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Final Study Programme Evaluation
Multimedia Design
(professional bachelor)

at

Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija

Assessment report

4 April 2012

Assessment report of the professional bachelor study programme Multimedia Design. The final evaluation was carried out by **evalag** as part of the Design and New Media Study Quality Development Project no. VP1-2.2-ŠMM-07-K-01-122.

Mokslas • Ekonomika • Sanglauda
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Kuriame Lietuvos ateitį

Multimedia Design

Contents

Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija (VTDK) commissioned **evalag** with the final programme evaluation of the newly created professional bachelor study programme "multimedia design". The programme evaluation was carried out by an international expert team that assessed the study programme according to the Lithuanian quality assurance standards (and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area) with the objective of accrediting and registering the programme according to Lithuanian higher education law and awarding **evalag**'s international quality label for study programmes.

1. Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija (VTDK)

Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija (VTDK) is a public Lithuanian non-university higher education institution that offers college level study programmes which are directed towards a professional activity. The college in its present form was created by merging several colleges in Vilnius that specialized in the fields of engineering and design – this gives the college its distinct profile.

According to Lithuanian law, college level higher education institutions (kolegija) offer full-time and part-time professional bachelors degrees that allow graduates to pursue a professional career. Master degrees are not offered. Graduates who want to pursue a master degree at a Lithuanian university need to complete one and a half years of bridge courses to meet the admission requirements.

About **4000 students** are enrolled at VTDK, which offers 22 professional bachelor programmes in the fields of engineering and design in the following four faculties:

- Civil engineering faculty
- Faculty of design
- Railway transport faculty
- Faculty of technical sciences

The college's mission is to be a partner in the development of a sustainable society. On the basis of this mission the college has developed a strategic plan for its development and management. VTDK has recently been very active and successful in acquiring EU-funding. The college finished or still carries out 16 EU-projects (in 10 of them VTDK has a leader role) to renew its study programmes, to renovate its buildings, to update its equipment, to develop its staff, to collaborate with its European partner institutions and to develop its internal quality management.

The redesigned multimedia design programme (former Interactive design study programme) will be operated by the faculty of design which offers four study programmes for 773 students:

- Interactive design
- Photographic technology
- Interior design
- Graphic design

Responding to the recent higher education reform in Lithuania and an employer's survey carried out by the college, the faculty completely updated the two first-named study programmes – among those the multimedia design programme – in order to ad-

just the programme contents to the demands of the labour market and to broaden the competences of the graduates.

The development of the multimedia design study programme is part of the implementation of EU-projects, e.g. “modernization of infrastructure of VCTD”, “design and new media study quality development”, “VCTD interior design, construction and transportation by roads management study programmes for stimulating mobility” and “VCTD studies quality improvement”.

2. The Multimedia Design programme

The multimedia design programme is the successor of the former interactive design programme. Its design has been renewed due to the rapid development of the field of new media and the needs of the labour market. The goals of the programme were modified, the contents were extended and the programme’s entire structure was reorganized by implementing a modular system and a more project-based teaching method.

The modification of the block of tracks resulted in three new ones − Interactive Design, Audiovisual Editing and Sound Design − while the track Visual Communications Design was eliminated. The track Animation is adopted as it stands into the new programme..

Since the new concept does not correspond to the former programme title, the programme was renamed (multimedia design).

The updating of the study programme aims at training specialists who have basic skills in several areas – Interactive Design, Animation, Sound Design, and Audiovisual Editing - and specific competencies in one medium. It offers graduates a practical education for the Lithuanian labour market. Graduates will be able to work or, after completing equivalency, continue to master’s studies at other higher education institution.

The college offers the programme a as three-year full-time programme

3. Accreditation process

The programme evaluation was carried out with a peer review on the basis of a self-evaluation report provided by the college, a site visit of an expert team, an assessment report by the expert team and the accreditation decision by **evalag**’s accreditation commission. **evalag** carried out the assessment of the multimedia design programme in a cluster together with another bachelor programme of the faculty: photograph technology.

The final expert evaluation (performance principles, steps, processes, and procedures of the evaluation) was conducted in accordance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2005) and documents regulating the implementation and evaluation of study programs in the Republic of Lithuania (*Study Program External Evaluation and Accreditation Procedures Description*, approved by the July 24, 2009, Order No. ISAK-1652 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, and *Study Programs Intended-To-Be-Implemented Preparation Description and Their Compliance With Approved General And Specific Requirements For Study Programs Establishing Methodological Guidelines Approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania*,

approved by the March 3, 2010, Order No. 1-01-18 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (December 20, 2010, Order No. 1-01-163 revision), *Degree-awarding undergraduate and integrated study program general requirements,* approved by the April 9, 2010, Order No. V-501 of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Lithuania and Science, etc.)

The assessment of the programme consists of two parts which complement one another. On the one hand the programme was assessed to be registered according to Lithuanian law which allows the programme to go into operation. For its registration the programme has to comply with the general requirements for study programmes as laid out in Order # V-501 and meet the assessment criteria for new study programmes as described in Order # 1-01-18.

On the other hand the programme was assessed to receive **evalag**'s international label of study programmes. For this label **evalag** uses the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (part 1) and national criteria for programme assessment. In this case, in addition to the above orders the criteria for existing programmes were used as described in Order # 1-01-162. The two sets of criteria are compatible insofar as the criteria for new study programmes are a subset of the criteria for existing programmes taking into account that some information may not be available for newly created study programmes.

The college produced the self-evaluation report according to the Lithuanian guidelines for new study programmes (yet-to-be implemented programmes) as outlined in Order # 1-01-18 and submitted it to **evalag**. **evalag** formed an expert team consisting of two professorial experts and one student expert:

- Prof. Dr. Bernhard Eberhardt, Hochschule der Medien Stuttgart (Stuttgart Media University)
- Prof. Stefan Kim, Fachhochschule Brandenburg Brandenburg (University of Applied Sciences Brandenburg)
- Veronika Kölle, who studied B.A.Media Management and B.Eng., Media Technology, Hochschule Mittweida (University of Applied Sciences) and studies Business Consulting, Hochschule Harz (University of Applied Sciences)

The site visit at VTDK took place on 23 to 25 January 2012 at VTDK. During the site visit the expert team met with representatives of the two programmes, the college administration, students and teaching staff and visited the laboratories and seminar rooms used by the two programmes which are used by the successors programmes .

The expert team produced an assessment report of the programme with an accreditation recommendation which was submitted to **evalag**'s accreditation commission. The commission took its final accreditation decision in March 2012.

On behalf of **evalag** the evaluation was coordinated by Anna Peczyńska with assistance of Grischa Julius R. Fraumann.

4. Programme assessment

4.1 Learning outcomes

Current situation

According to the self-evaluation report the main goals of the study programme are to educate creative and innovative specialists that meet the needs of the dynamic and creative industry job market and to prepare multimedia product creators capable of practically implementing creative multimedia products prepared by themselves or others by working individually or as part of a team (self evaluation report, p. 5)

The self-evaluation report describes programme goals and learning outcomes of the programme and links it with the curriculum. The learning outcomes describe both professional knowledge and competences as well as general/soft skills. The module handbook describes the learning outcomes and contents of each module or subject and gives detailed information on the contents and working methods of the courses.

The study programme's tasks comply with the professional bachelor's level requirements:

- to cultivate students' theoretical, critical, and reflexive understanding about various media forms (communication of knowledge, systemic understanding of the field of study),
- to teach students to delve into a topic by collecting and analyzing data necessary to solve problems of a professional activity and creative nature (the conducting of research),
- to teach students to create and expand media content with film, animation, and interactive design projects (development of knowledge, comprehension, abilities, and skills),
- to cultivate an ability to work with various media formats: static and moving images, sound, and Internet (development of specific abilities),
- to cultivate students' ability to adapt to constant changes in the national and international media culture industry (communication skills and the ability to continue studies),
- to encourage students' creativity and conceptual thinking (the expression of a competent opinion and the making of decisions),
- to cultivate students' independence and responsible attitude for the quality of work performed (cultivation of personal competency).

As stated in the self-evaluation report (p. 5ff) learning outcomes are based on the Dublin descriptors and linked to following specific and general competencies as well as teaching and learning fields:

- mastery of media history and aesthetic forms and the ability to analyze and evaluate them (knowledge and understanding, application of knowledge and understanding),
- understanding of enterprise, market economics, and professional ethics (knowledge and understanding, communication skills),

- foreign language usage in professional activities (knowledge and understanding, communication skills),
- the ability to perform research and to apply its results (application of knowledge and understanding).
- the ability to create a conception of a multimedia work and plan and organize a multimedia project (decision making),
- the ability to practically implement a multimedia creation's idea using all text, image, and sound elements (decision making),
- the ability to correctly apply techniques, technologies, and safety standards in the media industry (application of knowledge and understanding),
- the ability to work as part of a team and present one's own activity results or those of one's team (decision making, communication skills),
- the ability to reflect the study process (communication skills, study skills),
- the ability to independently deepen one's knowledge (study skills).

The multimedia design programme is unique in Lithuania and is the only media field (artistic field) first-stage professional bachelor's-level programme.

Graduates who successfully complete the studies receive a professional bachelor's qualification degree in the field of media art. They can work in advertising and design companies, publishing houses, fine and performing arts fields, information environment, TV (television) and radio channels; cinema production companies, and other cultural and art enterprises. Graduates will be able to independently undertake media art work, initiate and manage creative multimedia projects, establish their own companies and manage them.

In order to meet the admission requirements for a Master programme at a Lithuanian university the students with an professional bachelor degree need to attend one and a half years of bridge courses.

VTDK regularly conducts employer and graduate surveys. The last one was carried out in 2010. Additionally the college cooperates with employers formally (employer representatives are the members of the college's board) and informally through contacts between teachers and employers.

Graduates are mostly absorbed by the local and regional job markets. Depending on the economic situation, the graduates do not have – according to the college – any significant problems with finding a job. About 90 % of them get quickly employed after their studies.

Assessment

According to the expert team the programme objectives and learning outcomes are well defined and clear. There is also a clear outline of the study programme. Modules are designed adequately and have a clear succession. However, the expert team missed the public accessibility of the programme objectives and learning outcomes on the web site.

The programme objectives and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. As stated in the self-evaluation report and according to the information gained during the site

visit, this programme is unique in Lithuania. The results of interviews with commercial partners and professional experts led to this deliberate programme.

Lecturers involved in the programme are trained by companies or own them themselves and, thus, market needs may enter into the curriculum.

The expert team suggests, however, review again some modules.

From the experts' point of view the programme objectives and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered; this is certainly fulfilled within this professional bachelors programme.

The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

Recommendations

In order to make the programme objectives and learning outcomes publicly accessible and in order to attract more students (also from abroad) the expert team recommends developing an adequate web presence in English. Furthermore it is recommended to present, besides the general information on current and finished projects, also more precise information on practical projects conducted by students or graduates on the web site.

Furthermore, the experts suggest reviewing again (and continuously) some modules.

4.2 Curriculum design

Current situation

The curriculum is based on a total of 180 credits (ECTS) which is equivalent to 4800 working hours. 15 credits are devoted to general college-level study subjects, 135 credits are devoted to study field subjects among which 40 are study programme tracks (specializations). Students have to choose from four areas: Interactive Design, Animation, Sound Design or Audiovisual Art Editing. 30 credits are specific study subjects (electives, graduation practices, graduation thesis).

Table 1. *Scopes of subject groups in credits* (as stated in the self evaluation report, p. 15)

Subjects	***Credits***
General college-level studies subjects	**15**
Field of study subjects: • Field modules • Track modules	**135** 95 40
Specific study subjects (introductory practice, creative practice, professional internship, final practice)	**30**
Total:	**180**

Core electives and elective subjects supplement the curriculum: core electives and electives are meant for personal cultivation and provide the opportunity to attain new skills that are useful in preparing and implementing creative projects. In the general college-level studies subject group six core electives (each with three credits) are envisaged and students have to choose two of them. Electives make up ten credits and the students can choose from all courses offered by the college or even courses from other higher education institutions (self evaluation report, p. 26).

General college-level subjects are taught during the whole semester. All other field of study subjects are combined into modules. The module minimum is five credits, where one credit equals 26.6 hours.

The curriculum is organized in such a way that during the first two semesters students can achieve basic media skills and theoretical basis for the artwork production. During the third and fourth semester they study the major (track) and train their skills in multimedia projects. The last two semesters are mainly dedicated to applied research, project development and the preparation of the graduation thesis.

The curriculum also includes practical elements (introductory practice, creative practice and professional practice) that reflect the practical and professional orientation of the study programme.

According to the self evaluation report this curriculum design gives students the opportunity to become professional in their chosen field of specialization. The curriculum covers the main subjects of the multimedia design field and gives the graduates solid basis of the field. The general college study subjects are not subject related and cover language and key competences, which is usual for Bachelor's programmes in Lithuania.

Assessment

The expert team assesses the curriculum as well structured and logical as a whole. The subjects and modules are well figured out and cover the relevant contents and competences to meet the programme's objectives and prepare the graduates for the local labour market. The workload and credits are well distributed over the whole study process of six semesters.

The structure of the study programme is well organized and allows the students to follow a well-arranged schedule in their studies. First there are the basics, and then there is training on the project to develop their (practical) knowledge.

The contents of the subjects and/or modules are consistent with the type and level of the studies and are appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes. According to the expert team the structure of the programme is very much focused on the media production. Hence it will suffice the needs for educating professional bachelor's degree.

As the research among the local industry and the survey on alumni of the existing programmes indicates, most of the students will find adequate jobs in Lithuania. However, these numbers were only communicated orally.

Since, as the administration indicated, many of the lectures are trained by external professionals, this could be beneficial in educating according the Labour market needs.

However the expert team has the impression that some of the subjects could be more specific, e.g. the combined lecture on psychology, sociology and philosophy in the first semester should take up specific topics regarding media and design rather than treating general definitions. Moreover, the expert team indicates that a basic education in

programming skills is missing. It is not available in the curriculum for all of the students within the programme.

The subject and module descriptions are mostly exemplary and give students and teaching staff a comprehensive overview over content, learning outcomes, working methods, assessment and workload of the subjects or modules. According to the students the choice of the modules is a free one or advised by the teaching staff. However, to the experts is not clear what subjects can be chosen. The curriculum description should be revised regarding the free elective list.

The study programme is to a great deal project oriented. In order to realize this goal it is necessary to keep up to date with modern technology. However, the expert group has not seen a sufficient technological infrastructure. The students also expressed that deficiency. According to them they mainly work on their projects outside the college – at home using their own equipment. All expectations rely on new facilities and investments to be made. The current equipment is outdated and not sufficient (see also section 4.4).

The expert team values very much the teachers´ networks to international communities that are also reflected in the modern topics of the curriculum. The students in the final semester are well prepared to choose a fashionable thesis project.

According to the expert team the curriculum meets the general requirements for study programmes as laid out in Order # V-501.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends considering some particular adjustments of the curriculum in order to optimize the already well founded study programme:

They recommend integrating the results of international research in the area of digital media in order to reflect the developments and standards in the labour market better.

The expert team considers communication theories as important for all students, especially as a preparation for projects concerning advertising and consumer's psychology. The experts recommend integrating basics as psychology and sociology closer focused to media topics in the curriculum in order to adapt them to the objectives of the study programme. Basic knowledge in the field of marketing, business economics, drafting contracts with agencies and copyright should be incorporated stronger within the curriculum, too. If there are economic limitations - alternatively additional reading material etc. could be provided.

The basics of design should be part of the basic studies since this is needed in every specialization and since the branch of multimedia production requires flexible workflows.

From the experts´ point of view basic programming skills, interaction and usability should be provided to all of the students in the study programme during the first or second semester.

In order to implement more subjects closer focused on the needs of multimedia designers in todays labour market, the expert group suggests to reduce other subjects in time and workload. For example film language could be reduced or integrated in other modules.

The expert team recommends furthermore adding elements from the programme photograph technology such as video shooting or film language and suggests creating

more links between the study programme Multimedia Design and Photography Technology.

In particular the expert team suggests incorporating into the curriculum the integration of Computer Generated Images (CGI) into real image production projects.

With regard to a most suitable selection of free electives and tracks the experts strongly recommend setting up an advisory board or a mentoring programme for the students which may support a profound and solid education. Learning outcomes in such a practical focused study can only be ensured with structured practical trainings which seem to be established.

An up-to-date study programme requires that the contents reflect the latest achievements in science, art and technology and the provision of adequate equipment and training resources.

To make full use of the investments this should be discussed in small focus groups with stakeholders for every part of the new premises (in order to use them fully and therefore have full advantage of every invested Lita).

The expert team is not yet sure whether there is enough expertise for specialization C: Sound Design – especially as there are 15 credits on this module. The current state of sound technology at the college is not sufficient at all. It is useful to have students focusing on sound design as well. But it also has to be well-founded by technologies and lecturers. For this reason a very close working process between sound designers and all other specializations is strongly recommended to make sure the sound designers get the necessary practical training. Since sound design is going to be a new major in the curriculum it should gain adequate attention regarding its instrumentation.

4.3 Teaching staff

Current situation

The Faculty of design has a teaching staff of 70 persons. All members of the teaching staff involved in this study programme have obtained second level (master's) degrees or have a degree that is equivalent to a master's or doctor's qualification degree. Moreover, they have practical and pedagogical experience.

The activities of staff members are in principle confined to teaching and artistic activities. Research is not a primary task. The college, however, encourages its staff to do applied research and supports projects proposed by staff members.

In general, professional development is the responsibility of each staff member, but the college supports the professional development of its staff. Therefore, the college attempts to acquire EU-funded projects in order to provide financial support for staff development. This permits lecturers i.e. to attend international or national conferences. The college also participates in Erasmus exchange programmes for teaching staff. Nevertheless the lack of funding for staff development might be a general problem.

Many of the members of the teaching staff are Lithuanian video and design creators, highly engaged in creative industries, participating in production and various domestic and international film festivals and preparing scientific and professional publications and projects.

They have close ties with foreign media universities and every year one teaching staff member participates in the international week organized at the partner institution. Sev-

eral times per year members of the teaching staff members participate in animation creative workshops at animation universities abroad.

Teaching staff is evaluated by the college on a regular basis. The teachers write a yearly self-assessment report which is used for a gratification scheme. Every five years there is an assessment of each lecturer, which also takes into account the lecturer's efforts for their own development.

According to the self-evaluation report (p. 29) further improvement of the quality of teaching is expected due to constant professional development of the teaching staff, preparation of methodological material and the teaching staff's artistic and scientific activity.

Assessment

The expert team assesses the staff as adequate in qualification to offer a college-level study programme and to provide the students with a qualified learning experience. They appreciate the motivation of the teaching staff met during the site visit.

There is an impressive number of teachers within the programme and a good student/teacher ratio. Teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme and to support the newly introduced consultation hours. Also the students confirm that teaching staff is easily accessible for them.

The survey used for teachers´ evaluation meets international standards.

The experts appreciate that the college provides opportunities for the professional development of the teaching staff as the college offers sabbaticals and supports the participation at conferences. As stated above the college plans to train on and acquire a completely new technological infrastructure. These changes also imply continuous expansion of the staff competencies.

The teaching staff of the programme is involved in research and art which is directly related to the study programme and the teaching staff has good connections to professional (also international) institutions in this field.

The expert team appreciates the decision of the college directorate to support staff development and encourages the college to provide financial support.

Teaching staff seems to be very committed to the study programme. Students reported that teachers would update their knowledge and skills for projects of the students – this leaves the impression of a flexible and committed teaching staff. Also, it was reported, that teachers are working part-time, thus they are up to date to the needs of the Lithuanian market. Guest lectors are invited, but not on a regular basis.

The study programme is provided by the teaching staff, who meets all relevant legal requirements.

Recommendations

The expert team encourages the college to strengthen its cooperation with the industry and commercial companies. These activities could enrich the education of students by involving them more in applied research.

The experts recommend inviting guest lecturers on a regular basis to get specific input, especially as the students seem to appreciate those guest lectures a lot. As those specialists will most often not be available for regular classes, weekend-seminars could be discussed.

The new equipment will require the training of the whole teaching staff, who will operate the machines and laboratories (support for laboratories). In order to save costs the college could also take into consideration setting up online tutorials, etc., unless they are used systematically. In addition selection of international journals could also be supportive. Another possibility would be to have older students training newer ones in cross-term projects.

4.4 Facilities and learning resources

Current situation

Facilities

Since 2009 the lectures of the interactive design programme have been conducted in the facilities of the Technical faculty and in the VTDK main hall. Creative practice takes place at the practical teaching base in Nida. General college-level studies subjects are conducted at the college's main hall in common auditoriums. This is also where field studies and specific studies subjects are taught.

According to the self-evaluation report the auditoriums and laboratories used for studies meet occupational safety and hygiene requirements.

Conducting all tracks with a high degree of quality requires specific and specially equipped auditoriums. In order to improve the quality in teaching and learning the college developed a modernization project and won a EU-tender. The college submitted the list of new equipment which will be – according to the college – purchased with the funding and will be supplied between April and June 2012. All auditoriums of the Design faculty will then be transferred to the Technical faculty and the media center will be equipped with the new equipment.

Technical base

In studios of multimedia design profession the technical base is important. Up to now the demand has been satisfied with regard to the multimedia production process. Equipment needed for animation and video production was compiled: filming cameras, photo cameras, animation tables, computers, and equipment for demonstrations.

According to the self-evaluation report and information given by members of the college during the site visit funding from the college and from the EU (see above) will be used to procure the necessary equipment and software**.**

Practice places

According to the college (self evaluation report, p. 20) students can conduct professional and graduation practices at companies with which cooperation agreements have been signed and with others that use modern technology and equipment. Creative practice is conducted at the practical working base in Nida, where conditions are created for developing students' creative potential, abilities to work in a team, and international and cultural familiarity.

Library

According to the self-evaluation report (p. 20) students and teaching staff have the access to the college's central library which comprises a circulation desk, a circulation reading room, a general reading room, an informational and periodical publication reading room, an internet reading room, a computerized language learning center with 15 places. The college's reading rooms include 167 places, of which 47 are computerized, and it is possible to work using a laptop. The students use also the Technical faculty library.

As stated in the self-evaluation report it is planned to equip the library with a media resource center. The review hall in the Technology faculty will also be equipped as part of the modernization project. That should improve the teaching of all lectures related to image and sound creation. Also, facilities for students will be established to review films, listen to sound recordings and prepare audiovisual projects in groups.

Methodological resources

According to the self-evaluation report books, manuals, periodicals, and single-use publications are obtained in line with the study programme's goals and are accessible to students and teaching staff at the library, reading rooms, and the department's methodological funds. Methodological guides prepared by the teaching staff are stored in the teaching staff methodological guide database.

Assessment

During the site visit the experts evaluated premises, facilities and learning resources for the study programme with regard to its size and quality. The evaluation team discovered a very basic state of facilities and learning resources and observed some work-in-progress.

Teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) seem to be adequate and accessible. In addition most of the literature is available in the internet.

Classes are divided if needed. Laboratory size is about 15 places as reported. Presently there is not at all a sufficient number of places and outdated equipment for student work. The experts have seen a total of 6-10 computer workstations during the visit. Students reported to work at home on the subjects. Only in arts area there seems to be an adequate arrangement for students' practice (work stations), when it comes to studies with no technical equipment.

The expert team is in doubt that the currently used facilities are offering adequate prerequisites for studies regarding the number of places for practical work and exercises as well as technical equipment.

The expert team has also assessed the subsequently (after the site visit) submitted list of equipment and facilities (multimedia design study programme equipment purchase) to be purchased and comes to the following conclusions: The current and likewise the equipment on the list is not sufficient and suitable for ensuring the operation of the study programme in many areas. The equipment as described in the list will improve the situation only partially. More specially, significant improvements could be obtained only in the areas of audio and video as well as in the fields of recording, editing and presentation. The area of animation remains insufficiently. Here, for example the procurement of 15 licences of "ToonBoom" is planned. This and other equipment for the animation studios continues to indicate the exclusive focus on traditional animation techniques (cell-, model- or cutout-animation and animated cartoon) within the anima-

tion major. Up-to-date and professional 3D-Software for the areas of special effects, compositing, cutting, visualization, computer generated images (for example Maya, 3DMaxSoftimage, Cinema 4D, Nuke, fusion, ZBrush etc.) is still missing and is also not foreseen.

The list, moreover, shows some contradictions: The equipment shall be obtained in April-July 2012. 20 specialized studios, of which only 13 are identified, shall be set up next year. The exact date is unknown. It is also unclear where the equipment will be placed during this time and where the education will take place. The equipment purchase report indicates that two classes will be equipped with computers (about 40 stations). But only 12 computers and one server are mentioned in the acquisition list. The report also holds that the table provides each room's annual workload, but the place where this will take place is also unknown.

Recommendations

The expert group recommends involving all stakeholders of the college in the planning process of the new facilities and its equipment. Students, teaching staff, representatives of the labour market and others should carefully discuss the necessity, the usage and the priorities of materials, equipment and other resources.

The equipment should be chosen with regard to the requirements of the curriculum and course objectives. Up-to-date and professional 3D-Software for the areas of special effects, compositing, cutting, visualization, computer generated images (for example Maya, 3DMaxSoftimage, Cinema 4D, Nuke, fusion, ZBrush etc.) should be provided, because the training on this type of software is expected of the animators in the areas of film/ television/ design/ visual effects (certainly also in Lithuania).

In order to use the new equipment appropriately the experts strongly recommend the provision of adequate training-courses for the teaching staff and laboratory assistants responsible for the equipment.

The expert team suggests also setting up a co-operation with software producers for educational licenses as well for workstations at the college as for students in educational usage.

The experts recommend furthermore setting up more links to economy and educational institutions.

4.5 Study process and students' performance assessment

Current situation

Students need to have a high school diploma with two state exams for enrolment. Studying at universities requires three state exams. Additionally applicants must pass a selection procedure that consists of two art exams: script and composition. The aim of these exams is to check candidates' creativity and artistic abilities by telling a story and presenting it visually (by drawing or photographing).

The study programme starts only in September.

The study process is organised in groups of approximately 20-30 students and offers a variety of working methods such as lectures and seminars, laboratories, home work, consultation hours and independent work. The study programme likewise includes problem-based learning, research and analysis methods, project activity. This is organ-

ized by combining subjects into modules. Integration of module subjects proceeds in three aspects: 1) artistic creation, 2) technologies, 3) research and work organization.

Great attention is devoted to the development of students' creative potential, cultivating their artistic and experimental abilities and fostering group creative work abilities. Attention is also devoted to mastering the multimedia production process and cultivating technical and technological skills in designing and realizing a multimedia project or leading this process.

The teaching methods are listed for each module / subject in the module handbook.

Each subject ends with a student assessment. The final subject assessment consists of at least two different assessment forms and is combined according to a predefined formula. This leads to variety of examination methods i.e. written exams, tests, practical works, project reports, independent work to assess different competences. The assessment methods and formulas necessary for creating the final mark are described in the module handbook. The individual marks are assessed and processed by the lecturer and the final mark is submitted to the college administration.

Drop-out rates (in the previous interactive design programme) were at about 50 %. According to the college this is about the average drop-out rate in Lithuania. The renewed multimedia design programme has now a higher ratio of individual consultation hours, which may contribute to reduce the drop-out rates.

The study programme includes professional activities – internships (professional practice (10 credits) and voluntarily the graduation/final practice (10 credits)) is written at companies with which cooperation agreements were signed and at other companies that use modern technology and equipment (self evaluation report, p. 20). The students search the companies on their own initiative. The college provides, if requested, support through their contacts. A three-party contract is agreed between the college, the student, and the company which includes also the task that should be performed during the internship.

Internships correspond with fields of study and chosen specializations, where students can apply their knowledge and skills and deepen them. These are for example film and television studios, design and advertising companies.

Creative practice (creative practice session, five credits) is conducted at the practical teaching base in Nida. Students are involved in creative workshops and international projects conducted with students and teaching staff from EU countries as well as staff and students from four other Lithuanian colleges.

The graduation practice takes place at a commercial company or at the college. Students, after preparing their graduation thesis concept (project technologies) and explications (project development) and dividing up work, deepen their knowledge and practical skills related to the topic of the thesis.

The graduation thesis is based on students' chosen topics, which must be relevant, original, be capable of application, and correspond to the qualification sought.

Students have the opportunity to participate in mobility programmes. The college takes part actively in the Erasmus programme and has, especially for the multimedia design programme, partner institutions, e.g. in Denmark, Finland, France, Poland and Turkey. The number of incoming students, however, is low, as the college does not yet offer courses in English.

After finishing their studies the majority of the students look for – mostly successfully according to the information of the college - a job in their profession.

For students seeking a more universal professional education, the college wants to create opportunities to obtain a double bachelor's degree from the same field by choosing additional modules from related specializations or from the photograph technology study programme. The college plans also to develop a joint-degree programme and double diploma in cooperation with the international partner institutions.

Assessment

The expert team assesses the admission and selection procedure as well-founded and complying with the state law. The study process seems to be well organised and balanced and the organisation of the study programme seems to be adequate to achieve the intended learning outcomes. This assessment is also confirmed by the students during the site visit. They were in general satisfied with their situation at the college. Students especially emphasised the easy and good contact with their lecturers. Students confirmed an adequate level of academic and social support, for example the offer of evening lectures for working students.

Students are also satisfied with the assessment system. The assessment scheme is transparently described and uses multiple assessment methods to check different competences of the students. The documents of the study programme and module handbook are available in Lithuanian on the college's website.

The academic and social support of the students seems to be appropriate. The students report a smooth study process and are in general satisfied with their situation at the college. Lodging seems to be no problem, also due to the good supply of student housing by the college. The expert team remarks the high drop-out rates of the study programme and encourages the college to take appropriate measures to reduce them. Experts appreciate the introduction of consultation hours in the renewed study programme. These consultation hours may help recognise the individual problems of the students and support them to progress in their studies if needed.

The college also offers its students possibilities for international mobility. The expert team encourages the college to strengthen these mobility programmes and further motivate students to participate in student exchange programmes. Therefore the existing partnerships could be strengthened.

The production of media content is the core of the programme. It implies a large amount of practical work to be performed by the students. The module on free electives (may) round up the students´ education and give an adequate choice of subjects. Since the students have production oriented study-phases, where they can choose current and research oriented projects, in the expert group opinion there is a good dissemination of research, artistic and applied research activities.

Students have already opportunities to engage in research activities through projects offered by the college and its industrial and academic partner institutions. The experts assess creative practice in Nida positively, opportunities are created for developing students' creative potential and abilities to work in a team. Participating in projects and workshops in Nida gives students also a unique opportunity to be trained by famous professionals. The Professional Practice at an audiovisual product creation company generates conditions for furthering students´ practical abilities in a professional environment by solving real-life tasks.

Students were confident about the old programme (interactive design study programme), but would as well switch to the new multimedia design study programme as they stated to exceed the needs of the labour market in practical trainings. This proves

an adequate level of student's performance for the local market. It is not sure if this also applies for international markets.

Recommendations

The expert team believes that the college could further integrate applied research into the study process and increase students´ involvement in applied research through expanding its cooperation with industry and international partners.

The expert team recommends the expansion of funded activities, especially with regard to the quick changing technical standards.

The study process could be also improved with an institution founded by the college offering services and products according to the contents of the curriculum, for example short animation videos. The students could train themselves pracitically in real working conditions. Earned money of the institution could be reinvested to renew the equipment (which is constantly necessary in multimedia sector) or give the students an opportunity to co-finance their studies.

4.6 Programme management

Current situation

Each study programme is run by a committee, which is related to the faculty. The programme committee consists of lecturers and students. It is responsible for the yearly improvement of the programme and coordinates the programme related quality assurance activities. The college has a council with representatives from the social partners.

For programme improvement the college supports initiatives of its lecturers, results of the quality assurance instruments and its close contact with its social partners. The recent programme renewal was carried out in close cooperation with employers in order to customise the programme content to the needs of the labour market.

On programme level the department carries out student course evaluations. The results of the evaluations are analysed and discussed in the department or if needed between a lecturer and a dean. The results are also presented to the students.

On college level there exists a quality assurance office that supports the faculties and study programmes in their quality assurance efforts. The college also provides a quality handbook that describes the most relevant processes. Currently the college carries out a EU-funded project to redesign its internal quality assurance system and to develop quality management system based on a combination of EFQM and ISO. In this project the college will also define strategic performance indicators for its faculties and study programmes.

Assessment

The expert team assesses the programme management as transparently structured and efficient. The experts appreciate the good involvement of external stakeholders in the improvement of study programmes. The quality assurance of the programme seems to be straightforward. The experts commend the college on its efforts to improve its internal quality management system in a EU-funded project and support the

college to implement the results of this project fully. As the project is not yet implemented the quality management system cannot be fully assessed at this stage..

Recommendations

Experts recommend the college to use statistics more systematically in its internal quality assurances processes. Collecting statistic data on graduates would help to adjust the curriculum contents and structure – programme objectives and learning outcomes – promptly and in accordance with the labour market needs and rapid technological developments.

The expert team recommends the college to use the opportunity of the EU-funded quality assurance project to design and implement an integrated strategic quality management system that builds on the strategic objectives of the college and the study programmes, uses diverse sources of information to analyse the quality and derives and implements measures for improvement. The college needs to assure that the quality management system supports the lecturers in providing a good learning experience and reduces bureaucracy.

5. Overall assessment

The general assessment of the expert team is positive. The experts appreciate the professional bachelor study programme multimedia design as sophisticated and well founded regarding its curriculum – contents and structure. The college provides a solid education concept in order to prepare the students well for their future profession. The professional character of the programme is clearly described in the learning outcomes. Curriculum and study process are clearly structured and appropriate to achieve these learning outcomes. However, in order to sharpen the study programme profil the experts suggest to review some of the structural curriculum elements.

The programme management and the quality assurance seem to be appropriate to manage and improve the programme. The expert team values the close cooperation of the college with regional and local employers in order to support the study process and to develop the study programme constantly and to focus the competences of the graduates to the needs of the labour market. A great asset of the college is its motivated teaching staff and its engagement in extending their international (academic/art and professional) networks in order to improve the programme quality standards. The efforts of the college in providing good learning opportunities are also highly valued by the students.

However, the experts assess the current situation regarding facilities and equipment as not sufficient. The premises and the teaching and learning equipment (laboratory and computer equipment, consumables) are not adequate in size and quality. Even the quantity and kind of equipment that is to be provided with the funding of the EU-project seems to be not fully sufficient. From the experts` point of view even with the intended purchase it will not be possible to achieve all learning outcomes of the multimedia design programme.

The expert team sees a necessity to focus on the technological profile of the study programme by implementing new, modern and adequate facilities and equipment. This should be a priority of the college and the programme management.

Furthermore, the expert team recommends the college considering and implementing the recommendations in this report to further improvement of the programme.

According to the expert team the multimedia design programme meets the Lithuanian requirements for programme accreditation with exception of the criteria of facilities and learning resources. Due to the given situation regarding the indispensable facilities and equipment for the implementation of the goals of the study programme the expert team does recommend this programme for accreditation with preconditions.

The accreditation shall become valid under the precondition that the college has procured and installed the missing facilities and equipment within 9-12 months and has proved this within this period.

The expert team recommends that the college shall prove the fulfilment of this condition in two steps:

- The college shall provide a report on the facilities and equipment of the multimedia design programme by **30 September 2012** to **evalag**.
- One member of the expert team shall assess the facilities and the equipment of the multimedia programme on site by **31 March 2013** and report to the expert team and the accreditation commission of **evalag**.

A second precondition concerns the provision of a basic education in programming skills to all students during the first or second semester.

6. Decision of the Accreditation Commission

The accreditation commission of **evalag** accredited the professional bachelor programme “Multimedia Design” of Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija (VTDK) and awarded the **evalag** label for programme accreditation with the following preconditions:

A/ The college shall assure appropriate facilities and equipment to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme as outlined in chapter 4.4 of this report. The college shall prove the fulfilment of this condition in two steps:

- The college shall provide a report on the facilities and equipment of the multimedia design programme by **30 September 2012** to **evalag**.
- One member of the expert team shall assess the facilities and the equipment of the multimedia programme on site by **31 March 2013** and report to the expert team and the accreditation commission of **evalag**.

B/ The college shall provide a basic education in programming skills to all students during the first or second semester.

The accreditation is valid **from March 2012 until March 2013** and will be extended **until August 2015** upon successful fulfilment of the condition. In case the college cannot prove the fulfilment of the condition, the accreditation will expire and label will be withdrawn.

To further improve the study programme the accreditation commission affirms the recommendations given by the expert group.