



STUDIŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos Klaipėdos  
vizualinio dizaino fakulteto  
**VIZUALINIO DIZAINO PROGRAMOS (61202M119,  
612W20004)**  
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**Visual Design (61202M119, 612W20004)**  
**STUDY PROGRAMME**  
at Vilnius Academy of Art

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## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Vizualinis dizainas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	61202M119, 612W20004
Studijų sritis	Dizainas
Studijų kryptis	Dailė
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinės (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais <sup>1</sup>	160
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Menų bakalauro laipsnis
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1991

<sup>1</sup> – vienas kreditas laikomas lygiu 40 studento darbo valandų

## INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	<i>Visual Design</i>
State code	61202M119, 612W20004
Study area	Arts
Study field	Fine Arts
Kind of the study programme	University Studies
Level of studies	First
Study mode (length in years)	continuous (4)
Scope of the study programme in national credits	160
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Art
Date of registration of the study programme	1991

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Vilnius Academy of Art offers two programmes from its campus in Klaipėda: a first level bachelor and a second level masters. This was the first evaluation by an International Peer Review Team.

The Bachelor of Arts in Visual Design is delivered on a four-year cycle for whole-time students. It correlates with similar programmes across Europe and the study programme is structured to deliver 210 credits based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The International Peer Review Team prepared a preliminary report based on the Self Evaluation Report (SER) and supplementary appendices provided by the Academy. This was followed a one-day visit to the campus in Klaipėda during which the Review Team met with the Vice Rector of the Academy, teaching and administrative staff, students and a selection of employers. In addition, there was an opportunity to observe the facilities and resources available to the Academy. In addition, final project work of students and examination materials were reviewed.

The Review Team notes that the actual delivery of the programme goes a long way to meeting the expected quality standards but this was not always thoroughly reflected in the documentation.

This final report was prepared following a series of private meetings of the Review Team to discuss its findings and present the analysis and conclusions given below.

## II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### *1. Programme aims and learning outcomes*

#### **1.1. Programme demand, purpose and aims**

##### *1.1.1. Uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme*

Satisfactory. There is a clear description of the demand for this programme from applicants and the selection process is outlined in the SER. There is also clear evidence that graduates are finding employment. This was supported by the contributions from graduates and employers.

It is to be positively remarked the denomination of the programme. Choosing the concept of Visual design instead of Graphic Design or Visual Communication which are the standards, allows the programme to develop in different professional lines, provide a wider education and be able to introduce new technology challenges for creative industries when appear.

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

While there is general compliance with the regulations the Review Team suggests that the documentation should be amended in certain areas. The study plan has to be adjusted by new legal requirements for higher education study programmes (august, 2010), this means a proportion of some subjects has to be changed.

##### *1.1.3. Relevance of the programme aims*

Satisfactory. Some good, clear programme aims are given and describe, in general terms, the graduate profile. Some additional and specific descriptors of the graduate, differentiating him/her from a liberal arts or fine art graduate should be included.

## **1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme**

### *1.2.1. Comprehensibility and attainability of the learning outcomes*

Satisfactory. Although not as clearly described as they could be in the SER the Review Panel is satisfied that the learning outcomes are comprehensible both by staff and students and are attainable. The emphasis is on developing students' creativity and conceptual ability and applying this in all stages of the design process. Students are introduced to problem solving and independent learning.

It would be useful if the learning outcomes are stated in a numbered list to facilitate alignment with assessment criteria.

### *1.2.2. Consistency of the learning outcomes*

Satisfactory, in actuality but, as written in the documentation, not fully consistent with those of design programmes across Europe. The achievements of the students and graduates confirmed for the Review Team that appropriate outcomes are being delivered but the documentation places too much emphasis on outcomes more appropriate for Fine Art and insufficient concentration on the need for graduates to understand issues such as the current business environment, the needs of the clients and the demands of industrial production.

### *1.2.3. Transformation of the learning outcomes*

Unsatisfactory. While it appears the programme team engages in a process of self-reflection this is not formalised nor described appropriately in the documentation.

## **2. Curriculum design**

### **2.1. Programme structure**

#### *2.1.1. Sufficiency of the study volume*

Unsatisfactory. The volume of study is largely relevant and appropriate on this programme. Nevertheless, the balance of class-contact teaching against independent learning on the part of students would benefit from a re-alignment. To develop a more student-centred learning environment requires that students be encouraged to direct their own learning.

#### *2.1.2. Consistency of the study subjects*

Satisfactory. Consideration could be given to the balance of subjects on the curriculum. There is a bias towards those more suitable for a Fine Art programme, for example Academic Painting, Academic Drawing, Sculptural Plastics, and Art Aesthetics. Perhaps the inclusion of subjects such as Design Process, Typography, Professional Design Practice, Project Management, Marketing, Branding, Prepress and Printing etc. would rebalance the programme.

Foreign languages is one elective subject field we would recommend be included in the main programme, with an appropriate credit allocation.

The descriptors for some modules are not easy to understand, for example, Sculptural Plastics. The Colour Theory modules would benefit from the addition of information about Colour Specification Systems and Colour Management Systems.

The emphasis on the History of Art is not entirely appropriate and students would benefit from the inclusion of the History and Theory of Design.

## **2.2. Programme content**

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

Satisfactory. According to the submitted self-assessment material and information obtained during the meetings, it appears that the program is generally consistent with the General Requirements for Undergraduate Study programs. The program is 160 credits, 7 subjects per semester, 12 credits for final project. Although the number for practical training is not sufficient (6 instead of 10). The subjects of study field should be increased till 60 credits. Some electives still have 1 credit.

The new study plan which should be introduced for first year students (based on the General Requirements for the Degree conferring First Cycle and Integrated study programs) was not presented.

### *2.2.2. Comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content*

Satisfactory. There is a comprehensive range of subjects making up the programme content. The programme documentation gives the impression that the emphasis is on developing the technical ability of students. However, it is clear that in reality the emphasis is on developing the creative and conceptual abilities of students but the programme should move even more towards a student-centred learning environment identified by approaches such as problem-based learning and peer learning. Experience has shown this approach to be successful in developing the ability for lifelong learning so crucial in this rapidly changing world.

## **3. Staff**

### **3.1. Staff composition and turnover**

#### *3.1.1. Rationality of the staff composition*

The Review Team found the number of staff, their qualifications and experience to be sufficient. The legal requirement for a minimum of 50% of study field subjects to be taught by PhD or recognised artists is met. A total of 25 lecturers from Visual Design and Foundations of Art faculties work in the first level of Visual Design study programme: 1 professor, 1 assistant professor, 7 associate professors, 16 lecturers.

10 lecturers work in Visual Design faculty, including 1 professor, 1 assistant professor, 1 associate professor and 7 lecturers. 15 lecturers worked in Foundations of Art faculty, 6 of which are associate professors and 9 lecturers.

#### *3.1.2. Turnover of teachers*

Satisfactory. The turnover rate of lecturers has been very low. Where there is a turnover of staff it is due to teachers taking up professional appointments in order to keep up to date with developments in the design sector and the selection of replacement staff “is implemented by open contest.”

### **3.2. Staff competence**

#### *3.2.1. Compliance of staff experience with the study programme*

Satisfactory. There is a broad range of experience evident among staff. They are actively engaged in the design profession. The Review Team notes also that members of staff are engaged with scholarly activity in addition to their professional work.

#### *3.2.2. Consistency of teachers' professional development*

Satisfactory. The Academy appears to be supportive of lecturers' professional practice and development, as evidenced by staff engagement with the local design community and participation in applied design projects. The projects include students and provide an invaluable opportunity to experience professional practice at first hand. However, it would be beneficial if members of staff can be encouraged work more internationally to ensure the student experience is not solely local.

#### **4. Facilities and learning resources**

##### **4.1. Facilities**

###### *4.1.1. Sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies*

Unsatisfactory. Both buildings from which the programme is delivered are not fully fit for purpose. As outlined in the SER "both buildings require renovation, ie, isolation of windows and doors, cosmetic reconstruction or walls and ceilings". The Review Team notes that the Academy has identified alternative accommodation and is in the process of planning refurbishment.

###### *4.1.2. Suitability and sufficiency of equipment for studies*

Unsatisfactory. Similarly, the equipment is not fully fit for purpose. The tables and chairs in the auditoriums are not suitable for design studies, the table-tops are not adjustable and are too small. The furniture is more appropriate for theoretical studies. There is insufficient storage space for students' work. The SER states that according to health and safety regulations the computer classroom "is not suitable for work is there are more than eight people in a group stationed at computers due to monitor radiation and sound levels" despite there being 20 seats. Updating of computer equipment is required for "the harmful effects should decrease. The furniture in computer auditorium is completely unsuitable for computer work. The Review Team recommends that new accommodation plans should include appropriate upgrading of equipment.

###### *4.1.3. Suitability and accessibility of the resources for practical training*

Satisfactory. "Two auditoriums are equipped for theoretical studies. They have excellent image projection equipment." This equipment is also mobile which allows for flexibility. Students also have access photocopying, traditional photography equipment, some computers, a scanner and sound system. The plan is to upgrade the computer facilities from seven workspaces to ten.

The development of new premises is expected to address the shortcomings.

##### **4.2. Learning resources**

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

Unsatisfactory. There is a small library, which gives the best service it can. The quantity of books is small, with very few recent purchases: "considering the difficult financial state of Klaipėda Design Faculty found itself in, the growth of the library funds was limited." Nevertheless, the quality of what is in the library is good.

The Review Team is concerned by the lack of subscriptions to online/print journals, periodicals or databases and the lack of computers and internet access.

###### *4.2.2. Suitability and accessibility of learning materials*

Satisfactory. The suitability and accessibility of learning materials, other than the library, is not addressed in the SER but the Review Team found this situation to be better. Members of staff are very supportive and helpful, students have access to the school until late in the evening. However, "computers are insufficient and there is no internet accessibility."

## **5. Study process and student assessment**

### **5.1. Student admission**

#### *5.1.1. Rationality of requirements for admission to the studies*

Satisfactory. The requirements for admission set by the Academy are appropriate but there are issues around the national system that are addressed in the conclusions. In common with normal European practice anonymous portfolio review should be implemented rather than personal portfolio presentation. This would support the selection of the best students.

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

Satisfactory. Promotion and marketing of the programme could be improved. Information about the campus in Klaipėda on web is not easy to find. On the other hand the Review Team did notice that the final thesis exhibition in city galleries makes very positive input.

### **5.2. Study process**

#### *5.2.1. Rationality of the programme schedule*

Satisfactory. The programme schedule given in the SER is well-balanced and appropriate. The annual plan is coherent with teaching, examination and work experience distributed evenly. The weekly schedule balances the student workload between theoretical lectures and studio practice while also acknowledging independent learning time.

The Review Team noticed that short-term projects with speedy feedback gave good results, and greater security to the students and lecturers.

#### *5.2.2. Student academic performance*

Satisfactory. Student progress and retention is monitored in an appropriate manner and statistics from 2005/6 to 2009/10 are given in the SER showing a very positive record in student completion. The Review Team had the opportunity to view students' project work and also had presentations from some students. The quality of the work is comparable to that of students on similar programmes across Europe.

#### *5.2.3. Mobility of teachers and students*

Unsatisfactory. The SER notes that "the exchange of lecturers is not sufficient." While lectures are very well connected with local industry and the design sector there is little evidence of staff engagement with international issues. During the period of the self-evaluation only three students took part in Erasmus exchange programmes. The SER suggests that students "do not receive state funding, the so called 'study package', which belongs to them due to the good study results" and this is having a negative impact on mobility.

Both staff and student mobility should be encouraged. The Faculty needs to develop the Erasmus programme to encourage staff and student exchanges. While not being unaware of the financial issues the Review Team suggests that perhaps strengthening the foreign language skills of staff and students would support internationalisation process.

### **5.3. Student support**

#### *5.3.1. Usefulness of academic support*

Satisfactory. There is evidence of excellent communication between staff and students. Students were aware of all issues affecting their studies and the range of opportunities available to them. Information about the programme is presented during open days that coincide with public debates of final thesis held in public. Publications are monitored by a designated lecturer.



### *5.3.2. Efficiency of social support*

Satisfactory. Due to the small size of the campus and its distance from the main campus in Vilnius there is little formal social support. However, this has resulted in an excellent structure of informal support systems that appear to function very well.

## **5.4. Student achievement assessment**

### *5.4.1. Suitability of assessment criteria and their publicity*

Satisfactory. The assessment criteria are not sufficiently described in the programme documentation but the Review Team found that both staff and students were familiar with the assessment processes and criteria.

### *5.4.2. Feedback efficiency*

Satisfactory. The approach to feedback is effective and it is clear that the student achievement is improved on this basis. The SER does not give much detail about this aspect of the programme but the Review Team was impressed with the satisfaction among the students regarding feedback and tutorial support. This feedback is given verbally and students report that it is timely, regular and very useful.

### *5.4.3. Efficiency of final thesis assessment*

Satisfactory. The requirements for final thesis assessment are appropriate and match those across art and design programmes in Europe. The Review Team received presentations of their final work from students and also given access to the project work and theses of all students. The quality was satisfactory. It is also evident that the procedures are clear and transparent: students are given printed details of the specific evaluation criteria at the start of the semester and said they are satisfied with the efficiency.

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

Satisfactory. Non-formal and self-education is built into the programme structure. Students are encouraged to participate in various local activities. The Review Team feels that it would be good to see more student participation in international competitions and workshops.

## **5.5. Graduates placement**

### *5.5.1. Expediency of graduate placement*

Satisfactory. The placement of graduates is exemplary. Most of the graduates work in the field of their profession, establish their own businesses, working as freelance designers and consultants or continue studies in MA programme. Statistics given for 2009 in the SER show that only a single graduate to be unemployed, all others are either working in the design sector or undertaking further study. In 2008 two are shown to be unemployed. These are impressive results.

## **6. Programme management**

### **6.1. Programme administration**

#### *6.1.1. Efficiency of the programme management activities*

Satisfactory. It is clear that the programme is efficiently and effectively managed. The required information is readily available and members of staff were able to comment activities with knowledge.

## **6.2. Internal quality assurance**

### *6.2.1. Suitability of the programme quality evaluation*

Satisfactory. Although the process requires more formalisation the Review Team was satisfied that staff are engaged in a process of continuous evaluation and improvement of the quality of this programme. This was echoed in the comments of the students, graduates and employers. Currently, an updated approach based on the Tuning project of the EU and the General Directorate for Culture and Education is being tested.

### *6.2.2. Efficiency of the programme quality improvement*

Satisfactory. As stated in the point above, quality is a key concern of all engaged with the programme. The SER reports that “results of the student survey are used to enhance quality of instruction and delivery of information, to increase clarity and transparency in assessing students’ work and employ, to a higher effect, student-teacher feedback.” It is clear that staff are aware of the necessity of monitoring the programme in order to achieve improvement in quality.

### *6.2.3. Efficiency of stakeholders participation.*

Satisfactory. The Review Team was impressed with the level of cooperation with local industry. This provides a very strong industrial and professional context to the student experience in addition to opportunities for summer work experience and employments following graduation. There was significant evidence of this process to be seen throughout the city. This supported the description of significant stakeholder engagement in the SER.

## **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **3.1.**

Contemporary design practice should replace the over-emphasis on a Fine Art underpinning of the programme. The context in which design is practiced should be articulated in the programme documentation. The suite of modules should reflect this.

### **3.2.**

Clearly stated and coherent learning outcomes for the programme must be written. They need to reflect the knowledge required by a professional visual designer working in a global context.

### **3.3.**

Specific learning outcomes must be written for each module descriptor.

### **3.4.**

Criteria describing how each of the individual learning outcomes will be assessed must be written for each module descriptor.

### **3.5.**

The emphasis on teaching needs to be replaced by the development of a student centred learning environment that encourages students to engage in independent learning and supports approaches such as problem-based learning.

### **3.6.**

Consider establishing an industry advisory committee to advise on appropriate programme content.

3.7.

The inclusion of subjects such as Design Process, Typography, Professional Design Practice, Project Management, Marketing, Branding, Basics of Law, History of Design, more credits for foreign Languages, Prepress and Printing etc. would improve the programme.

3.8.

Opportunities for international staff and student exchange should be explored.

3.9.

The Review Team was given to understand that a move to new and more suitable premises is being planned. The opportunity should also be taken to ensure contemporary learning materials and equipment are put in place and the required upgrading of the library is completed.

3.8.

The new national application process does not appear to include a portfolio submission that is out of step with normal international practices. It has caused a significant problem with recruiting appropriate students. The Review Team encourages the college to seek amendments to this process.

#### IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Visual Design* (state code – 61202M119, 612W20004) ) is given **positive** evaluation.

Table. *Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment.*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2	Curriculum design	3
3	Staff	4
4	Material resources	2
5	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	3
6	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	<b>Total:</b>	18

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

2 (poor) - Meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement

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

4 (very good) - The field is exceptionally good