



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

LIETUVOS MUZIKOS IR TEATRO AKADEMIJOS  
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *Populiarioji muzika***  
*(valstybinis kodas – 653W31002)*  
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

---

**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**OF *Popular Music* (state code - 653W31002)**  
**STUDY PROGRAMME**  
at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre

**Experts' team:**

1. **Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos (team leader)** *academic,*
2. **Prof. dr. Margus Partlas,** *academic,*
3. **Lect. Hannu Apajalahti,** *academic,*
4. **Prof. dr. Anda Beitane,** *academic,*
5. **Doc. dr. Emilija Sakadolskis,** *academic,*
6. **Mr. Augustinas Rotomskis,** *students' representative.*

**Evaluation coordinator -**

***Mr. Edgaras Baumila***

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba  
Report language – English

Vilnius  
2015

## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Populiarioji muzika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	653W31002
Studijų sritis	Menai
Studijų kryptis	Muzika
Studijų programos rūšis	Koleginė
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (3)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Muzikos atlikimo profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2009-08-31

---

## INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Popular Music</i>
State code	653W31002
Study area	Creative Arts and Design
Study field	Music
Type of the study programme	College
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (3)
Volume of the study programme in credits	180 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor's degree in Music and professional competence of a performer
Date of registration of the study programme	31 <sup>st</sup> of August 2009

© Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras  
The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

# CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1. Background of the evaluation process.....	4
1.2. General.....	4
1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information.....	4
1.4. The Review Team.....	5
<b>II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	6
2.2. Curriculum design .....	8
2.3. Teaching staff .....	9
2.4. Facilities and learning resources .....	11
2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment.....	12
2.6. Programme management .....	13
2.7. Examples of excellence * .....	13
<b>III. RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>IV. SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>19</b>

## **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.	The Changes Taking Place in the Popular Music Study Programme 2015-2016

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

The Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies (hereinafter - Faculty) was established in 2013, merging the Faculty of Design and Technologies and the Faculty of Arts. The Dean, professor. Dr. Eugenija Strazdienė, heads the Faculty assisted by the Vice Dean, Jūratė Cravetto, who administers the academic activity. The heads 1) Study Organisation and 2) Studies and 3) Projects

Offices. Heads of Departments and Offices contribute to the day-to day activities, together with the The Faculty has Administration Office, Archive, Library and the Office of maintenance service. There is a Faculty Council.

*Dance Pedagogy, Musical Theatre, Popular Music, Management of Cultural Activity, Apparel Design, Image Design, Coiffure Design, Clothing Technologies and Business* are the programmes on offer by the Faculty and encourage and enable collaboration, interdisciplinarity and the implementation of artistic projects.

There is considerable demand for popular music performers in Lithuania and new opportunities exist for performers in terms of increased concert opportunities here and in other countries. Recording studio opportunities, which complement concertizing opportunities offer aesthetic developments for Lithuanian society and marketable production in artistic fields. Similarly, music-related TV programmes are increasing as well as privately-funded opportunities, including event management, artistic unions and various associations. In 2013, 639 cultural centres were operating in Lithuania, while at the beginning of the following year, as many as 700 registered organizations were engaged in creative, artistic and entertainment activity. There has also been a dynamic increase in tourism, recreational facilities, entertainment and leisure infrastructure in Lithuania, which indicates and predicts a favourable circumstance for popular music and its musicians. Despite quite marked demographic changes in Lithuania, the popularity of the programme remains high and remains attractive to applicants, students and the music industry.

#### **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 *3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2015*.

- 1. Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos (team leader)** *International Consultant/Visiting Professor in the Renaissance, Université Catholique de Lille, France. United Kingdom.*
- 2. Prof. dr. Margus Pärtlas**, *Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and Research Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonia.*
- 3. Lect. Hannu Apajalahti**, *Lecturer in Music Theory, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland.*
- 4. Prof. dr. Anda Beitane**, *Vice Rector for Research and Artistic Work of the Latvian Academy of Music, Latvia.*
- 5. Prof. dr. Emilija Sakadolskis**, *Associate Dean for Research, Projects, and the Arts Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania.*
- 6. Augustinas Rotomskis**, *Clinical psychology student at Vilnius University, Council Member at the Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers, Lithuania.*

## II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publically accessible and are readily available for a variety of involved and interested audiences, including students, potential students, teachers, employers and are uploaded on Vilnius College Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies Internet Website. Leafletting and other advertising material outline the requisite information concerning study programmes at the Faculty. Additionally, Open Door Days and Career Days provide the future students with possibility of discussing the aim of the study programme and its concomitant learning outcomes, content, teaching and learning. There is an annual presentation of the programme at the Science and Study Fair in Vilnius LITEXPO exhibition centre, and there are national level science promotional festivals, providing opportunities to meet the teachers and the students of the Faculty. [SER 2.1: paras.18-33] In 2014, the magazine “Reitingai” the *Popular Music* study programme was evaluated as one of the most successful programmes. This statement of success has been articulated during a period of considerable demographic change in Lithuania.

Organised into encompassing and comprehensively defined clusters, the learning outcomes carefully and appropriately embrace a range of attitudes, skills and registers in *Popular Music*. These are set out in terms of general and professional competences, knowledge application, competence to undertake research, special competence, social competence and personal competence. The aim and learning outcomes are available to employers. The learning outcomes in particular are wide-ranging and are rich in professional and personal pertinence in respect of their application to the contemporary settings to which they apply. It is clear that the learning outcomes of the study subjects have been distilled from the programme learning outcomes. [Appendix 1; SER 2.1: paras.18-33]

The very broad mission/aim: ‘to prepare practice-oriented specialists with degree of higher education and who meet economic and social needs; to develop an effective cooperation with the representatives from the operating field and ensure that the study process would be modern and in compliance with European standards; to develop the students’ general abilities and civil values, necessary for the future work of Vilnius College graduates and their continuing studies’ meets the requirements of the sixth level in Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, the First-Study Cycle defined in European Qualification Framework (EQF), the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, the Bologna Qualification Framework (especially the Dublin descriptors) and Descriptor of Study Cycles. [SER 2.1: para.20]

The study programme, its aim and learning outcomes are congruent with the skills and

attributes required of a performer, lifelong-learner and the desired 'general-abilities' education at Level 6 [SER 2.1: para.21].

While the learning outcomes have been elegantly composed and conceptually well placed, they should be surveyed yet again to ensure that all are achievably situated at each semester. For example, in semester 1 History of Music: General History of Music I, Study Outcome 3.1 states: 'after completing the study programme, a graduate will be able to analyze and evaluate events of popular music culture in the cultural music context of regions and worldwide'. As to the certainty that this learning outcome is achievable for a module of 36 taught hours (44 self-study hours), the response given during interview was that the learning outcomes are set at the optimum of Level 6 (Lithuanian and European Qualifications Framework), thus providing scope for the very high achievers. The comprehensiveness of the learning outcomes allow for improvisation with a musical instrument/voice in the manner of popular music style and genre. Moreover, a graduate will be prepared individually to facilitate the design and preparation of 'jazz and popular music programmes for different social and cultural contexts'. [SED, Table 2, 7.2, 8.1]

There are discrete study areas under the broad headlines: History of Music, Culture Management, Copyright and Neighbouring Rights, Musical Notation, Main Instrument, Vocal and Improvisation, Ensemble and Additional Instruments, Practice (4 discrete components) and final Project. [Appendix 1] Importantly for a programme in *Popular Music*, student application is required across a broad spectrum of studies and skills, ensuring, knowledge, literacy and competence at Bachelor level. All the related academic inputs speak to each other relevantly. [Appendix 1] The programme includes a variety of genres including jazz, modern pop and rock music and it is possible to graduate in any of these as a specialism.

The learning outcomes had been composed under the direction of the previous Head of Department, but were re-validated for the SER. It was stated that performance standards and audience reaction are important as evidence of learning outcome achievement; the dynamics of change in learning outcomes are palpable in that they are being tested and evaluated constantly. Teachers should ensure that their students are well versed in the meaning and function of learning outcomes at Level 6.

As stated below, the learning outcomes would benefit from the development of wider dimensions in non-music competences as articulated by Social Partners [2.2] In this sense, the Review Team felt that the programme could illustrate more actively, and be able to provide examples, as to how learning outcome adjustments, which commendably are observed and made during the programme, are dynamically effective and productive both to students and the

external world of employment and also to further academic study. In general - the field develops systematically and has distinctive features.

## **2.2. Curriculum design**

The curriculum design meets all legal requirements, as set out in the SER in accordance with the law *On Approval of Description of General Requirements for the First Cycle and Continuing Study Programmes*: approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania 09-04-2010 No.67-2635 by law No.V-501, amendments 15-07-2010 No. V-1190. [SER 2.1: para.21; Republic of Lithuania: Law on Higher Education and Research 30th April, 2009: No X1-242] The scope of the study programme consists of 180 ECTS, 4800 hours; duration of the studies - three years (six semesters, each of 20 weeks). Each semester consists of 30 ECTS credits (when 1 ECTS equals to 26,7 working hours per a student or one working week). [SED, 2.2, para.35]

Although, out of appropriateness, the nomenclatures of some study subjects remain the same, the levelness and intensity of them correspond to the development of the students as the programme progresses the student, but this is mainly confined to the *practice* modules. The content of the study subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies – professional bachelor studies. A practical component (art programme project) and 2) written component (student achievement *portfolio*) comprise the Final Thesis. This self-study and preparation comes at a summative point where the student can apply theoretical and practical knowledge to demonstrate how the learning outcomes and competences, as defined in the programme, are achieved.

It is all carefully designed to accommodate the curricular content appropriate to *Popular Music* and to operate at Level 6 in accordance with both the European and Lithuanian Qualifications Frameworks.

The curriculum and its study subjects are discerningly appropriate for the achievement of learning outcomes. Interviewees stated that the formulation of the learning outcomes meet the requirements of the cycle in being optimal and possible to implement over the period of study, ie, 3 years. [SER 2.1, para.26] The breadth, personal, professional and educational scope of the programme are matched by corresponding learning outcomes.

Graduates of the Professional Bachelor's *Popular Music* study programme are able to work as individuals or in ensemble and provide cultural services or products. They are also equipped for personal careers as musicians.

That the curriculum also includes languages, psychology and Civil Safety and Ecology, Copyright and Neighbouring Rights [Appendix 1] demonstrates the European and national



interest in creating a broad but relevant and up-to-date programme. The subject descriptors and content illustrate an assured and thorough grounding in *Popular Music*, thus ensuring that the programme meets the criteria of the award at Professional Bachelor level. The subjects themselves also indicate a strong command of the programme in holistic terms, illustrating the number of academic and professional strands required for the full make-up of the programme. Students felt that a stronger choice of elective subjects would be enhancing. Some elements of the programme in English towards increasing internationalisation is recommended.

Moreover, as indicated in 2.1, both the learning outcomes and the curricular content would indeed benefit from a more serious and systematic inclusion of non-music competences. This is said in deference to the Social Partners, who during interview, called for skills in entrepreneurship, self-management, self-sales and promotion, self-presentation and the art and practice of successful networking. These, they stated, were vital for both the national and international labour markets as the demands of the future will inevitably unfold.

Concerning advice sought by the programme team about the proposed changes designed to take place during 2015-16, the Review Team has deliberated on the matters. In relation to a) in the submitted document, that of Computer Technologies of Music, Basics of Composition and Arrangement being moved into the compulsory category, and c) in same document, the new subject and Studio Practice being introduced, the Review Team are in broad agreement with all proposals. They, however, express some reservations towards proposed changes under b), the movement of Speciality Language and General and Social Psychology, into the group of *Optional Subjects*, and the movement of Copyright and Neighbouring Rights, Management of Culture and World Music into *General Subjects of College Studies*.

The Review Team believes that the field develops systematically and has distinctive features.

### ***2.3. Teaching staff***

The qualifications of the teaching staff meet the legal requirements, in that all are qualified to Master level, although only 1 of the 25 holds a doctoral qualification. [Appendix 3] Staff comprise professional practitioners who are strongly engaged in artistic and practical activity. This is to the students' benefit, who acquire not only theoretical knowledge but the practical skills of professional activity to guarantee a positive and firm correlation between the taught subject and the needs of modern labour market [SED 2.3, para.82]

Age diversity of the staff – 25 to 66 - is seen as being a positive contributor to the programme, as the young teachers are active as musicians and possess foreign language skills. They are well known as subject experts and active educators. [SER 2.3, para.55] However, more

new and younger staff would make valuable contributions in terms of new ideas and new pedagogies. Reassuringly and supportively teaching hours for teaching colleagues are at their optimum.

Many of the staff, whose average age is 46, are substantially time-served at Vilnius College; 59% of staff are over the age of 40 and 1 teacher aged over 60 years. While there is reasonable age balance, the future might hopefully allow for appointments in the lower age range to re-balance career structures on the programme. Current student recruitment statistics, however, may not prove prospectively helpful in respect of additional appointments. Notwithstanding this situation, the Review Team understood that the future of student recruitment has been under discussion with senior representatives involved in the management of higher education in Lithuania.

There is high compatibility between the professional standing of professional colleagues, and, as evidence unfolded, the learning outcomes written by them. Many of the constructions are quite academic in emphasis, and geared to practice and performance. However, evidence reveals that students are being taught at a high level and achieving similarly.

Broadly, staff-student ratios appear favourable. There are 2 semesters each of 20 weeks and the staff workload is measured in tenure track, whereby full-time teachers perform 1520 hours per year, from which contact hours are within the range 680 to 760 hours a year. The remaining hours are given to the preparation of lectures, qualification improvement, methodical, applied research and artistic activity. [SER 2.3.1, para.59] Table 9 illustrates the recent research and publications of involved staff. There is an obvious interest in pedagogic and textbook contributions to the relevant fields of the programme. The SER states that the insignificant turnover of the academic staff leaves opportunity to maintain and improve the taught course. Staff turnover is said to be natural and without detriment to the quality of studies. [SER 2.3.1, para.58] There is evidence of strong professional group dynamics.

The Review Team found that individual teachers are responsible for personal professional improvement and the within the respective departments and that they have to pass an attestation every 5 years. The *Law No. 949, II chapter II, article 8.3* is complied with. There is a regular procedure of monitoring a teacher's activity each year, implemented every year and teachers are required to present a 5 year self-evaluation report on both pedagogical and artistic activity. Reasonably, justifiably and impressively, the process also evaluates a teacher's competence to achieve the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme. This procedure enables opportunity to participate in a public competition and be recruited for a further 5 year period. [SER 2.3.2, para.69]

Appendices 5 and 6 impressively illustrate the creative and performing activities, while the SER lists prestigious national and international awards and prizes achieved by the teaching staff. Although publications are mostly of pedagogic, textbook and arrangements orientation rather than monograph and are less strong in terms of number, the quality, however is high. Teachers as national and sometimes international artists, are warmly appreciated by students who are drawn to Vilnius College and the programme by the prospect of being taught by them. Thus, the teaching staff are an asset to the programme in terms of artistic contribution, where their gifts as teachers result high pedagogic achievements with their students on the programme.

Therefore, the Review Team finds that in overall contribution the field is exceptionally good.

#### ***2.4. Facilities and learning resources***

The premises for studies are good both in their size and quality. There is sufficient number of classrooms to assign theoretical and practical classes and to implement efficiently the study programme. Despite this, there are several self-proclaimed areas in need of improvement. The facilities in terms of computerized work places, musical instruments as well as sound amplifying equipment will be expanded. The implementation of these steps should further increase the attractiveness of the programme [SER 2.4.1, paras.84 and 87].

The teaching and learning equipment meets the basic needs of the students. There is a sufficient number of properly equipped classrooms to implement the *Popular Music* programme. Despite this, there are some areas which need to be addressed in the following 5 years. There is no recording studio at the Faculty. Audio isolation of the classrooms is not sufficient. Not all the classrooms are provided with computing equipment; however other computing equipment is geared towards improvement. [SER 2.4.1, par.97] Classrooms and their acoustics are adapted for implement individual and group music activities. 28 classrooms are assigned to theoretical and practical classes and there are 51 classrooms in the Faculty in general. Classrooms are assigned to implement practical classes and are supplied with instruments, and some have sound amplifier equipment. 22 of the classrooms feature pianos; some of the classrooms feature 2 pianos and there are classrooms designed for ensemble activities to include music mixers, amplifiers, drum sets, keyboard instruments. String instruments, percussion and vocal specialisms are similarly catered for, all allowing the capacious implementation of *Popular Music*. There are 69 computers at the Faculty to accommodate the needs of the students and teachers. Computers elsewhere in other faculties can also be accessed. [SER 2.4.1, paras.86-7]

The Review Team found that the arrangements for students' practice are good, though more practice rooms would be welcome. There are specialized classrooms for implementing

activities with string instruments (violin and double bass), guitar, wind and percussion instruments and vocal. The sufficient number of properly-equipped classrooms to implement the *Popular Music* studies allows the design of a rational timetable and ensures allocation of time to self-study hours for the students. Students praised the ability to access the learning equipment and practice around the clock. The current facilities ensure the basic needs of the study programme are at a good level but due to lack of money, not all the classrooms are provided with computing equipment and other computing equipment is depreciating. [SER 2.4. para.97]

Teaching materials are good and accessible. Sufficient funds are allocated towards expansion of the Library to meet the demands of the *Popular Music* study programme. [SER 2.4.2.] All in all, material resources are currently at a good level. It can be said that this area develops systematically and has distinctive features.

### **2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment**

The admission requirements are well-founded and meet the legal requirements [SER 2.5.1.]. The requirements of the enrolment examinations are defined in the *Students' Admission Rules to VK*. Interested applicants are required to hold the certificate of secondary education and primary education in music. The competitive grade of the Programme comprises 1) an entrance examination (respective coefficient 0,7); 2) Lithuanian language (respective coefficient 0,2); and 3) the examination grade from one of the following: history, foreign language, information technologies, mathematics or biology (respective coefficient 0,1). [SER 2.5, para.99] The entrance examination is of 4 parts – performance; performance improvisation; solfege; aural.

The organisation of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. The students are introduced to the basic Vilnius College documents, standard regulations and procedures of studies, content of the subjects, schedules, timetables, duties and responsibilities of Vilnius College students. Adequate time is allocated to theory subjects, practical classes and consultations. There is standardised procedure for the examination of students' work [SER 2.5.2.].

The Review Team found that the staff encourage students to participate in research, artistic and applied research activities by helping the students with their individual projects. Students praised staff involvement in their individual research, artistic and applied research pursuits; however, the Review Team found that this process, while commendable, could be more strongly documented and systematically presented. The artistic achievements of students is strong. Towards enhancing these achievements, as mentioned in 2.4, the programme should acquire more practice rooms and a recording studio.

Concerning mobility, the Review Team found the students have the basic opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes. Students are informed about the possibility to participate in mobility programmes, though the implementation of mobility could be stronger. It would seem that the popularity of the programme cause students not to seek mobility. For example, due to the satisfaction with the quality of the *Popular Music* study programme, the data for 2013 found no evidence intimating student interest in mobility. [SED 2.5, para.118] Where the process is working, staff help students to prepare the necessary documentation for the participation in mobility programmes. Despite this, the selection of a full-range of mobility programmes is not an easy matter. [SER 2.5.2, par.117, Table 15]

Vilnius College ensures an adequate level of academic and social support. Students may be granted scholarships, loans and other forms of financial support. There is a gym, career centre, canteen, which are available for the students. Also, there is a possibility to participate in the activities of sport branches and art collectives which are operating at Vilnius College. Despite this, the Review Team see two areas for improvement: the Faculty allocates 10% of the scholarship fund to the premiums of students. It is welcoming that the faculty allocated premiums to their students, but the percentage of students who obtain premiums could be higher for this kind field of study. Towards increasing its student support services, Vilnius College should also consider appointing a professional psychologist - as is increasingly standard in higher education - towards increasing the basic support structure available to students. [SER 2.5.3.] Psychologists can be important in working with students to prepare themselves for high-level and taxing performances, for example. Relations between staff and students are very good. Students welcomingly reported that there is a 'one door' ie., one route resolution to any problems.

The assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available [SER 2.5.4, paras.85 and 87] and activities in the professional fields of graduates from the *Popular Music* study programme coheres with the expectations of its executors [SER 2.5.5.] Students reported that they were aware of their assessment criteria and how they are assessed. Both staff and students are able to see and hear learning outcomes.

The field develops systematically and has distinctive features.

## **2.6. Programme management**

The management of the programme is in the hands of the Studies Quality Council which operates within the Vilnius College with an aim to coordinate a system monitoring the quality of internal studies. There is a Quality Manual governing QA procedures; the College Administrative Board is responsible for the studies quality, monitoring of the study programmes,

while The Vilnius College Academic Council approves study programmes and submits the proposals to the Vilnius College Rector. The Deputy Director for Academic Affairs organizes and coordinates the full-range of activities concerning the implementation of the study programmes' internal quality evaluation and accreditation. [SER 2.6, paras.149-165]

While the programme management includes at its administrative helm, the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, and an admirable facet of quality management and a governing authority for quality assurance, the Review Team found it less clear to discern precisely how the ESG, as applied to *Popular Music*, operate as an umbrella mechanism for *overall* programme management and the processes for any periodic reviews that may be in place, but not mentioned in the SER. It should be mentioned however that Vilnius College has assembled an operational Quality Manual. There could be more mentioned on management issues as they relate to future development, in particular the day-to-day management issues that might arise should the programme develop in terms of student numbers and in mobility. While these are to some extent currently unknown, managerial vision is also important.

There is a due process for the collection of data. Data is collected and accumulated in the subject evaluation record registers. These, together with meeting minutes of the committees on qualification improvement, reports, evaluation record registers of the final theses, statistical accounts on student mobility, the orders of Vilnius College Rector and the Dean of the Faculty, minutes of community meetings, management board and department minutes, timetables and schedules, collaboration agreements and personal files of the students, form a major part the quality process for the study programme.

The chain of process begins with teachers who present their activity reports to the Department and the teachers not assigned to the Department present their reports to the Vice Dean. The Department Head prepares an Activity Report for the Dean. The Dean prepares an Annual Faculty Activity Report for presentation and approval during the Faculty Council meeting. To conclude the process, the Annual Faculty Activity Report is presented to the Vilnius College Quality-Assurance Management Division. Concomitantly, annual activity plans are assembled following the analysis of strengths, weaknesses and actions for improvement. [SER 2.6, para.59]

The Programme Committee, to the forefront of the improvement process, arranges the meetings to oversee the implementation conditioning of the study programme and meets not less than twice per academic year. The Programme Committee evaluates the subjects at least once a year and analyses subject content, themes and coherence with learning outcomes. [SER 2.6, 162] External evaluation enables the programme to seek a maximum accreditation period of 6 years;

thus following the recommendations and advice given by international experts, programme leaders are able to make adjustments in the best interests of their students. Given the enthusiasm and dedication in evidence, this current first international evaluation suggests that Vilnius College will react to the process assiduously.

There are informal processes for the involvement of Social Partners and community members in the quality assurance process. [SER 2.6, paras.164-66] Formal processes for the Social Partners include involvement in the study programme development, implementation and evaluation. Social Partners are members of the Committee of the Study Programme. Duties include: taking part in the Commissions of the final evaluation, lecturing, the creation of conditions to give practical classes in the institutions of culture and education and the supply of places for performing practice activities. Social Partners are also given the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the learning outcomes of the study programme within the labour market. This is largely achieved through the submission of evaluations of practice activities performed by the students and also through the reports gleaned from the defense of Final Theses.

In 2014, the Chairman of the Final Evaluation Qualifying Commission stated that the level of the acquired competences of the programme graduates had significantly increased. [SER, 2.6, para.166] Social Partners are warmly supportive of the programme and especially in their keenness for students to obtain additional wider labour-market orientated competences. They strongly support mobility, which remains positive but somewhat embryonic, and also teaching in the English language, also acknowledged by the College. [SER 2.3.2, Tables 9, 8, para.82] Towards developing wider international contacts, particularly in terms of the excellent artist-teachers involved in the programme a robust marketing strategy is recommended by the Review Team.

The Review Team found that the management of the programme, mostly through the application of quality assurance measures, is working well. Thus the field develops systematically and has distinctive features.

## **2.7. Examples of excellence \***

Vilnius College's successful policy of recruiting and retaining nationally recognised artists and artist-pedagogues is both commendable and an example of excellent practice. This available expertise and artistry is fundamental to recruitment and the popularity of the programme (See 2.3 and the Summary).

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a better choice of elective subjects and offer at least some elements of the programme in English towards increasing internationalisation and locate as many routes and openings as possible towards future mobility possibilities.
2. Develop stronger non-music competences, as illustrated in programme analysis areas 2.1. & 2.2. and ensure students are fully familiar with the meaning and function of learning outcomes.
3. Do everything that is possible towards resolving acoustic and sound isolation problems in the faculty premises.
4. Acquire more practice rooms and a recording studio.
5. Appoint a Psychologist for the students. Be competitive at the highest levels, whilst maintaining the domestic market and develop robust marketing.
6. Spell out how the *European Standards and Guidelines* are being activated in quality-assurance procedures, in that precisely how the 7 standards are currently being engaged.



## IV. SUMMARY

The programme is demonstrably attractive and put together with skill and expertise. The great strengths are the comprehensiveness of the course units (modules) and the opportunities for playing and performing. In these respects, the programme offers a mature pedagogical experience, coupled with excellent professional opportunities nationally. There is an admirable composition of learning outcomes, which are firmly located at Level 6 of the Lithuanian and European Qualifications Frameworks. The teaching staff bring excellence to the programme. The current staff-student ratio is optimal and also is attractive to potential students. There is however a need to revisit the electives to ensure that they are sufficiently varied in terms of students' choice.

Internally, study facilities appear to be good as do library and software provision. Nevertheless a recording studio and more practice rooms would be greatly appreciated. Opportunities for mobility exist and students are given the opportunity to seek representation on various committees and to make contributions to the quality-assurance process. Mobility, though difficult to achieve due to many competing factors, should be very high on the 'urgent' agenda for Vilnius College. There is evidence of strong formal and informal student-support services and very good opportunities for internship, careers and progression into the world of work, as testified by the popularity of the programme. A *one-door, ie., one route* resolution to student problems attests to the ease of working relationships between staff and students.

What appears as a strength may feasibly be, in places, quite testing to students: this is the matter of learning outcomes, referred to earlier. Generally, while they are admirable and stylishly composed, students would benefit from more learning-outcome awareness in technical terms and how learning outcomes build towards graduate status. Admirably, staff are well attuned to leaning outcomes and evaluate them at regular intervals.

More doctoral activity (2.3) would further support and enhance the excellence of the artist-staff appointments. This may be difficult to achieve given frequency of high-level performances, but as the programme maintains an academic pedagogic emphasis, it is a worthy complementary thought for future development.

Concerning quality assurance and management, the Review Team did not gain a precise and clear picture on how the *European Standards and Guidelines* are actually being used, though student surveys on staff are regularly carried out, and there are clear and copious methods for monitoring and reviewing quality. The Quality Manual appears a distinctive internal document. Management of the programme is clear in labelling, that is in terms of the staff who perform it and also in terms of some of its important structures; but it is less clear in terms of how

management operates on a week-to-week basis, and what management issues are important for the successful running and future planning of *Popular Music*.

Finally, the SER and site visit offered much detail in the various arenas of learning outcomes, content and external relations, support and professional development, perhaps to some extent at the expense of the big issues, those concerning sustainability, the future perspective, growth and funding; and while the Review Team wish to conclude with a positive endorsement concerning the analysis of the contemporary situation and provision the programme team has provided, the SER and site-visit interviews revealed that there *may* be some myopia in relation to the possibly *tough* economic road ahead, yet to be overcome in Lithuanian Higher Education. Vilnius College urgently needs a stronger, more persuasive and assertive marketing strategy, both national and international, and more overseas partners towards the securing of a robust future for *Popular Music*.

The Review Team commends the programme in the ways illustrated throughout this report, its remarkably various, professional course content and excellent artistic staffing especially.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Popular Music* (state code – 653W31002) 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	3
3.	Teaching staff	4
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>19</b>

\*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. Terence Clifford-Amos
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Prof. dr. Margus Pärtlas
	Lect. Hannu Apajalahti
	Prof. dr. Anda Beitane
	Doc. dr. Emilija Sakadolskis
	Mr. Augustinas Rotomskis