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Final Study Programme Evaluation
Photograph Technology
(professional bachelor)

at

Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija

Assessment report

4 April 2012

Assessment report of the professional bachelor study programme Photograph Technology.
This is part of the Design and New Media Study Quality Development Project no. VP1-2.2-ŠMM-07-K-01-122 project.

Photograph Technology

Contents

Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija (VTDK) commissioned **evalag** with the final programme evaluation of the newly created professional bachelor study programme "photograph technology". 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)

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 VTDK its distinct profile.

According to Lithuanian law, college level higher education institutions (kolegija) offer full-time and part-time professional bachelor's 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 photograph technology 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 photograph technology programme – in order to adjust the programme contents to the demands of the labour market and to broaden the competences of the graduates.

The development of the photograph technology study programme is part of the implementation of EU-projects.

2. The Photograph Technology Programme

The photograph technology programme is the successor of the former “photography technologies” 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 project-based teaching method.

The photograph technology study programme was redesigned in the following ways:

- The two new tracks of *Advertising Photography* and *Photographic Image Programming* were created.
- The track of *Photographic Services Technology* was updated.
- The subject contents (*Foreign Language; Applied Physics; Basics of Design; Composition; History of Photography; Special Photography Technologies; Photo Process Theory; Color Photography; Cultural History; Applied Research; Photographic Methods; Photo Apparatuses and Equipment; Creative Practice)* were updated.
- *The Photographic Methods* module was created, which combines three subjects: Portrait Photography, Architectural Photography, and Landscape Photography.

The updating of the study programme aims at training specialists who are capable of providing photography services to clients in mini labs and photo studios, working as a photojournalist, photographer for advertising and publishing, image processing, and performing video filming work.

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 as a three-year full-time programme and as a four-year part-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.

The final expert evaluation (The 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.

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 Objectives and 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 working individually or as part of a team in the field of photography.

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 content 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.

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

- to know the physics and chemistry processes that photography technologies are based on (knowledge and understanding/comprehension),
- to know the cultural context of various epochs and of the modern day (knowledge and understanding/comprehension),
- to professionally apply photo and film equipment, potential and lighting methods (application of knowledge and understanding),
- to shoot pictures and video for the news media publishers, film events and storylines (application of knowledge and understanding),
- to create imagery for advertising and graphic design (application of knowledge and understanding),
- to apply information technologies in modern digital photography fields (application of knowledge and understanding),
- to professionally apply artistic creativity principles in the work process (decision making),
- to organize creative projects and research activity and to solve their implementation and financing questions (decision making),
- to be able to communicate with clients and business partners and work as part of a team (interaction skills),
- to provide digital photo laboratory services (interaction skills),
- to factually capture events by applying various methods of photography (study skills),
- to collect information and evaluate photography business developments and tendencies (study skills).

The photograph technology programme is the only college studies programme in the Republic of Lithuania in which photographers are being prepared by combining knowledge of photographic technology with a creative hand.

VTDK regularly conducts employer and graduate surveys. The last one was carried out in 2011. 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 in finding a job. About 90 % of them get 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 and thus, market needs may enter into the curriculum.

The expert team suggests, however, reviewing again some modules to further adjust the contents within (see remarks below).

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, contents and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

The expert team assesses photograph technology as very much focused on the analogue workflow and chemical photolaboratory techniques that are important to know about but nevertheless have become a niche market regarding the domination of digital technologies in the photographic industries. Digital workflow contents are not sufficiently implemented within the redesigned curriculum.

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 information on current and finished projects, also information on practical projects conducted by students or graduates on the web site.

Additionally, the experts recommend focusing the programme contents much more on the digital workflows as they are asked primarily on the job market. Consequently the expert team suggests reviewing again (and continuously) some modules. This will also require the adequate equipment and facilities (see also section 4.4).

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 19 are study programme tracks (specializations) subjects. Students can choose one of five tracks: Photographic service Technology (track A), Photojournalism (track B), the Art of Video Shooting (track C), Advertising Photography (track D) and Photographic Image Programming (track E). 30 credits are specific study subjects (electives, final practices, graduation thesis).

Table 1: *Scopes of subject groups in credits* (as stated in the self evaluation report, p. 17)

Subjects	***Credits***
General college-studies subjects	**15**
Field of study subjects: • Basic study subjects • Module • Track subjects	**135** 106 10 19
Specific study subjects	**30**
Total:	**180**

Core electives and elective subjects supplement the curriculum: core electives and electives are meant for personal development and provide the opportunity to attain new skills that are useful in preparing and implementing creative projects. Electives make up 10 credits and give students the opportunity to improve their abilities in a chosen field. The students can choose from all courses offered by the college or even courses from other higher education institutions.

The curriculum is organized in such a way that the first year is devoted to general college-level studies subjects. Students gain furthermore fundamental knowledge in applied physics and photo processes as well as basic knowledge of photography, photo apparatuses and equipment.

During the third and fourth semester students are taught basics of information technologies, corporate economics and cultural project management, law, advertising, journalism and filming. The fourth semester consists also of the new created module – photography methods (with three subjects: architecture, landscape and portrait photography methods). Furthermore students study color photography, cultural history and history of modern art and computer graphics. They learn how to apply their knowledge and skills through solving artistic/creative and technological problems of photography. During the third year of studies students choose their major (track) and deepen their knowledge of a specific field of photography and the professional competencies necessary for it. The last two semesters are also dedicated to applied research and to the preparation of the graduation thesis.

The curriculum includes also practical elements (introductory practice: three credits, lighting practice: six credits, creative practice: six credits, and professional internship: six credits) that reflect the practical and professional orientation of the study programme. This curriculum design gives students the opportunity to become professional in their chosen speciality.

The curriculum covers the main subjects of the photograph technology field and gives the graduates a solid basis of the field. The general college study subjects are not subject related and cover language and key competences.

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 national labour market. The workload and credits are well distributed over the whole study process of six semesters.

The main 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 a 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 mostly appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes. The lectures and modules described indicate a profound education in design and artwork. Also the final projects prepared by graduates (presented during the site visit) have a high artistic level. 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. Since, as the administration indicated, many of the lectures are trained by external professionals, this could be also beneficial in educating according to labour market needs.

The expert team assesses the structure of the programme as very much focused on art. However, the name of this study programme "photograph technology" implies mainly modern (not only traditional) technology-based study contents. Those are in some ways not adequately reflected in the curriculum.

In order to improve the employability of the graduates on the international labour market the experts see the necessity of some adjustments regarding scope and kind of curriculum contents.

Track E (the Photographic Image Programming) needs to be reviewed regarding the scope of its content. For instance, the module "philosophy of technology" has five credits and almost as much as "programming" having eight credits. The expert team does not understand the reason to teach this module in the track "image programming" with such an emphasis. Having the desire to teach philosophical or ethical topics one could replace the module by implementing subjects on ethics in image-manipulations / image forensics (the technology to detect forgery) in particular.

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 photograph technology rather than treating general definitions. Also the lectures in law should take up topics of professional photographers, e.g. contracts, copyrights.

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 which subjects can be chosen. The curriculum description should be revised regarding the free elective list.

The names of subjects “media technology” and “artificial intelligence” are not an optimal choice – they do not comply with the contents taught.

The study programme is to a high degree 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 projects outside the college. All expectations rely on new facilities and investments to be made at the new location. 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 curriculum modern topics. 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 and to increase students´ employability.

The expert team recommends sharpening the study profile in the digital area and focussing more on digital workflows regarding new technologies, in order to reflect the developments and standards of the labour market better.

Furthermore, the subjects color management and image archiving/data base usage could/should be added to the curriculum (in cooperation with photo agencies).

Especially the Photographic Image Programming (track E) should be better balanced regarding its subjects. The experts recommend considering the adjustments mentioned above.

The expert team recommends the renaming of the subject “media technology” into “human computer interfaces” (in audiovisual art).

The name of the subject “artificial intelligence” and in particular the content should be also reviewed. “Neuron activity simulation”, “creation of an intelligent system” or “simulation of an evolutionary system” are very distant content with regard to photography technology and especially image programming. Maybe “algorithmic generated graphics” fits more to the subjects.

The expert team considers communication theories as important for all students, especially as a preparation for projects concerning advertising and consumer’s psychology. It recommends integrating basics as psychology and sociology closer 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 limits – 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 since the branch of multimedia production requires flexible workflows.

Furthermore the expert team suggests building a connection between Computer Generated Images (CGI) and real image production.

The expert team suggests creating more synergetic interdisciplinary links between the two study programmes (e.g. by adding elements such as video shooting or film language from the programme photograph technology to the multimedia design and incorporating cg-integration from multimedia).

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 learning resources. To make full use of the investments this should also 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).

4.3 Teaching staff

Current situation

The Faculty of design has a teaching staff of 70 persons. The majority of the teaching staff holds a Master degree or an equivalent. 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 pedagogical and creative experience.

According to the college most of lecturers are employed full-time (80 %); this complies with the general requirements for the implementation of the study program. 90 % of teaching staff who teach core subjects undertake artistic/creative (and project) or scientific activity. About 60 % of the Photograph Technology Department personnel belong to various professional creative unions (e.g. the art photographers´ union).

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 in 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 is a general problem.

Many of the members of the teaching staff are Lithuanian recognized art photographers and highly and successfully engaged in various domestic and international creative exhibitions, contests and media projects.

They have close ties with foreign media universities and every year one teaching staff member participates in the international contests and festivals organized at the partner

institution. Several 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. 40) the study program is receives support from a sufficient number of college technical support personnel (computer maintenance specialists and others) and two department lab technicians.

One teaching staff member supervises no more than eight students preparing graduation theses.

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. Especially in the area of design and art the reputation of the teaching staff is undoubted. The experts appreciate the motivation and engagement 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 to 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 or art respectively which is directly related to the study programme and the teaching staff has good connections to professional (also international) institutions in this field as well.

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 industry and commercial companies. These activities could enrich the education of the 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 offered.

The new equipment will require the training of the teaching staff, who will operate the new equipment. In order to save costs the college could also take into consideration to set up online tutorials etc., unless they are used systematically. In addition selection of international journals could also be supportive.

4.4 Facilities and learning resources

Current situation

Facilities

The lectures of the photograph technology programme take place in the facilities of the Technical faculty and in the facilities of Design faculty (main Building, Antakalnio g. 54): five auditoriums (160 work stations, 285 m², work in groups and sub-groups), two photo studios (15 WS, 95 m², work in sub-groups), two laboratories (35 WS, 100 m²,intended for sub-groups), three computer auditoriums (35 WS, 180 m², intended for sub-groups); an editing facility (5 WS, 20 m², intended for sub-groups). Students perform independent assignments in the library's reading rooms, in locations specially equipped for that purpose in foyers on the 4th and 5th floors, and in studios and laboratories.

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. Creative practice takes place at the practical teaching base in Nida.

Full-time and part-time students use the same material base.

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 an 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, where two studios for pavilion photography, an equipment storage facility and the lighting system will be fundamentally updated.

Technical base

The equipment and materials are based on the requirements of traditional (analog) and digital processes. Two department laboratory assistants consult students doing practical work.

As stated in the self evaluation report (p. 45) the new track studies will be conducted using the existing photograph technologies material base, because the new tracks do not require specific equipment (existing photo equipment and apparatuses, laboratories, computer equipment etc. are suitable).

According to the self evaluation report (p. 44ff.) existing computer equipment is sufficient in size and quality. Photograph technology use auditoriums with 50 desktop computers, 30 places equipped for work with laptops, two photo scanners, and one film scanner. 70 % of places have internet access. They are loaded with licensed image and video editing software.

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 all newest necessary equipment and software**.**

Practice places

According to the college (self evaluation report, p. 44) students can conduct professional and graduation practices at companies with which cooperation agreements have been signed or with others that use modern technology and equipment. Creative practice is conducted at the practical teaching 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. 43) the college's central library 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.

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

The experts evaluated during the site visit premises, facilities and learning resources for the study programme with regard to their 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, the number of workstations is not sufficient and the equipment for student work is outdated. The experts have seen a total of 6-10 computer workstations. Students reported to work at home on the subjects. Only in arts 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 premises for studies regarding the number of places for practical work and exercises as well the technical equipment.

The expert team has also assessed the subsequently (after the site visit) submitted list of equipment and facilities (photograph technology 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. The equipment as described in the list will improve the situation only partially.

Image-taking: The already satisfactory situation of the studio lighting is further extended. However two digital cameras with one set of lenses each are simply too few for the study course "photograph technology" consisting of circa 20 students per matriculation period, especially lenses will be needed in higher quantity.

Image-editing: According to the acquisition list ten computers should be procured. The presented monitors within the site visit were inappropriate for professional image editing (color proof, flatscreen). According to the acquisition list a new procurement of monitors is not foreseen, but urgently needed.

Image-output: Only the procurement of three new color and black/white enlargers for the analogue darkroom is planned. There are too few digital image-printing possibilities available (one thermal transfer; one ink, both for the areas of photo-minilabs; only small formats to a maximum of A3).

The jobs in photographic industry are in advertising, fashion photography, editorial photography, museums, galleries, education units, film and TV, video production, research, medical research, manufacturing industries, secondary college teaching as curators, artists, digital production consultants, color management specialists, workflow consultants, professional photographers and imaging specialists. Educating the students requires training in art (already adequate covered within the redesigned programme) and in the whole spectrum of techniques, from analog to digital, digital darkroom to enlargers for black/white and color, from slide scanners to large format ink jet printers. For this reason the programme must provide digital and traditional cameras, from 35 mm to medium and large format. Students may use them in the studios and should have the opportunity (and especially the chance) to borrow them. Thus there must be an adequate number provided by the college.

The expert team observed during the site visit a strong operating experience of the teaching staff regarding the artistic/traditional/analog aspects of this programme. However, the experts missed equipment that complies with contemporary/international needs of a photographer. For example databases, color management, modern printers (large size inkjets), professional programming languages, programming skills and adequate number of digital editing-suites with adequate/modern hard- and software are either not present in the programme or not sufficient – currently and likewise on the photograph technology study programme equipment purchase.

Recommendations

The expert team 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 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. The expert team recommends the procurement of modern, pigment-based inkjet printers for medium (A3 and A2 sheets) and large (rolls of paper) image-printing (for example Canon Pixma Pro-1, Canon image PROGRAF iPF6350, Epson Stylus Photo R3000, Epson Stylus Pro 9700). This would ensure a photographic education within a digital workflow from image-taking to image-editing and image-viewing.

In order to use the new equipment 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 cooperation with software producers for educational licenses as well as for workstations at the college 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. Great attention is devoted to the development of students' creative potential, cultivating their artistic and experimental abilities and fostering group creative work abilities. 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 a 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

photograph technology 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 (six credits) and graduation/final practice (ten credits)) at companies with which cooperation agreements were signed and with others that use modern technology and equipment. The students search the companies on their own initiative. The college provides, if requested, support through their contacts. A tripartite 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 advertising agencies and publishers, periodicals publishers, photo laboratories and studios, information agencies, television stations, archives etc.

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 is conducted at photography companies whose spectrum of activities is close to the topic of the graduation thesis. During the graduation practice students gain, organize, and analyze material for their graduation thesis and perform applied research. 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 photograph technology programme, partner institutions 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. The college plans to develop a joint-degree programme and double diploma in cooperation with international partner institutions.

Graduates who successfully complete the studies receive a professional bachelor's qualification degree in the field of media art – technology of photography (as stated in Diploma Supplement). 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.

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 was also confirmed by the students during the site visit. They were in general satisfied with their situation at the college. Students especially emphasise 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 study programme documents 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 assess the introduction of consultation hours in the renewed study programme very positively. 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 studies-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 positively Creative Practice in Nida, where conditions 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 opportunities for furthering students´ practical abilities in a professional environment by solving real-life tasks.

Due to the close cooperation with employers in designing the study programmes and during the practical periods during the programme, students are mostly able to find appropriate jobs in their profession in Lithuania. During the site visit students mentioned that finding a job did not seem to be a big issue for them as they see themselves well prepared. Student projects have already a high artistic level and are appreciated by the potential employers. Professional activities of the majority of graduates meet the programme providers' expectations – at least at the local labour market.

Students were confident about the old programmes, but would as well switch to the newer versions 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 by the formation of a company which offers "products" which are beneficial/exemplary for the later-on work of the students. In real

market conditions and with real budget and frameworks students could test themselves and earn money, that could be reinvested to renew the equipment (which is constantly necessary in photography sector).

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 an EU-funded project to redesign its internal quality assurance system and to develop a 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 an 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 man-

agement 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 photograph technology as sophisticated and well founded regarding its curriculum (contents and structure). The college provides already 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 reflect the developments and standards in the labour market better the experts see the need to sharpen the study profile in the digital area and to focus more on digital workflows regarding new technologies.

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. 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 sufficient. From the experts` point of view even with the intended purchase it will be not possible to achieve the learning outcomes of the photograph technology programme fully.

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 improve the programme.

According to the expert team the photograph technology 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 photograph technology programme by **30 September 2012** to **evalag**.
- One member of the expert team shall assess the facilities and the equipment of the photograph technology programme on site by **31 March 2013** and report to the expert team and the accreditation commission of **evalag**.

6. Decision of the Accreditation Commission

The accreditation commission of **evalag** accredited the occupational bachelor programme “Photograph Technology” of Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija (VTDK) and awarded the **evalag** label for programme accreditation with the following condition:

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 photograph technology programme by **30 September 2012** to **evalag**.
- One member of the expert team shall assess the facilities and the equipment of the photograph technology programme on site by **31 March 2013** and report to the expert team and the accreditation commission of **evalag**.

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.