



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VILNIAUS KOLEGIJOS
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *KINEZITERAPIJA*
(*valstybinis kodas - 653B30002*)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *PHYSIOTHERAPY* (*state code - 653B30002*)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VILNIUS COLLEGE

Experts' team:

1. **Dr. Mark Sacco (team leader)** *academic,*
2. **Dr. Anne Karki,** *academic,*
3. **Dr. Mateusz Romanowski,** *academic,*
4. **Dr. Ieva Eglė Jamontaitė,** *academic,*
5. **Mrs. Lukas Gabrielius Tribulas,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator -

Ms Gabrielė Bajorinaitė

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Kineziterapija</i>
Valstybinis kodas	653B30002
Studijų sritis	Biomedicinos mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Reabilitacija
Studijų programos rūšis	Koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (3 metai)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Reabilitacijos profesinis bakalauras, Kineziterapeuto kvalifikacija
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2001-08-31; ISAK Nr. 1254

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Physiotherapy</i>
State code	653B30002
Study area	Biomedical Sciences
Study field	Rehabilitation
Type of the study programme	College studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (3 years)
Volume of the study programme in credits	180
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor of Rehabilitation, Physiotherapist
Date of registration of the study programme	31 August, 2001; Order No. 1254

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes**, approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: *1) self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI); 2) visit of the review team at the higher education institution; 3) production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as “very good” (4 points) or “good” (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

The programme **is not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point).

1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	Timetable of the programme “Physiotherapy”
2.	Practice Report of first year students
3.	Practice Report of second year students

1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information

The procedures of the external evaluation of the first Study cycle full-time (3 years) 180 ECTS study programme Physiotherapy (state code 653B30002) (PT) held at the Vilnius

Kolegija/University of Applied Sciences (Vilnius College) were initiated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania. The degree awarded and/or qualification awarded (according to the main data of the study programme in self-evaluation report) is a Professional Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation, Qualification of Physiotherapist. The study programme Physiotherapy is implemented by the Department of Rehabilitation of the Faculty of Health Care.

The evaluation process consisted of a number of steps. In the first phase various documents regarding the Higher Education system and documents related to the procedures for external evaluation were analysed as well as the Self-Evaluation Report (hereafter, SER) that were forwarded to the team prior to the actual visit. Next, a site visit took place on the 17th of April 2015 that allowed the external evaluation team (hereinafter – EET) to gather relevant information, to discuss and prepare this report. During the visit different meetings took place: with the administrative staff, the staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff, students of all years of study, graduates and employers / social partners. The external evaluation team (EET) were also given the opportunity to evaluate various support services including laboratories, classrooms, auditorium for learning and practice, library and computer facilities, examined students' final works, and other documents.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on *17 April, 2015*.

- 1. Dr. Mark Sacco (team leader)**, *Physiotherapy Head of Department, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Malta, Malta.*
- 2. Dr. Anne Karki**, *Principal Lecturer of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Finland.*
- 3. Dr. Mateusz Romanowski**, *Assistant at Department of Rheumatology and Rehabilitation, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poland.*
- 4. Dr. Ieva Eglė Jamontaitė**, *Lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine, Vilnius University, Lithuania.*
- 5. Mrs. Lukas Gabrielius Tribulas**, *student of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences study programme Biology.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The need for rehabilitation in Lithuania is on the increase, the SER states that Lithuania will require about 5000 physiotherapists yet presently there are 700 registered with the Lithuanian Physiotherapy Association. This need for rehabilitation is not only required and desired in Lithuania, but has become a global necessity.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are in good consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are connected in good manner with each other.

The programme aims (or objectives as in the SER) and learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible (in Lithuanian and in English) on the website of the HEI. The aim of the programme “preparing rehabilitation specialists with higher college education who will provide, independently or within the rehabilitation specialist team, health care services including examination and assessment of a person’s functional and physical health state, treatment by motion and physical agents, disability compensation, disease and injury prevention, healthy lifestyle promotion and education”(SER, page 8), reflects all the activities of a physiotherapist: assessment, formulation of physiotherapy diagnosis and prognosis, construction and implementation of a physiotherapy intervention plan, evaluation of intervention, healthy lifestyle promotion and education.

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) Team has lifted up the question of national regulations (Ministry of Health) and their role of limiting the development of physiotherapy education by regulating professional activity of specialists. The actions for improvement stated in SER are seen very positive by EET.

The list of competences and learning outcomes is logical and well-structured however there is a need to update the list based on ‘Towards an EQF Culture – ENPHE EQF FG 2012’. The programme learning outcomes could be more congruent to the WCPT statement of what a qualified and professional physical therapist is required to do. http://www.wcpt.org/sites/wcpt.org/files/files/WCPT_Policy_statements_2013.pdf. In this statement the physiotherapy education is expected to equip physical therapists to practise in a variety of health care settings including (but not limited to) institutional, industrial, occupational, private clinics and primary health care, encompassing urban and rural communities. Also the education should prepare physical therapists, if possible, to practise in environments that reflect the health care/service delivery models that operate in different countries. Keeping these requirements in mind the learning outcomes should cover up e.g. occupational physiotherapy, preventive physiotherapy in primary health care settings (WCPT 2013, 4.).

As in SER, page 13 is stated movement is an essential element of health and wellbeing and is dependent upon the integrated, co-ordinated function of the human body at a number of levels. Movement is purposeful and is affected by internal and external factors. Physical therapy is directed towards the movement needs and potential of individuals and populations. (WCPT, 2013). However, EET could not find learning outcomes including movement, just the use of The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) terminology further in the learning outcomes would help to keep in mind the core of physiotherapy.

One of the competences to be attained by students is “Healthy living promotion“. It was a bit difficult to find disease and injury prevention’s reflection in any of the subject’s topics description. Also, in the description of the study units, these do not reflect any compatibility of treatment by means of motion and physical agents, so it is needed to alter e.g. Table 2 and 3 and include these aspects in there.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements. Although the results of the professional field research carried out by the Study Programme Committee, Department teachers and Employers are not presented in the SER but some examples of these activities were however presented during the site visit.

The SER preparation group pointed out that they are preparing specialists for the Lithuanian and European labour market. According to the SER Programme this is prepared in compliance to European standards. EET found that the prospects of graduates in the European labour market are not very convincing, it would be good in the future if any graduates are known to work in another European country that could also be reported in SER.

2.2. Curriculum design

The Programme’s curriculum design meets the legal requirements as laid down by the State. The duration of the Physiotherapy programme is of 3 years for full-time students. However the EET would also like to point out that according to the World Confederation for Physical Therapists a physiotherapy course has to be of four years duration. “*The first professional qualification should be completion of a curriculum that qualifies the physical therapist for practice as an independent autonomous professional.[1] Education for entry level physical therapists should be based on university or university level courses of at least four years (WCPT Policy statement – Education)*“. The SER states that the study programme has been adjusted taking into account the WCPT, EU and ENPHE recommendations and other requirements (study committee, employers and social partners, students, graduates). The EET would like to recommend to show these documents more consciously followed in future SER. EET is also familiar with the legal requirements for study programmes in colleges in Lithuania

and are aware of the possible course duration but it would like to recommend to get closer to the WCPT guidelines as even possible.

The study subjects are spread evenly, their themes are not repetitive. Presently, at this stage the Programme structure includes 24 credits of general subjects, the national requirement is 15 credits. The EET would like to recommend a programme alteration to increase the amount of professional subjects and decrease the number of general subjects, the former graduates lifted up the similar issues. This discussion needs to be done also in collaboration with the administrative level of the HEI (Higher Education Institution).

The students' needs for better Latin language skills were brought to the discussion during the meeting with the Administration; the EET suggests that the integration of basic Latin language into the professional topics could be a way to respond to the student's needs. The programme structure could be altered towards a more holistic approach where the professional subjects are formed and combined from the individual courses like pharmacology, psychology, basics of education. This modular form would allow better integration of the contents and courses as well as enter to a more integrated teaching and learning environment. This holistic approach is needed for the future physiotherapist to be able to work in variety practice setting that will in future be multiprofessional environment. "By 2020, 20% more jobs will require higher level skills. Education needs to drive up both standards and levels of achievement to match this demand, as well as encourage the transversal skills needed to ensure young people are able to be entrepreneurial and adapt to the increasingly inevitable changes in the labour market during their career. Efforts need to be concentrated on developing transversal skills. Modern, knowledge-based economies require people with higher and more relevant skills. Transversal skills such as the ability to think critically, take initiative, problem solve and work collaboratively will prepare individuals for today's varied and unpredictable career paths." <http://eurlex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/?qid=1389778594543&uri=CELEX:52012DC0669>

Analysing the content and subjects of studies the EET suggests an alteration to the curriculum concerning the professional studies and the Subjects of the Study field to respond to the expressed needs of students, graduates and the social partners. There should be more studies regarding patient assessment and physical fitness testing, electrotherapy, taping, anatomy and clinical reasoning in the course. The students would also like to see more active learning methods in their education as it revealed during the meeting with the students.

The Programme Committee has decided that students should have 28 contact hours for practice training per week. Based on the documents and discussion (teachers, students and graduates) the informed number of contact hours varied from 3 to 6 hours per day. The EET was

also informed that 1 clinical hour equates to 45 minutes, so this also alters the real time in clinical practice and increases the amount of free time and self-studies during the practice periods. Graduates informed the EET that both Thursday afternoons and Fridays were free. The EET suggests alterations to the clinical practice component of the present curriculum, the real hours and also possible elective practice for looking into some new issues e.g. sports physiotherapy. The clinical practice hours in the curriculum are not comparable to most European countries or previous WCPT recommendations, so this could be a room for improvement.

Based on observations of existing thesis and discussions with students and graduates the final thesis topic seems to be based on student's own interest and not on the need of clinical practices or patients. The final thesis process is mostly planned to be carried out as an experimental design. The decision about the manner to research different treatment methods is however decided by students and this leads to the question of abiding by research ethics. The use of humans with or without disabilities as target of experiments should be assessed by the ethical board either in HEI or any organisations responsible for the treatment prior to approval for the study to be carried out. The Declaration of Helsinki could now be observed <http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/> In EU – level more information is found in <http://www.eurecnet.org/index.html>.

The EET suggests that there could be more variation of used research methods and more assessment of what research and development is needed in the clinical setting. The documents should also include discussion of ethics and reliability of collecting data, analysing it and doing conclusions. This should be one of the most important issues learned when most of decisions in the final thesis process are done by one student and not systematically assessed or tutored by qualified clinical physiotherapists in those setting, where the thesis is carried out. It should be noted that the clinical settings could be more involved in the research process and this could also lead to a more systematic use of final thesis results.

In relation to the order of the Minister of Health Care of the Republic of Lithuania (2012) it is stated that it is necessary to give priority to private activities of independent contractors and to develop outpatient rehabilitation services. However the curriculum gives no evidence of entrepreneurship in physiotherapy certainly a topic that can support any private enterprise. Even though there is the course of Basics of Law and Management 5 ECTS, the content of the course does not appear to include any entrepreneurial issues.

Concerning the latest achievements in science and technologies, the separate courses like Massage, Physiotherapeutic Techniques, Physical Medicine, Electrotherapy and Rehabilitation could be assessed based on the theoretical models of physiotherapy methods and

also in perspective of a rehabilitation approach. Now this course appears to be based on traditional national needs and not taking into account the new evolving concept of Health 2020 (The European policy for health and wellbeing) which two strategic objectives are: improving health for all and reducing health inequalities, improving leadership and participatory governance for health. This new concept should now alter the course content. According EET opinion the curriculum is lacking the topics of preventive and occupational physiotherapy though some of the issues can be seen in the courses like Basics of Education and Ergonomics. The co-operative work of rehabilitation professionals could be better supported by offering more inter-professional learning / joint-studies with other health care professionals for example Occupational Therapy students. For example, Health 2020 supports the idea of carrying out joint Final Thesis together with other health care students. It is one of idea for further possible development.

The EET also noted and considered the Student Self Study number of hours and the comment being put forward is that this is rather excessive and some of this time could be used to either reinforce topics already covered or to introduce some physiotherapy skills that are not being covered in the course.

Some social partners noticed that graduates before had more knowledge in practice than now and they also recommended to improve students' abilities to assess patients.

To summarise this chapter the EET would like to mention some strengths of the programme too: the curriculum seems to be attractive for students and they seem to be able to suggest alterations to it. The curriculum covers the main physiotherapy competences and knowledge base with some exceptions. The programme at Vilnius College offers 9 credits of Optionally Chosen Subjects which topics are not decided. This flexibility should allow students the opportunity to become better educated and more adapted to the labour market, if the topics would deepen or fill in the knowledge that have been identified by the market. All in all, the content of subjects seems to be consistent with the type and level of the studies.

2.3. Teaching staff

The study programme is provided by staff meeting legal requirements, 25 teachers are involved in the programme, two of them hold a doctoral degree. The majority of the teaching staff, 92%, have no less than 3 years of practical experience. According to the SER (p.14) teachers are appointed by a public competition. Contracts with teachers are signed for a five-year term. Teachers provide a comprehensive self-analysis every year. This means that the qualifications for the teaching staff meets the legal requirements and is adequate also as a number of them to ensure achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The EET sees that the

teaching staff turnover seems to ensure mostly the adequate provision of the programme, but larger number of qualified physiotherapy teachers could offer wider knowledge pool for education.

During the meeting with Administration it became apparent that there are 5 physiotherapists amongst the staff working full time, and according to Annex 3 there are 4 physiotherapists with a master's degrees and one with a bachelor's degree though holding the master degree of sport physiology. During the meeting with the SER team it was discovered that all teachers are evaluated by students giving the feedback after the course and there has been no complaints. Students highlighted that they have a really good relationship with the teachers. They gave an example how on one occasion a teacher had reacted really quickly because of students' complaints about an unclear question in a test.

Clinical practice tutors who co-operate with the College have to attend a free course, where they learn to properly evaluate students and the ways how to provide them with knowledge.

It has to be pointed out that there are no set criteria that a teacher's qualification requires (besides the minimal requirements set by State). It could be a recommendation that the Administration set various criteria for example: further education courses, seminars, publications with an impact factor, Erasmus exchanges that they should achieve, within a stipulated time period. The EET points out that these demands could also help to motivate teachers to be more active and improve their qualification and skills.

Interviewed teachers admitted that all developmental actions they take part in or would like to take part in at the College are mainly oral roundtable discussions. The teachers' possibilities to participate in the development of the course curriculum should be more transparent.

Teachers are actively participating into activities of international organizations e.g. ENPHE and one of the teachers has been the member of Executive Board in ENPHE (2005-2013) and is still acting as a country co-ordinator for Lithuania. Another teacher has been involved with ENPHE's working group activities.

Though there are only few international conferences teachers attend to. According to Annex 3 participation into the conferences seems to be not fully enough. EET analysed that there is limited number of publications done by the teaching staff in field of physiotherapy, and none of publications has an impact factor. It could be improved as mentioned in the text above.

According to Annex 3 of the SER, teachers, who are physiotherapists, went on an exchange 14 times between 2009-2014. The number of exchanges is considered quite good,

nevertheless the number of countries with which the college has signed the agreement could be extended.

The EET can conclude based on the SER and site visit that the Vilnius College has created conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme.

As seen during the site visit the teaching staff (physiotherapists and others) of the programme is involved in research in physiotherapy and this activities have been already involving some physiotherapy students and their thesis which is evaluated positively by EET.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

It was the opinion of the EET that the facilities and learning resources for theoretical lectures were adequate and the practical classroom (or laboratories) is quite good. The entrance to the facilities both theoretical and practical is easy for everyone. The practical setting could be made easier to access these facilities for self-studies and final thesis preparation. Presently access needs to be applied from the Administration. The amount of equipment both for assessment and therapy have been updated recently, however there is still a need for acquiring more equipment and apparatus to be more effectively used during the education in the short amount of time reserved for contact learning in a larger or smaller groups. Presently the amount of equipment for example for learning to use and teach the use of assistive aids is not adequate (wheelchairs, crutches, walking sticks, rollators). Also for exercise testing several test bikes with testing programmes should be more useful. For learning movement analysis and biomechanics the education should have a small movement analysis laboratory that could be shared with the Occupational Therapy education. Described in this study-unit is the specific competence “Healthy living promotion”. However for the development of this competence the environment has to become more suitable: equipment for cardio exercise, for different forms of physical activity. It’s a suggestion for improvement and further development.

Learning physical therapy agencies could be based on evidence-based knowledge and the use of equipment could be critically assessed based on the existing scientific evidence. This also means the EVB assessment concerning the use of massage and different massage techniques.

The resources for the implementation of the PT programme there are lecture halls, teaching laboratories and classrooms. In gym classes are held for physical training and work out. General college subjects take place in lecture halls (not less than 46 workplace). Students are able to use a canteen of 245 seats and a cafeteria in the premises of the Faculty. The EET is

pleased to note that students are able to use all the resources after classes once access has been granted.

Students have the possibility to carry out Professional clinical practice in other institutions. According to the SER practical classes of Physiotherapy in Neurology and Ergonomics are held in the health centre UAB “Gemma, in UAB “Teida” salon. There, students are able to use the resources of the stakeholders.

In the SER it was stated that “*Students’ practices of professional activity take place in real working conditions in personal health care, social care and ward ship, educational institutions*“ (SER, page 20). During the visit students informed the EET that they are satisfied with the organization of clinical practice and the proposed practice sites. Social partners also stated that the organizational aspects of clinical practice are good.

Library resources are well-funded. According the numbers EET saw, there was enough allotted for acquisition of books, periodicals and e-publications. This statistics is for all units of the library. The EET noted that there is quite a significant supply of e-books in Lithuanian and in foreign languages. Students have access to the following databases: eBooks on EBSCO host (subscription from college funds), EBSCO Publishing (the suit of 10 databases), Emerald Management e-Journals Collection, Taylor& Francis, Grove Art Online, Grove Music Online and Reference Library.

Students can freely use the library resources and premises. Teachers mentioned that would be useful if the resources in information technologies were increased especially those that are specialized in PT study programme. Graduates pointed that now conditions and resources for students are better than before, but some more studies could be carried out concerning for example physical fitness testing, more basic testing and biomechanics. The students mentioned that some resources could be improved like offering more books for learning orthopaedics and using different teaching/learning methods.

To summarise the facilities and learning resources are of a good standard, some more support (access to labs) and several apparatus and equipment could help students in their self-studies and during practical sessions held during the stated contact studies.

2.5. Study process and students’ performance assessment

Admission procedures are clear and understandable. There are no special requirements to admission. Vilnius College forms part of the joint admission system of the Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions. According to the administrative staff and the SER Vilnius college is implementing the most popular study programme of physiotherapy amongst all Lithuanian colleges. Student admissions are stable and amount in recent years were ranging from 33-50

annually. The admission procedures are well formulated, easily available and conform to Lithuanian admission regulations. When it comes to the entry requirements, the college accepts students with the best score from all who apply for the course. The competitive average score of the students admitted in 2014 was 7.14 in a 10 point scale. The number of applicants slightly decreased during the last 3 year but it ought to be mentioned that both the students and the graduates think that Vilnius College is the college of choice. Competitive score of applicants (using the previous scale) is high in the period 2010-2013 it ranges: highest from 19,44 to 21.12, lowest from 12,38 to 16,79. In 2014 (when the competitive score counting system changed to a ten-point scale) highest score was 9,22 lowest 5.06. Students are motivated and this is evident from the high admission scores. High number of applicants and high their competitive scores correlate with motivation of students. During the period 2010-2014 the number of admitted students ranged from 26 to 31 in state-funded and from 8 to 13 in state-non-funded places. The drop-out rate between 2007 and 2011 was 10% at average. The main reasons for drop-out and termination of the studies according to SER (p. 21) are personal reasons and under-achievement. The students are pleased with the support that the College guarantees and appreciate the very good academic level of knowledge of the teachers. Unfortunately, there are still a significant number of student drop-outs and these needs to be taken into consideration.

The College provides the following forms of academic support for the students (of this Programme): during the first few days of the first year, the students are introduced to the main provisions of the study regulation, consultations with the teachers involved in the programme and practice supervisors/mentors and a possibility to study according to an individual programme. During the meeting with the students, it was highlighted that the students have a really good relationship with the teachers. Social support provided for the students includes scholarships, allowances, prizes and accommodation (SER p. 24).

Although Erasmus exchange seems to be on the right level, there is always place for improvement. Participation in mobility programmes is usually carried out by the most motivated and progressive and possibly financially sound students. Students pointed out that it would be very useful if students would get more information about exchanges during the first study year of their course. Students have to be encouraged more to participate in exchange programmes. According to the SER (p. 23), there were 19 outgoing and 7 incoming students between 2010 and 2014. The number of incoming students is expected to increase in the future. The meeting with the teachers showed that not everyone speaks English fluently, which restricts the opportunities for teaching in English, which in turn not only restricts teachers going on an exchange but also restricts inward exchange mobility for both foreign students and visiting foreign teachers.

According to SER (p. 25), students participate actively in the Faculty's community life, i.e. monitors, members of Student Union. During the meeting with the teachers, it came out that mainly good students give feedback to the teachers. Equal attention should be guaranteed to all students and the student with learning difficulties; however, the latter should be especially strongly motivated to work.

The students of the Physiotherapy study programme are actively involved in applied research activities (SER, p. 22). They had presentations in Vilnius and Kaunas. Students can participate in: international student massage championships (SER, p. 23), sport activities, folk dance and singing in a choir (SER, p. 25).

Students during their clinical practice are producing portfolios and keeping diaries (diary is assessed) which should be filled in during the practice. During the site visit students mentioned that there is not enough time for practice as it could be so their wish is to increase time allocated for practice. Students have the opportunity to choose a practice placement's institution by themselves.

All students and graduates stated that the means of assessment throughout the course is fair, transparent and should a revision of a paper or a grade be necessary, there is a procedure to follow that can resolve the issue.

EET would like to note, that teachers mentioned that there would be more convenient to work in smaller sub-groups.

Students are thinking about masters studies because they want more knowledge. During the meeting with graduates it was noticed that it would be useful for students if graduates with masters' degree will meet students and tell them about their studies.

College has an agreement signed with Lithuanian Labour Exchange, which provides data about graduate employment. During the concerned period a good graduate employment rate was observed. According to the data of the Labour Exchange, the placement rate of graduates from the study programme Physiotherapy for the date 01/03/2011 was 86.5 %; for the 01/03/2012 – 93.33 %, 01/05/2013 – 100%, 01/05/2014 – 88.2 %. According to the findings of the annual surveys conducted by the department teachers, about two thirds of the graduates (64 % – 86 %) get employed according to their speciality (physiotherapy). This should be kept in mind when the administration of HEI assesses the amount of student intake per year. The EET suggests that in the future one ought to consider the local needs more and taking into consideration the amount of physiotherapy students graduating from other HEIs in Lithuania.

2.6. Programme management

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated. The main role of the programme implementation and quality assurance is assigned to committee of the study programme. All the members of the committee have clear responsibilities (SER, pg. 27) and this was also evident during the site visit.

The responsibilities for the programme management are clear and rest with a 7 person Programme Committee which is approved by the Rector. On the committee are stakeholders and student representatives who are elected every two years however the responsibilities amongst its practitioner programme staff appear unclear. Cooperation between the teachers, the graduates, the students and the stakeholders “is delivered in printed form”. However, during the meetings, both the teachers and the students said that, usually, their comments about the programme are given verbal. Although this is a flexible way to solve problems, it would be suggested that the teachers and the students used the channels that the institution has established.

According to EU Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area in 2013, quality management system was developed in line with Vilnius College. The internal quality assurance measures seem to be effective and efficient. In the SER is stated that “*Self-evaluation remains one of the basic elements for quality assurance. Self-evaluation process includes all the academic staff of the VK, students, graduates, social partners and other members of the community*“(SER, pg. 28). Information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed as it was confirmed during the visit. In the SER one can clearly view the described analysis of the feedback from student’s surveys and that this information is publicly available (SER, pg.28). However, it was mentioned that every second year, surveys of the employer’s opinion about graduates are carried out. During the discussions with social partners they stated some very useful observations about the programme: more attention should be focused on clinical reasoning and patient’s assessment.

An in-depth analysis of how well the management of the study programme is achieved is included in the SER; however, it should be complemented by a strategic plan for the future, not only in the short- but in the long-term as well. Both the expenses and the way to increase the qualifications of the teachers should be taken into consideration. Moreover, due to the growing competition in the labour market, it should be considered what steps ought to be taken in order to enhance the graduates. When it comes to improving the qualifications of the teachers, it may be helpful to have written requirements for them, such as the number of international exchanges or the number of impact factor points which must be achieved, for example, every two years (analysed in the area about the Staff).

Student surveys and round-table discussions enable the teachers to find out the students' opinion about the content of the programme. During the meeting, the students emphasized that their contact with the teachers is sufficient and that they appreciate the openness of the teachers on their suggestions.

The communication with the social partners is mainly through surveys. In the SER there is no reference about how often the data is collected from them, but during the meeting with social partners it was highlighted that they are satisfied with the partnership. However, there was a suggestion to include further knowledge of ultrasound and more hours of assessment of patients to the study programme, and the College assured that it will take on the suggested changes. Nevertheless, after a year, nothing was heard about such changes (as it was told to EET).

The graduates had many valuable comments on the programme of study. They believe that more time would be useful in the field of biomechanics and prosthetic limbs. It has also been emphasized that students could benefit a lot from more frequent meetings with other students from other colleges or universities. Although the graduates said they fill in questionnaires from time to time, their influence on the programme is inadequate.

The EET is led to believe that the consistent and comprehensive monitoring of the study programme is achieved mainly by self-evaluation, which has influenced the Physiotherapy study programme effecting its quality and this is publicly available on the website.

Recommendations for study committee – to research the advantages of the study programme not only in practical training, but also in partnership with employers to find out the true labour market needs.

2.7. Examples of excellence *

* if there are any to be shared as a good practice

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The aim and learning outcomes of the programme could be better defined to meet the stated requirements of the European labour market, this is not taken into consideration amongst the learning outcomes and thereafter in the curriculum design.
- Curriculum design – course programme needs to include more modern trends in physiotherapy and health services ought to be included in the Course Programme, example: Preventative physiotherapy, Occupational physiotherapy, Entrepreneurship. Also there is a suggestion of more modular approach to the curriculum design that would help to create a better theoretical foundation for evidence based physiotherapy and a holistic approach in the field of rehabilitation.
- Increase the internationalisation of the HEI and the physiotherapy programme, by increasing the number of international partner organisations, and in this way increasing the number of visiting lecturers. This would enhance the students' concept of internationalisation and their abilities to study in English leading to more interest for applying for exchange studies abroad.
- The recommendation is that the study hours within the programme could be increased. Now the amount of contact hours and self-studies are not in balance and also the amount of hours in clinical practice are too few when compared to the demands of levels of physiotherapy studies in Europe and the amount of studies previously recommended by the World Confederation of Physical Therapists.
- A change in the course programme ethos away from the medical model is already in process in Vilnius HEI but still there is need for a more evidence-based physiotherapy and rehabilitation oriented curriculum with a modular design.
- To decrease the amount of general subjects in the curriculum and combine some subjects to professional ones and also create a modular based structure that could be supported by definition of Physical Therapy / Physiotherapy <http://www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-descriptionPT>
- To encourage the Staff to do more research and possibly publish in foreign journals.
- To obtain more apparatus and equipment that could support effective learning in contact hours and self-studies if possible.
- The real world feedback for developing physiotherapists for future needs should be more systematically collected. Perhaps even a national research of physiotherapists within Lithuania could be carried out to enquire the requirements and competences.

- It is being recommended that further interaction between Universities and Colleges in Lithuania takes place to inject different aspects of the curriculum and staff (learning better practice from each other).

IV. SUMMARY

There are many changes taking place to the Lithuanian health and rehabilitation sector together with the stated demand that the country is to require a lot more physiotherapists within the near future ensures that Vilnius College will have to educate students to become physiotherapists. To do so will require that the programme aims, learning outcomes, competences and the course curriculum all have to be focused even further on the prospect of a future physiotherapist. The present programme has already been altered somewhat to need both the national and European needs. The curriculum design should be looking at the broader scope of evidence-based physiotherapy practice, a profession that has developed over the time into one that is based more on the social rehabilitation model. Should one of the aims of the course be to train students to become physiotherapists who can seek employment on the European market then the course will have to alter some of its programme contents and clinical practice hours as well as amount of self-studies to make it more comparable.

The facilities and learning resources are good and adequate to ensure learning, even though there is some suggestions to guarantee more effective learning during the contact and self-studies.

The internationalisation of the course including the staff and students is on a good tract, some new partners could still be acquired to have more visiting-lecturers and support the internationalisation of students and staff. The students could be informed of exchange possibilities in the early stage of the course and have more support to go on exchange.

The study process of Vilnius College is quite clear and student centred approach is seen throughout the academic support of students and assessment regime. The demand of internationalisation of physiotherapy education is in a good process and in future more students and teachers could be involved with it.

The staff to student ratio is excellent and the good student support and careful academic monitoring has ensured the good physiotherapists that Vilnius College is producing, that has been supported by all the graduates and social partners present.

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the Physiotherapy Study Programme are clearly allocated and seem to be functioning based on the observations during site visit. There is anyhow a need to develop the oral feedback of teachers and students to more systematic and analytical survey form. This would help to follow-up the possible changes carried out and systematically see if the changes will make a difference in the education.

The EET would like to end this report by stating that the strongest asset that Physiotherapy Study Programme of Vilnius College has are its staff, if they can continue to be involved with international networks, be supported and motivated then all the changes proposed will come about and the education will continue to strive forwards and improve.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme PHYSIOTHERAPY (state code – 653B30002) at VILNIUS COLLEGE is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	17

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

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

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

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

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Dr. Mark Sacco
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Dr. Anne Karki
	Dr. Mateusz Romanowski
	Dr. Ieva Eglė Jamontaitė
	Lukas Gabrielius Tribulas