



ALYTAUS KOLEGIJOS

vadybos ir verslo administravimo krypties
įstaigų ir įmonių administravimo, verslo vadybos
studijų programų
išorinio išsamiojo

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

Alytus College

study field of management and business administration
external assessment of
office and enterprise administration, business management
study programmes

Final Report

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Profile of Management and Business Administration Study Programmes

Title of study programme	<i>Office and Enterprise Administration</i>	<i>Business Management</i>
State code	65303S104	65303S118
Kind of study	Non-university	Non-university
Mode of study 1 (duration in years)	F (3), PX (4)	F (3), PX (4)
Volume of study programme in credits	120	120
Degree and (or) professional qualification to be awarded	Administrator	Manager
Programme registration date, order No.	2000 09 21 No. 1182	2000 09 21 No. 1182

1 **F** – Full-time; **PE** – Part-time (Evening); **PX** – Part-time (Extramural).

1. Introduction

On the report.

The site visit was on April 14, 2005.

The Self-Assessment report (SAR) had been issued in September 2003, featuring a detailed description of the state of affairs at that time.

However, significant changes and innovations have taken place in the meantime. Both, the academic setting of Alytus College and the study courses have been going through further developments.

In this report the expert group took into account the SAR and the subsequent developments indicated. In addition there are some findings and recommendations.

Outcome oriented academic thinking.

As it is not required prominently in the official “Regulations” it is useful to point out that the most important step forward taken by the College seems to be the full adoption of the outcome oriented planning method. We found management and teaching staff living up to linking Vision - Goals – Strategy – Tasks – Learning outcomes set – Content and Delivery – Evaluation/Examinations.

2. Aims and goals of the Study Programmes

Alytus College has a vision of its role in the Lithuanian society and especially in the development of the region and the city. The programmes established reflect the needs of social and Higher Education development in general. They also reflect the standards set by the government and the consultation with regional enterprise managers.

The overall goal of the *Office and Enterprise Administration* course is to ensure that the students of the Office and Enterprise Administration Curriculum, could acquire necessary theoretical and methodological training and practical skills to execute the function of administration activities.

The range of tasks is described as referring to the following fields:

making estimates, planning, organizing, coordinating administrative activities and solving complicated problems of administration management, be able to apply Information technologies, manage documents both in public sector and in business companies.

The learning outcomes after successful completion of the course – in the SAR called goals and tasks of the Curriculum – are defined in particular in the SAR.

The overall goal of the *Business Management* course is to ensure that business management students obtain necessary theoretical and methodological preparation and competences necessary for a successful fulfilment of manager’s functions.

The range of tasks is described as referring to the following fields:

establishment of a company, market research, planning company/subdivision activities according to the type of business, staff management, control over business condition, business development, all this connected to personal professional competences and specialist behaviour and skills.

The learning outcomes after successful completion of the course – in the SAR called goals and tasks of the Curriculum – are defined in particular in the SAR.

Comment

The aims and goals are well set and they are being further developed. The College management has a clear view in that respect. Academic staff are informed in that respect and, even more important, teachers seem to be committed to the set of goals and tasks.

Also the student organisation (“Student Embassy”) demonstrated their acceptance and their support of the goal driven strategy of Alytus College into the future. In an impressive manner their present activities are in line with the College’s tasks.

There is a broad spectrum of social partners in the region. Social partners showed their interest in and support for the College on a remarkably high level.

All constituency, stake holders and the College management pointed out that the strong practical orientation of the studies is an important element of these programmes. They also suggest that this be maintained in the future.

At the same time, a further increase in the fields of theoretical knowledge and research abilities is on the College’s agenda. This also includes teachers’ further education as well as the study aims.

The expert group, while avoiding discussion of the national educational system, finds that the efforts to improve research and theoretical work taken by Alytus College are very good and deserve to be taken into account.

3. Analysis of the Programme

3.1. Study programme *Office and Enterprise Administration (non-university studies)*

3.1.1 Structure, contents and study methods

The programme is offered both in a full-time mode (FT) with a three years schedule and in a part-time mode (PT) with a four years schedule.

The amount of credits to be gained is 180 ECTS.

Central subjects for acquiring Administrator’s qualifications make up for 51 credits and contain courses of Management, Economics, Marketing, Finance, Information Technologies, and Communication.

Improvements in 2004/5 include the addition of Service Marketing, Finance Accounting, SME management, Information Systems, the International e-bag project.

Specialisation courses may be chosen on an alternative basis. These make up for 10,5 credits. The fields to choose are maintenance of computer networks, personnel/labour organization, organisation of publications.

General non-university education courses make up for 31,5 credits and contain studies of Fundamentals of Philosophy, History of Culture, Humanities (Language standards, foreign languages,) and social sciences (Psychology, Micro and Macro Economics) courses.

Improvements in 2004/5 : Russian language studies have been added.

Practical Training makes up for 20 credits, one of the methodological assets being The Practical Firm. An innovation introduced is the three-sided agreements on practical training between a student, an employer and the College.

The programme studies used to be completed by the *Diploma paper* (7 credits). As an innovation since 2004 students may choose a *Final Exam*. It is said that a majority of students take the Final Exam.

Special attention was given to some issues of the *general methodological approach*. 20% of contact hours have been transformed into self-study work.

There was a shift towards a more integrated (“holistic”) perception of the market environment.

Use of the problem solving method of teaching has increased. One effect of this change, among others, is the increased number of requests for applied research coming from institutions and SMEs. Financial awards for such research work have been given to teachers as well as to students and these have been used to purchase additional resources.

Comments

Structure and content seem to be designed to goals and needs.

However, from the expert team’s view it seems a little difficult to understand that “office administration” and “enterprise administration” should address the same level of intellectual efforts as well as professional responsibility. From that viewpoint “office administration” rather belongs to a work field related to non-academic education (Vocational School types) while “enterprise (firm, business) administration” could be related to responsibilities that clearly need academic (University) education.

This may be a problem of translating Lithuanian terms into English, as well as a problem of interpretation of those English terms relative to the experts’ national backgrounds. On the other hand we have seen the programme content and we have heard graduates talking about their professional duties. Also we heard employers on that question.

Some graduates do administrative work in offices on a lower level of responsibility, in our perception of “office administration”. A notable number of graduates have achieved true management positions, though.

There seems to be a bifocal character of this study programme. It could be worthwhile to straighten that out. See recommendations at the end of this report.

It is welcomed that the number of subjects per semester had been reduced from 9 to 7.

As for the study methods used there seems to be a quite adequate mix of theoretical lectures, discussions, group work, case study and analysis, business games in terms of nicely integrated work in the Practical Firm, role-plays and project work.: the whole basket of good academic teaching.

Rather than dealing further with the details of Structure, Content and Methods the expert group would like to underline the continuing improvements to be seen. Improvements observed show a great commitment to quality in terms of both reacting to the needs of the

stakeholders – society and students – and reactions to the implications of the European H.E. development process.

3.1.2 Execution of studies and support for students

Execution of studies: See above *general methodological approach*.

Student support:

In addition to the use of the European projects on H.E. exchange and improvement, the College has successfully applied for a number of other funds. The strategic thrust being general support as well as intensifying international exchanges.

Comments

An interesting aspect is the involvement of the Alytus College Student Embassy (ACSE) in the implementation of time tables as well as in the further development of the programme in general. This notion was also reflected in the participation of ACSE representatives and their special presentation during the visit.

Teachers work is evaluated by students once a semester. Findings are used at the Dean's and Director's level for improvements. Consequences are said to have happened. However, there is a general reluctance to openly discuss the results with the students and among each other. Referring to recent developments in this area in other European countries further attention is recommended. Implementation needs a lot of tact, however.

3.1.3 Variation in the number of students

See the SAR.

The number of admissions is controlled.

The programme is in high demand. The applicant-admissions-ratio shows a rise from ~ 2:1 in the year 2000 to ~ 6:1 in 2004. An admission policy exists and the selection process is carefully executed.

Unemployment after graduation is negligible. This, in context of employers being almost excited to have those graduates kept to the region, may raise the question of sufficient admission numbers – which the foreign expert team can not address conclusively.

Comment

It is noted that the number of drop-outs has significantly decreased. The College would link this fact to an increase in students' motivation. If so, and there is no evidence to the contrary, this effect may be linked to positive changes mentioned in other parts of his report.

3.1.4 Teaching staff

A list of systemic requirements and competences of the academic staff is effective since May 2004. Respective programmes are implemented.

The College supports lecturers in attending and contributing to conferences, particularly abroad. In general, fostering research activities is an important issue from the viewpoint of the College management: see the rise of applied research mentioned under 3.1.1.

The College has used the possibilities opened by newer Certification to appoint 5 teachers in this programme as Associate Professors.

1 Professor from a Lithuanian University takes part in the programme.

Staff is complemented by practitioners from the region. Proportions of teaching by own staff and practitioners look appropriate to the goals stated, i.e: theoretical as well as practice oriented higher education.

Full-time teachers amount to 66 % of total staff.

Lecturer exchange with partners in other European countries is part of the overall development plan, the good effects can be observed.

Comment

While existing staff qualifications are adequate, there is still a lot to be done in order to further develop the academic staff. Remarkable progress has been made over the last years. The expert team's further expectations are encouraged in that respect by the spirit to be observed throughout the College.

3.1.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the Programme

Several points of strengths and weaknesses had been listed in the SAR. The following findings relate to the present state of affairs.

Strength

The College is really embedded in its regional, social and political environment.

The various Centers of the College seem to strengthen the respective fields of activity effectively, and also to the benefit of this study programme.

From an outcome oriented point of view, the following factors may be taken into consideration as advantages:

- the Curriculum is based on the dialogue between the Ministry, the College, regional and municipal governments, society and enterprises,
- the Curriculum allows for flexibility in terms of the study mix , i.e.: contact hours and use of IT, especially the Internet and an Intranet,
- the Curriculum extends a solid mix of practical and theoretical workload, designed to needs expressed.
- the turn-around from just teaching subjects to the more comprehensive methodological approach of solving problems is well under way.

Weaknesses

It should be mentioned that the representatives of the College show a remarkable level of commitment. We found many of the self-critical remarks in the SAR (Sep 2003) no longer applicable in April 2005. Other items are on their way. European developments are well monitored.. From the achievements of the last years one can state that the stakeholders and the College staff seem to work hard.

As a consequence, weaknesses do not exceed significantly what could be found in other parts of Europe.

Teachers' further education and particularly their integration into the international research family may be the key to solving the tasks remaining.

3.2. Study programme *Business Management (non-university studies)*

3.2.1 Structure, contents and study methods

The programme is offered both in a full-time mode (FT) with a three years schedule and in a part-time mode (PT) with a four years schedule.

The amount of credits to be gained is 180 ECTS.

Compulsory subjects make 87 %, optional subjects make 13%.

Self-study work (40% in full-time studies and 73% in part-time studies) alternate with classroom studies.

Central subjects for acquiring Manager' s qualifications make up for 49 credits and contain courses of special introduction to the discipline, micro and macro Economics, business philosophy, company economics, basics of law, accounting and auditing, management accounting, state finance, taxes, banks, TQM, international trade management, company finance, personnel management, marketing, logistics, business ethics, insurance, international protocol and negotiations,

Improvements in 2004/5 include the addition of international trade, marketing and law. Logistical and carriage-related subjects have been integrated into that, losing their character as an independent course. Business communications is a new course.

Specialisation courses may be chosen on an alternative basis. These make up for 13 credits. The fields to choose are marketing management, financial management and trade business organization..

General non-university education courses make up for 32 credits and contain studies of language culture and oratorical skills, a second foreign language, information technologies, mathematics, statistics, basics of philosophy, psychology of communication, office work and business correspondence, civil and labour safety.

Improvements in 2004/5: introduction of environment protection, ergonomics, project management, peculiarities of European markets.

Practical Training makes up for 20 credits. Practical activities are performed in the fields of information technologies, data processing /computing, marketing research, introduction to a real firm. An innovation introduced is the three-sided agreements on practical training between a student, an employer and the College.

The studies used to be completed by the *Diploma paper* (6 credits). As a novelty since 2004 students may choose a *Final Exam*. It is said that a majority of students take the Final Exam.

Special attention was given to some issues of the *general methodological approach*. 20% of contact hours have been transformed into self-study work.

There was a shift towards a more integrated (“holistic”) perception of the market environment.

Use of the problem solving method of teaching has increased. One effect of this change among others is the increased number of requests for applied research, coming from institutions and SMEs. Financial awards for such research work have been given to teachers as well as to students to this and these have been used to purchase additional resources.

Comments

Structure and content seem to be designed to goals and needs.

It is welcomed that the number of subjects per semester had been reduced.

As for the study methods used there seems to be a quite adequate mix of theoretical lectures, discussions, group work, case study and analysis, business games in terms of nicely integrated work in the Practical Firm, role-plays and project work.: the whole basket of good academic teaching.

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3.2.2. Execution of studies and support for students

Execution of studies: See above *general methodological approach*.

Student support:

In addition to the use of the European projects on H.E. exchange and improvement, the College has successfully applied for a number of other funds. The strategic thrust being general support as well as intensifying international exchanges.

Further comments

An interesting aspect is the involvement of the Alytus College Student Embassy (ACSE) in the implementation of time tables as well as in the further development of the programme in general. This notion was also reflected in the participation of ACSE representatives and their special presentation during the visit.

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among each other. Referring to recent developments in this area in other European countries further attention is recommended. Implementation needs a lot of tact, however.

3.2.3. Variation in the number of students

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Unemployment after graduation is negligible. This, in context with employers being almost excited to have those graduates kept to the region, may rise the question of sufficient admission numbers – which the foreign expert team cannot address conclusively.

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The College supports lecturers in attending and contributing to conferences, particularly abroad. In general, fostering research activities is an important issue from the viewpoint of the College management: see the rise of applied research mentioned under 3.2.1.

The College has used the possibilities opened by newer Certification to appoint 11 teachers in this programme as Associate Professors.

2 Professors from a Lithuanian Universities take part in the programme.

Staff is complemented by practitioners from the region. Proportions of teaching by own staff and practitioners seem appropriate to the goals, i.e: theoretical as well as practice oriented higher education.

Full-time teachers amount to 77 % of total staff.

Lecturer exchange with partners in other European countries is part of the overall development plan, the good effects can be observed.

Comment

While existing staff qualifications are adequate, there is still a lot to be done in order to further develop the academic staff. Remarkable progress has been made over the last years. The expert team's further expectations are encouraged in that respect by the spirit to be observed throughout the College.

3.2.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the Programme

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As a consequence, weaknesses do not exceed significantly what could be found in other parts of Europe.

Teachers' further education and particularly their integration into the international research family may be the key to solving the tasks remaining.

4. Material conditions

Material conditions are sufficient. This statement applies to the premises, teaching- room equipment, library and other study supports, like the equipment of the Practical Firm. IT equipment is at a rather good standard, both in HW and SW.

5. External relations

External relations are viewed by the College as being of prime importance.

The College is gradually increasing projects under EU and Scandinavian programmes. Programmes for teacher qualification improvement are run in several foreign countries. Institutional relations exist with H.E. institutions in seven foreign countries at present.

6. Feedback

Feedback from students, graduates and employers is organised and the results are sought for by College management.

See comments in previous chapters.

7. Internal assurance of study quality

A quality policy according to the institutional goals and personal obligations of staff has been implemented.

Since 2004 the permanent quality analysis and improvement process is based on an internal QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM of Alytus College, accompanied by the QUALITY MANUAL.

The expert team notes that the current standards in this area are applied.

8. General assessment of the programmes within the study field

The general assessment of both programmes is positive overall.

The expert team wants to point out that it was impressed both by spirit and the quality improving attitude of the College management and teaching staff as well as the spirit and brightness of the students.

8.1 Recommendation to the higher education institution

- Capabilities and actual jobs of many former graduates of the OEA programmes seem to go higher than the term “Office Management” suggests, from the perception of the expert team` s countries. Perhaps changes of the name of the programme could be considered along with appropriate content adjustments.
- Further participation of teachers in international conferences and seminars should be considered.
- The requirement of writing a final thesis should be resumed, particularly if the following point is given attention.
- As long as a formal Bachelor degree can only be obtained after at 1 ½ to 4 years of additional University studies consideration should be given to expanding agreements with foreign institutions, either in order to develop common joint bachelor degrees or in order to get the Alytus diploma accepted for consecutive Master studies.
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8.2. Proposal on accreditation

Alytus College:

- Non-university study programme *Office and Enterprise Administration* (state code 65303S104) is given **full accreditation**
- Non-university study programme *Business Management* (state code 65303S118) is given **full accreditation**

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