is no list of literature or artistic references

¹⁸ ibid

(works of art, museums, internet links) included in any of the module descriptors.

- There is a definite lack of emphasis on experimentation and individual, unguided artistic and research work. Rather the programme seems tightly controlled by assignments and a highly structured and pre-determined work process.

3.1.2. Execution of studies and support for students

- It is disconcerting in the context of an MA programme that the 'The programme pursues as its main objective to **teach** students:'¹⁹ etc. etc. It is expected that MA students are encouraged and expected to be responsible, independent learners. Taking initiatives for their own learning and adopting a positive approach to life long learning.
- The practice of presenting the works of previous cohorts of students and staff to new or current students as models of good practice is a highly questionable practice. It promotes an inward-looking culture, emphasises the achievements of the past as exemplary over the need for future innovations and inhibits incoming students from exploring opportunities for new creative processes and the development of ambitious new ideas that explore uncharted territory.
- Very serious consideration should be given to reducing teaching contact time in favour of structured learning time. More self study needs to be introduced into the programme. This would have the positive effect of aiding students to become more responsible for their own learning and adopt a more positive approach to life long learning.
- The multiply emphasis on the completion of a 'scholarly thesis'²⁰ raises many questions i.e.; about the practical value of such an exercise, its relationship with other aspects of the programme, its reference to traditional, outdated 'academic respectability' rather than the real world rationale required by 'The Key Parameters of Study Quality'²¹.
- Considering the fact, that all courses except for the general courses are preparatory stages of the final project it could be said that the MA programme consists mainly of a two year period, highly controlled, of working on one project. This would call into question whether the course needs to be two years long or could and should it be achieved in a shorter time frame.

¹⁹ SER P21

²⁰ SER P20,21,22,23

²¹ ibid

3.1.3. Variation in the number of students

- The Experts advise that, the student numbers studying at present do not attain the critical mass per year group that is crucial to provide for a rich varied and stimulating learning environment. The experience and value of horizontal learning (students learning from each other) in institutes of art and design is considered to be hugely significant and recognised internationally. Horizontal learning is an internationally appreciated factor that all the best programmes not only strive to encourage but actively seek to achieve.
- If the programme is not a continuation of the Textiles BA programme²² it is recommended and expected that all students on the MA programme would benefit from the presence of students from more diverse backgrounds on the MA Textiles programme

3.1.4. Teaching staff

- There is an urgent need to review the established methodological basis of the teaching as the experts advise that it is outmoded (and historical) and as a methodology it is highly improbable that it is capable of producing programmes that can sufficiently meet the '*Key Parameters of Study Quality*²³, as defined by the agency. The focus on contemporary practice and on contemporary theory should be developed and enhanced.
- Serious consideration should be given to restructuring the programme and modernising the teaching methodology. Most of the changes envisaged or recently made that were presented to the experts did not seem to embrace restructuring and did not seem to be based on an acceptance of the fact that an encyclopaedic approach to skills and knowledge was no longer possible or appropriate
- Very serious consideration should be given to radically reducing teaching contact time on the Master's programme. This would allow teaching staff more time to involve themselves in professional development as teachers of higher education studies and to engage as researchers in the pedagogies of their discipline
- There is an urgent need to develop a meaningful Staff Professional Development processes in the Department to support and encourage teachers in the enhancement of their role as 'learning facilitators' rather than the present established, outmoded (and historical) 'master' teachers' role. In this way the true potential of the intrinsic talent that students

²² SER P22

possess, and bring with them to the study process, can be fully realised and made available to society on their graduation.

3.1.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the programme

Advantages

- The programme displays a strong level of craftsmanship and a great focus on technical expertise
- The Programme team communicated the perception that theirs was a programme in 'transition' and displayed concern at the need for 'change'. This is particularly valued by the Experts in comparison to the inertia and complacency of other Departments.
- The students perceive themselves as part of a friendly team with the staff and that they are being educated as free and independent artists.
- The students commend the "*strong skills in traditional techniques*" and that there are "*a lot of handicrafts*" and that Textiles is "*a very active programme compared to others*".
- The present ethos of the Programme centred on (traditional) handicraft skills and technical training and scholarly research should now be developed towards further educating the higher registers of cognitive and conceptual and creative skills and a critical, research oriented mind set, with the inclusion of teamwork skills, project management and entrepreneurial/marketing/business skills. The research element should be broadened and not necessarily be limited to History of Art or Artistic Theory or limited to those contexts when applied to Textiles. The research element should be broadened to include practice based research, marketing research, design research, manufacturing and production research, materials and processes research.
- The Experts perceive that the capacity exists within the programme and within the department to ensure future development to a satisfactory level that would meet the 'Key Parameters of Study Quality'²⁴
- The programme/department has a commendable record of participation in International collaboration. However, there appears to be a tendency to perceive much of the participation as 'competitive' and inevitably viewing their own students as the 'best' and using this experience as a benchmark of quality. This attitude can be myopic and limiting the value of the experience. The value in such experiences is seeing 'differences' and 'diversity' and in trying to analyse 'why'. 'Quality' is not determined by the

²⁴ ibid

beauty or 'professionalism' of students work but by the value, quantity and quality of the 'learning' achieved.

Disadvantages

- The financing of the programme is inadequate:

the salaries of teachers are unjustifiably low. Teachers work with great devotion and often at the expense of higher personal well being.

the provision of equipment particularly IT equipment is inadequate to provide for the programme to meet satisfactorily the '*Key Parameters of Study Quality*'²⁵ and international standards of graduate study.

the provision of a satisfactory working environment with adequate heating is essential.

- The Experts perceive that, the Textiles Programme Team are hindered and constrained by many traditions all of which they are not fully aware of at present.
- Consideration should be given to collaborating with other disciplines to produce new programmes with umbrella titles rather than an individual free standing study specialisation. This will lead to rationalisations of study that would promote horizontal learning and interdisciplinary studies, and the conceptual and creative development of students. It would provide essential broadening as well as deepening which is somewhat overemphasised at present.
- Very rarely do student numbers presently studying under the Textiles nomenclature attain the critical mass that is crucial to provide a rich varied and stimulating learning environment, populated both by enough peers and staff to encourage learning of a satisfactory level, nor does the learning environment presently have enough quantity or quality of equipment available.

61202M109 Ceramics Bachelor's (Vilnius)
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Introduction

The school of ceramics dates back to 1931, it was initially established in the Kaunas Art School but it was subsequently transferred to Vilnius when the

²⁵ Ibid

Kaunas and Vilnius art schools were merged in 1951. From this point on Lithuanian ceramics began to gain international recognition. From discussions with programme staff, the Experts gained the impression that there had been a significant revision of curriculum in the 1970's but that, subsequently, there had only been relatively minor changes to the curriculum structure and/or content and that the programme – as currently offered – would be broadly familiar to a graduate of the 1970's.

Aims and goals of the study programme:

- The self-assessment document provided for the Experts stated that the main aim of the programme is '*to train specialists who can work in the field of industrial ceramics or pursue their individual artistic careers*'. However, the Experts saw little evidence to support this aim within the design of the curriculum. Students did not appear to be provided with any business or entrepreneurial skills that would help them develop as creative practitioners, neither did there appear to be any effective links with industry. In the view of the Experts, insufficient attention was being given to preparing students for life beyond graduation.
- The objectives of the programme²⁶ focus predominantly on the acquisition of skills and understandings and do not appear to encourage the development of critical and intellectual skills. The individual objectives are of a rather general nature and do not appear to relate to the main aims of the programme, as outlined above.
- The main rationale and ethos of the programme is fragmented and lacks focus, it is presently unclear as to whether this is an 'art', 'craft' or 'design' programme.
- The profile aimed for appears to be the development of individual artists with a 'fine art' base; this profile attempts to combine the traditional concepts of a 'master of handicraft' with those of an 'artist'.
- If the traditional concepts of a 'master of handicraft' is the profile aimed for, forthcoming changes to the consumer market mean that there is a need to relate education and training in Ceramics more to design education with the inclusion of the development of teamwork skills, project management and entrepreneurial/marketing/business skills.
- If the profile aimed for is the development of '*a versatile, broadly educated artist, capable of critical thinking*', it will be necessary to commit the Ceramics programme(s) to a focussed development of a much more rigorous conceptual and intellectual approach to the subject.

²⁶ As listed in the Self-Assessment document (page 5)

Analysis of programmes

3.1.1. Structure, contents and study methods

- Credit weightings must meet the requirements of the law with regard to credit allocations and the number of subjects, at present there are more subjects than allowed and the Study Plan includes 1 credit units, not only breaking regulations but indicating a fragmented, over complicated study plan in the opinion of the Experts.
- At present there is an excessive quantity of subjects in the Study Plan that also includes an excessive number of 2 credit units. It is the opinion of the experts that this indicates a fragmented, over complicated study plan that is not producing a coherent holistic student experience of the type that is required to fully meet the *Key Parameters of Study Quality*²⁷ and is not consistent with standard practice in Higher Arts Education institutions in Europe.
- The Experts were informed by the self-assessment document that the BA has the aim '*to train specialists who can work in the field of industrial ceramics or pursue their individual artistic careers*'. These different profiles appear to be somewhat arbitrary and these goals are not reflected in the curriculum content or structure. There are no separate strands or pathways defined and no clear sets of electives are provided to meet with each of these profiles.
- The programme appears to be deeply rooted in two concepts that the Experts perceive as being problematic: a 'lexicographical' approach to teaching the foundations of the technological and general art practices (drawing, painting, graphic etc.) and an emphasis on assimilating long established mechanical and methodological processes. Both methods can militate against the development of graduates with individual creativity and a sense of responsibility for his/her own artistic decisions. The pedagogy employed appears to strongly promote competent crafts skills over individual creative vision. The Experts recommended that the programme moves towards an approach that focuses on individual creative problem solving where craft and creativity combine dynamically rather than to continually direct students towards tried and tested solutions. Students reported their perception that there was an "*emphasis on technique but little on creative art*" (Quote).
- The programme remains strongly rooted in traditional beliefs and methods of teaching. The Experts recommend that the programme team take the

²⁷ ibid

bold step of radically reviewing the current curriculum with a particular emphasis on the inculcation of content that fully reflects the context into which students will graduate and equipping them to prosper in the field of professional practice. This is particularly appropriate in the face of rising competition and an increasingly fluid educational environment.

- The Study Plan for Block C does not contain enough opportunity to study the Theory of Contemporary Art and/or Design and is heavily biased towards historical studies. In the view of the Experts the study of Contemporary Art and/or Design Theory and related issues is essential at all levels (years) of this type of programme.
- The Experts consider it excessive to extend the teaching of 'Drawing', 'Painting' and 'Graphics' beyond the first 3 Semesters and the presence of it in Semesters 4,5,6,7 and in the Master's programme does not meet with best practice in Higher Arts Education institutions. It is important that the emphasis be shifted to the independent and autonomous study of studio practice, professional practice and personal development.

3.1.2. Execution of studies and support for students

- The practice of presenting the works of previous cohorts of students and staff to new or current students as models of good practice is a highly questionable practice. It promotes an inward-looking culture, emphasises the achievements of the past as exemplary over the need for future innovations and inhibits incoming students from exploring opportunities for new creative processes and the development of ambitious new ideas that explore uncharted territory.
- Serious consideration should be given to reducing teaching contact time in favour of structured learning time. More self study needs to be introduced into the programme. This would have the positive effect of aiding students to become more responsible for their own learning and adopt a more positive approach to life-long learning.
- Students reported that probably between 30 and 40% of them were in employment to support themselves and that those students found it hard to meet the programme requirements. The employed students were dependent on individual teaching staff to be flexible. *"It is difficult to match job and study; cannot manage study and working and reach my own standards."*
- Students expressed desire to be enabled to engage in more independent work but felt that the current 'academic load' that they experienced was too great to allow sufficient time for this. They also felt that independent work should be supported by the curriculum structure incrementally

through each level of the programme, so that they were ready to take full advantage of the greater freedoms of the final stage of the of the programme.

- Students reported that they had not received a *“good explanation about the assessment Appeals process”* and that it existed *“in theory but not in practice”*

3.1.3. Variation in the number of students

- The specialist teaching resources appeared, to the Experts, to be poorly equipped and inadequate for the number of students studying in the subject area. The students expressed the view that the reputation of the programme was low within the Academy and that this had a direct bearing on the availability of resources. The lack of resources could, in turn, be leading to difficulties in securing the optimum number and quality of students to the programme and contributing to the low reputation of the subject.

3.1.4. Teaching staff

- There is an urgent need to review the established methodological basis of the teaching as the experts advise that it is outmoded (and historical) and as a methodology it is highly improbable that it is capable of producing programmes that can sufficiently meet the *‘Key Parameters of Study Quality’²⁸*, as defined by the agency. The focus on contemporary practice and on contemporary theory should be developed and enhanced.
- Serious consideration should be given to reducing teaching contact time. This would allow teaching staff more time to involve themselves in professional development as teachers of higher education studies and to engage as researchers in the pedagogies of their discipline
- There is an urgent need to develop a meaningful Staff Professional Development processes in the Department to support and encourage teachers in the enhancement of their role as ‘learning facilitators’ rather than the present established, outmoded (and historical) ‘master’ teachers’ role. In this way the true potential of the intrinsic talent that students possess, and bring with them to the study process, can be fully realised and made available to society on their graduation.
- The programme could potentially benefit from making more use of intelligence gathered from staff and students who have opportunity to teach or study at other institutions (particularly international institutions). At

present, there appears to be little or no systematic means of de-briefing returning staff and students as a means of gathering new ideas that may contribute to the development of curriculum. The Experts recommend that the programme team find ways to tap into this experience and to that of visiting teachers.

3.1.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the programme

Advantages

- The programme displays a good level of craftsmanship and a great focus on technical expertise
- The students perceive themselves as part of a friendly team with the staff and that they are being educated as free and independent artists.
- The Experts perceive that the capacity exists within the programme and within the department to ensure future development to a satisfactory level that would meet the 'Key Parameters of Study Quality'²⁹

Disadvantages

- The financing of the programme is inadequate:

The salaries of teachers are unjustifiably low. Teachers work with great devotion and often at the expense of higher personal well being.

The provision of equipment particularly IT equipment is inadequate to provide for the programme to meet satisfactorily the 'Key Parameters of Study Quality'³⁰

The provision of a satisfactory working environment with adequate heating is essential.

- The Experts perceive that, the Ceramics Programme Team are hindered and constrained by many traditions all of which they are not fully aware of at present.

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Aims and goals of the study programme:

²⁹ ibid

³⁰ Ibid

- The borderline and the distinction between Ceramics Bachelor and Ceramics Masters study programmes needs much better and clearer delineation: defining more clearly the distinct and stand alone quality of the Bachelor and emphasising the research element at MA level and the development of the capacity for conceptual and critical thinking. The research element should not necessarily be limited to History of Art or Artistic Theory but should be broadened to include market research, design research, manufacturing and production research, materials and processes research.
- The aims and objectives of the programme, as set out in the Self-Assessment Document, are presented in a ‘narrative’ style and lack clarity and coherence, this is perhaps indicative of a general lack of clarity about the purpose of the MA programme which “aims at preparing students for independent creative work” – this appears to be indistinguishable from the aims of the BA.
- The Self-Evaluation Document³¹ states that the ‘key’ goal for the Master programme is “*to shape the student’s artistic outlook and foster his spirituality*” – this goal is underpinned by the following (summarized) goals that enable students to:
 - ‘see’, feel and think;
 - express the uniqueness of their feeling and thinking in a tangible way, through the creation of artifacts;
 - pay attention to the peculiarities of Lithuanian culture;
 - demonstrate awareness of the developments of the world art trends.

If these are the ‘goals’ of the programme, it is the view of the Experts that they are clearly not ambitious enough for study at Master level; the emphasis on abilities such as ‘feeling’, ‘thinking’, ‘paying attention’ and to ‘demonstrate’ would be on the lower end of what can be expected from even a Bachelor graduate (Compare European Higher Education Area³² - Qualifications Framework³³, Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills³⁴) particularly when considering that the stated aims for the BA.³⁵

- The vagueness of the aims (goals) and objectives of the programme, as stated in the Self-Assessment Document, hampered the Experts when they attempted to map these on to the student experience offered by the programme or in contextualizing examples of student work viewed. The

³¹ Self-Evaluation Document (Page 15)

³² www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

³³ Ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/eqf/index_en.html

³⁴ www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html

³⁵ Self-Evaluation Document (Page 5)

initial impression gained from reading the documentation of the programme being unfocussed was confirmed during the visit.

- If a the programme is aimed at “preparing students for independent creative work”, forthcoming changes to the consumer market mean that there is a need to include the development of teamwork and project management skills as well entrepreneurial, marketing and business skills - probably in collaboration with other programmes.

Analysis of programmes

3.1.1. Structure, contents and study methods

- Credit weightings must meet the requirements of the law with the number of subjects, at present there are more subjects than allowed in the Study Plan, not only breaking regulations but indicating a fragmented over complicated study plan in opinion of the Experts.
- At present there is an excessive quantity of subjects in the Study Plan that also includes an excessive number of 2 credit units. It is the opinion of the experts that this indicates a fragmented over complicated study plan that is not producing a coherent holistic student experience of the type that is required to fully meet the *Key Parameters of Study Quality*³⁶and is not consistent with standard practice in Higher Arts Education institutions in Europe
- The objectives and learning outcomes in the Module Descriptors are often repetitive and formulaic; these need much more differentiation and should also accord with the higher level learning outcomes normally associated with study at Masters level.
- The curriculum in the Master’s programme is divided into the same three basic blocks (A,B,C) as the Bachelor’s Programme, with an additional element of theoretical research. Yet, the courses are divided in only two “subject blocs”, namely “Theoretical Studies” and “Analytic Research and Final Project”. (Annex Study Plan 2).
- This is confusing and inconsistent, as within the block “Theoretical Subjects” there are the same (practical and aesthetic) courses as are found in blocks A and B in the Bachelor’s curriculum. Also within this “block” are the theoretical courses formerly in block C.
- The assessment procedures are formulaic and no assessment criteria are provided in the SER.

³⁶ ibid

3.1.2. Execution of studies and support for students

- It is questionable, in the context of an MA programme, that the ‘The goal of further studies is to teach students...’³⁷ etc. etc. MA students should be expected to be responsible, independent learners who take the initiative for their own learning.
- The practice of presenting the works of previous cohorts of students and staff to new or current students as models of good practice is a highly questionable practice. It promotes an inward-looking culture, emphasises the achievements of the past as exemplary over the need for future innovations and inhibits incoming students from exploring opportunities for new creative processes and the development of ambitious new ideas that explore uncharted territory.
- Very serious consideration should be given to reducing teaching contact time in favour of structured learning time. More self study needs to be introduced into the programme. This would have the positive effect of aiding students to become more responsible for their own learning and adopt a more positive approach to life long learning.
- Considering the fact, that all courses except for the general courses are preparatory stages of the final project it could be said that the MA programme consists mainly of a two year period, highly controlled, of working on one project. This would call into question whether the course needs to be two years long or could and should it be achieved in a shorter time frame.

3.1.3. Variation in the number of students

- The Experts advise that, the student numbers studying at present do not attain the critical mass per year group that is crucial to provide for a rich varied and stimulating learning environment. The experience and value of horizontal learning (students learning from each other) in institutes of art and design is considered to be hugely significant and recognised internationally. Horizontal learning is an internationally appreciated factor that all the best programmes not only strive to encourage but actively seek to achieve.
- If the programme is not a continuation of the Ceramics BA programme³⁸ it is recommended and expected that all students on the MA programme

³⁷ Self-Evaluation Document (page 15)

³⁸ SER P22

would benefit from the presence of students from more diverse backgrounds on the MA Ceramics programme.

3.1.4. Teaching staff

- There is an urgent need to review the established methodological basis of the teaching as the experts advise that it is outmoded (and historical) and as a methodology it is highly improbable that it is capable of producing programmes that can sufficiently meet the '*Key Parameters of Study Quality*³⁹, as defined by the agency. The focus on contemporary practice and on contemporary theory should be developed and enhanced.
- Serious consideration should be given to restructuring the programme and modernising the teaching methodology. Most of the changes envisaged or recently made that were presented to the experts did not seem to embrace restructuring and did not seem to be based on an acceptance of the fact that an 'encyclopaedic' approach to skills and knowledge was no longer possible or appropriate.
- Very serious consideration should be given to radically reducing teaching contact time on the Master's programme. This would allow teaching staff more time to involve themselves in professional development as teachers of higher education studies and to engage as researchers in the pedagogies of their discipline
- There is an urgent need to develop a meaningful Staff Professional Development processes in the Department to support and encourage teachers in the enhancement of their role as 'learning facilitators' rather than the present established, outmoded (and historical) 'master' teachers' role. In this way the true potential of the intrinsic talent that students possess, and bring with them to the study process, can be fully realised and made available to society on their graduation.

3.1.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the programme

Advantages

- The programme displays a strong level of craftsmanship with a significant focus on technical expertise
- The present ethos of the Programme centred on (traditional) skills and technical training and scholarly research should now be developed towards further educating the higher registers of cognitive and conceptual

1 Page 2 External Assessment of Study Programmes, STUDIJU KOKYBES VERTINIMO CENTRAS

and creative skills and a critical, research oriented mind set, with the inclusion of teamwork and project management skills as well as entrepreneurial, marketing and business skills. The research element should be broadened and not necessarily be limited to History of Art or Artistic Theory or limited to those contexts when applied to Ceramics. The research element should be broadened to include practice based research, marketing research, design research, manufacturing and production research, materials and processes research.

- The Experts perceive that the capacity exists within the programme and within the department to ensure future development to a satisfactory level that would meet the 'Key Parameters of Study Quality'⁴⁰

Disadvantages

- The financing of the programme is inadequate:

The salaries of teachers are unjustifiably low. Teachers work with great devotion and often at the expense of higher personal well being.

The provision of equipment particularly IT equipment is inadequate to provide for the programme to meet satisfactorily the '*Key Parameters of Study Quality*'⁴¹ and international standards of graduate study.

The provision of a satisfactory working environment with adequate heating is essential.

- The Experts perceive that, the Ceramics Programme Team are hindered and constrained by many traditions all of which they are not fully aware of at present.
- Although programme staff participates in international collaboration, there appears to be a tendency to use such experience as a simplistic means of benchmarking the quality of their own students' work – which is always seen as being superior. This attitude can be myopic, limiting the potential value of such experience to act as a means of critical reflection on their own programme. The value of such experiences is seeing 'differences' and 'diversity' and in trying to analyse 'why'. 'Quality' is not simply determined by the beauty or 'professionalism' of students' work but by the value, quality and depth of the 'learning' achieved.
- Consideration should be given to collaborating with other disciplines to produce new programmes with umbrella titles rather than an individual

⁴⁰ ibid

⁴¹ Ibid

free standing study specialisation. This will lead to rationalisations of study that would promote horizontal learning and interdisciplinary studies, and the conceptual and creative development of students. It would provide essential broadening as well as deepening which is somewhat overemphasised at present.

- Very rarely do student numbers presently studying under the Ceramics nomenclature attain the critical mass that is crucial to provide a rich varied and stimulating learning environment, populated both by enough peers and staff to encourage learning of a satisfactory level, nor does the learning environment presently have enough quantity or quality of equipment available.

4. Material conditions

- Whilst general conditions in the older building adjacent to the Franciscan Church remain satisfactory the general conditions provided in the much newer annex building where the Textiles programmes are located across the bridge are very inadequate. In particular the reported total lack of effective heating, this is totally unsatisfactory and would not be tolerated elsewhere.
- Computer Information Systems facilities for all academic staff, students, administration, ancillary and library staff, including a communication system needs to be installed with 'Intranet' and 'internet' access
- The Experts recommend as essential that facilities be provided for the learning of skills in the use of IT generally and specifically Macintosh platforms and Adobe software programmes
- The adequacy of the facilities with regard to European Health & Safety laws and standards is very uncertain in the view of the Experts. It is highly recommended that an audit of the Health and Safety aspects of the facilities be urgently undertaken.

5. External relations

- All the programmes assessed have in some manner and to some extent established creditable but limited international relations with other programmes and universities as well as involving their students in exchanges and competitions. This process should be encouraged, enhanced both administratively and financially. In particular exchanges of academic staff are particularly beneficial as a developmental tool and international experience for all staff should be fully supported

- The Experts recommend that the Applied Arts programmes could be more systematic in the way they garner the experience of other educational cultures that has been provided by their individual involvement with Erasmus, EU exchange programmes and other international collaborations, competitions and exhibitions. Those Applied Arts educators and practitioners who have participated in Erasmus or other exchange programmes should use the information available to them, arising from their exchange experience, to critically analyse and evaluate their experiences. By noting the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the venues visited. This information should be used as a basis for discussion on an Academy wide basis and be available and disseminated to all interested parties, perhaps on a website.
- The Applied Arts programmes/departments have an established record of participation in International collaboration as mentioned above. However, there appears to be a tendency to perceive much of the participation as 'competitive' and inevitably viewing their own students as the 'best' and using this experience as a bench mark of quality. This attitude can be myopic and limiting the value of the experience. The value in such experiences is seeing 'differences' and 'diversity' and in trying to analyse 'why'. 'Quality' is not determined by the beauty or 'professionalism' of students work but by the value, quantity and quality of the 'learning' achieved.
- It appeared very anomalous to the Experts that whilst the Applied Arts programmes were anxious to develop international relations and collaborations they are not as yet collaborating or developing working relationships and synergies with each other. However, there are some examples and these need to be encouraged, enhanced both administratively and financially. Much can be gained by all concerned in developing more synergy between programmes/departments in differing subject areas and particularly between the faculties in Vilnius and Kaunas. Examples of developing good practice are emerging in each programme and faculty and this expertise needs to be exchanged to the benefit of all. This development of corporate (academy wide) knowledge and expertise is essential.

6. Feedback

- Whilst the process of utilizing questionnaires of student's opinions is good and signify the beginning of a Quality Assurance process practice they mostly indicate quantitative and not qualitative material. Their distribution needs to be followed and supported by an adequate analyses process and an information management system to implement and monitor the resulting developments.

- Student questionnaires are only one leg of a Quality Assurance and Enhancement system that requires feedback from other sources that includes, graduates, employers, academic and ancillary staff. The collection of this feedback needs to be followed and supported by an adequate analyses process and an information management system to implement and monitor the resulting developments
- The Experts experience when meeting graduates and employers was that it was the first time that anyone had ever asked them about the quality and content of the programmes. Of those that had been consulted they reported that the process was informal and usually based on their personal contact or relationship with a particular member of staff. In the vast majority of cases they reported that their advise had not been acted on.

7. Internal assurance of study quality

- It is obvious to this expert group that the development of Quality Assurance is in its infancy. However at the Academy of Fine Arts, even basic awareness, information and understanding is missing. This deficit of information, understanding, knowledge and practices needs to be addressed as matter of urgency.
- The perception of the Experts has been that the Applied Arts sector has been insufficiently prepared and supported for their engagement with the accreditation process. The experts found that any genuine understanding of the mechanisms necessary to provide for accreditation, quality assurance and programme enhancement was lacking and the value of and need for such processes was rarely appreciated or understood by those involved at Academy, Faculty and Departmental level.
- There is an urgent need to develop meaningful staff and particularly managerial Professional Development processes at the Academy throughout its Faculties and Departments to support and develop institutional management practices and encourage the embedding of quality assurance practices. All teaching staff but particularly Academy managers also require complete understanding of the Bologna Declaration and its implications.
- The Experts advise that the academy, faculty and departments take a much more formal approach to gathering feedback from students/graduates/employers. This recorded information gathered according to a formal recorded process and where the information is properly analysed is invaluable to develop a strategic view of the development of these, or any other arts programmes

- The Experts advise as essential that a senior member of staff should be allocated the role of 'Quality Assurance' manager to champion the introduction and embedding of a comprehensive system. Computer Information Systems facilities for all staff, academic, administration, ancillary, library and students with an ICT communication system needs to be installed with 'Intranet' access to facilitate a comprehensive QA&E system

8. General assessment of the programmes within the study field

8.1. Recommendations to the higher education institution

Essential recommendations

- Reorganise the existing Academy structure of small scale divisions and departments that presently do not enhance the curricula but instead limits the students learning experience as it maintains artificial boundaries between practices and forms of artistic expression and application that no longer exist in the world the graduates are entering. The attempts being made by the Kaunas Faculty to address this should be urgently realised and similar structures adopted across the Academy.
- Develop programme management systems* that clearly articulate the 'ownership' and responsibility for programme content and the methods available to change curricula, structure and, content. The aim being to provide coherence of all Blocks A,B,C to produce holistic student experiences of the type that are required to fully meet the *Key Parameters of Study Quality*⁴²
- Define the niche study specialisms and their aims within the BA and MA programmes.* These study pathways when clearly defined should be made available to students as options within a programme and could purposely link practical and theoretical competences more explicitly to defined career opportunities within a discipline.
- A refocusing within the Academy towards developing the higher registers of cognitive and creative skills⁴³ * and a critical, research oriented mind set.
- Refocus on advanced areas of education in the programmes.* The establishment of colleges has resulted in a new competitive context in the

⁴² ibid

⁴³ John Biggs 'Teaching Teaching & Understanding Understanding (Open University Press/McGraw Hill, 2003)

*(Applied Textiles, Kaunas, is the only successful example the Experts have been able to identify).

area of higher education in Lithuania. The colleges successfully centre on (traditional) handicraft skills and technical training leaving more advanced areas for development by the Academy.

- It is recommended that the Academy/Faculty/Departments formulate the aims and outcomes of the programmes in a concise and consistent format* (as numbered statements, not in a descriptive narrative) that-
 1. reflect the European standards of achievement of learning in Higher Arts Education⁴⁴
 2. makes a clear distinction of the achievements and career opportunities of a BA and an MA graduate⁴⁵
 3. are addressed in one section of the SER, namely the “Aims and Objectives of the Programme”
 4. utilise a ‘learning outcomes, competencies’ methodology
- Commence the development of a Quality Assurance and Enhancement system that begins to meet Bologna requirements and is comparable with standard European practice in Higher Education Institutions
- The Experts recommend as essential that Computer Information Systems facilities be provided for all staff, academic, administration, ancillary, library and students. An ICT communication system needs to be installed that includes open access to ‘Intranet’ and ‘Internet’ access for all
- Instigate urgently a greater focus on contemporary practice and on contemporary theory in the programmes. Where it already exists it should be increased in quantity and enhanced in quality.
- The designing of programmes that allow the student time and space for independent study and personal development is viewed as an urgent need.
- Develop programmes that produce graduates who are able to create and apply creative/artistic knowledge and problem solving skills* not only in the state subsidised and commercially limited sector of (fine) arts but also in the rapidly developing adjacent field of enterprise (or research). The Experts found that, generally, Applied Arts programmes are oriented

⁴⁴ see the Qualification Framework for Higher Education Institutions

⁴⁵ http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/BASIC/050520_Framework_qualifications.pdf

* (Applied Textiles, Kaunas, is the only successful example the Experts have been able to identify).

towards the development of individual artists with a 'fine art' base; the profile aimed for seeks to combine the traditional concepts of a 'master of handicraft' and an 'artist' whilst European best practice is rapidly developing in other domains

- The Academy should define and clearly delineate the borderline between Bachelor and Masters study * - defining more clearly - the distinct and stand alone quality of the Bachelor and emphasising the research element at MA level and the development of the capacity for conceptual and critical thinking. The research element should not necessarily be limited to History of Art or Artistic Theory but should be broadened to include marketing research, design research, manufacturing and production research, materials and processes research.
- Consideration should be given to the nomenclature of the Masters programmes considering the use of umbrella titles rather than individual free standing study specialisations. This will lead to the creation of programmes with student numbers that reach a critical mass. The resulting rationalisations of study at MA level would then promote horizontal learning and interdisciplinary studies, and the conceptual and creative development of students. It would provide essential broadening as well as deepening which is somewhat overemphasised at present in the MA programmes

Highly recommended

- Relate Applied Arts education and training more to design education with the inclusion of the development of teamwork skills, project management and entrepreneurial, marketing and/or business skills. In light of this, the positioning of Applied Arts within Faculty structures should be very carefully considered and based on accurate research of future needs.
- Seriously reconsider the recurring prevalence to aim for the 'universal specialist' as it is not feasible in the long term and is a false premise. It is ill informed and not properly grounded in market research or an accurate analysis of future requirements. It is also highly ill-advised as it lacks integrity of purpose both in the Experts' experience and knowledge and when considering the *'Key Parameters of study quality'*⁴⁶
- Applied Arts Departments across the Academy should undertake a self analysis of the current state of the Applied Arts programmes and how their educational practices compare to those of the wider European context.* This analysis should be undertaken by all staff teaching on the

⁴⁶ Ibid

* (Applied Textiles, Kaunas, is the only successful example the Experts have been able to identify).

programmes from Blocks A, B and C. The results of the self analysis should feed into a staff forum where the results of the self analysis and a programme for change and development is agreed.

- Develop meaningful Staff Professional Development processes at the Academy to support and encourage teachers in the enhancement of their role as ‘learning facilitators’ rather than the present established, outmoded (and historical) ‘master’ teachers’ role. In this way the true potential of the intrinsic talent that students possess, and bring with them to the study process, can be fully realised and made available to society on their graduation.
- In the view of the experts the present ubiquitous practice of presenting the works of previous cohorts of students to new or current students as models of good practice is a highly questionable practice. It promotes an inward-looking culture, emphasises the achievements of the past as exemplary over the need for future innovations and inhibits incoming students from exploring opportunities for new creative processes and the development of ambitious new ideas that explore uncharted territory.
- There is an urgent need to review the established methodological basis of the teaching as it is outmoded (and historical).^{*} It is highly improbable that the methodology presently employed is capable of producing programmes that can sufficiently meet the ‘*Key Parameters of Study Quality*’⁴⁷, as defined by the agency.
- Serious consideration should be given to reducing teaching contact time in favour of structured learning time. More self study needs to be introduced into the programmes encourage students to be autonomous and life-long learners. This would have the positive effect of aiding students to become more responsible for their own learning; and would allow teaching staff more time to involve themselves in professional development as teachers of higher education studies and to engage as researchers in the pedagogies of their disciplines.

