



Final Study Programme Evaluation

Financial Law

(II cycle master degree)

at

Mykolas Romeris University (MRU)

Assessment report

15 July 2014

Assessment report of the II cycle master degree programme Financial Law. The final programme evaluation was carried out by **evalag** as part of the external evaluation of II cycle study programmes Administrative Law, Business Law and Financial Law.

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Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) commissioned **evalag** with the final programme evaluation of the II cycle master degree study programme “Financial Law”. The programme evaluation was carried out by an international expert team that assessed the study programme according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and legal act of the Republic of Lithuania “Description of the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes” with the objective of accrediting and registering the programme according to Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and awarding **evalag’s** international quality label for study programmes.

1. Mykolas Romeris University (MRU)

The Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) in its present form was established by the resolution of the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania in 1997, although it began its activities in 1990 after Lithuania’s declaration of independence. It is located in Vilnius, the capital city of Lithuania, with one faculty located in Kaunas, 100 km away from Vilnius. MRU is a public Lithuanian university higher education institution that offers bachelor degrees (I cycle) and master degrees (II cycle), which are directed towards professional and academic activity, as well as postgraduate degrees (PhD).

According to Lithuanian law, university level higher education institutions (universitetas) offer full-time and part-time bachelor and master degrees that allow graduates to pursue a professional or academic career. MRU is entitled to award PhD degrees (III cycle) in certain fields.

MRU has almost 18,000 students and offers 110 study programmes in the study fields of Law, Public Administration, Political Science, Territorial Planning, Human Resource Management, Economics, Business Studies, Business and Administrative Studies, Finance, Accounting Management Studies, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, Communication, Education, Education Studies, Teacher training, Translation Studies, Philology, History, Philosophy, Informatics and Public Security in the following five faculties:

- Faculty of Economics and Finance Management
- Faculty of Politics and Management
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Social Technologies
- Faculty of Public Security

The following institutes and departments belong to the Faculty of Law:

- Institute of Criminal Law and Procedure
- Institute of International and European Union Law
- Institute of Civil Justice
- Institute of Constitutional and Administrative Law
- Department of Philosophy of Law and Legal History
- Department of Business Law

The Faculty of Law offers its students the following 20 study programmes:

Master Programmes: Law (specializations: Criminal Law and Criminology, International Law, Civil Law, Civil Justice, International Human, Consumer, Intellectual Property Protection), Public Law (Law and Management), Biolaw, Administrative Law, Financial Law, Parliament Law and State Institutions, Labour and Social Security Law, Business Law, European Business Law, European and International Business Law, Intellectual Property Law, Law of Carriage, International Law, European Union Law and Governance, International Maritime Law, European Union Law, International Protection of Human Rights, Legal Regulation of Public Administration and Human Rights.

Bachelor Programmes: Law, Law and Management.

Responding to the need of the society, labour market and the feedback from employers, the study programmes of MRU are – according to the self-evaluation report – continuously developed and updated. The contents of the study programmes are regularly revised in order to broaden the competences of the graduates and to provide young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to build a successful career.

2. Financial Law Programme

The Financial Law programme was successfully accredited in 2006 and reaccredited in 2009 by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) until 31 December 2014 and complies therefore with the Lithuanian law, regulations and general requirements for currently operating study programmes.

The programme is – according to the self-evaluation report – a social science law study programme, which is carried out in a cooperation of the Faculty of Law (Institute of Constitutional and Administrative Law, Department of Business Law) and the Faculty of Economics and Finance Management (Department of Finance and Taxes). It is offered in full-time (one and a half years) and part-time study (two years) mode. The total credit point number is 90; the estimated student workload is 27 hour per study credit. The Financial Law programme is taught in Lithuanian.

The objectives of the programme are to provide a broad range of theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for the solutions of contemporary financial problems on the level of states, public institutions and the private sector. Future professionals will have a high level of qualification, knowledge and skills required to participate in a common financial policy, to understand the banking, taxation, public finance sector processes, to solve the problems in these sectors, to know budget formation and management of EU financial support. The content of programme has connections to economics, information technology, management, public administration and enterprise management.

The Financial Law programme is of applied nature, oriented to the practical professional work. It offers a wide range of academic education: Students will be able to apply the training knowledge in practice, and will have the knowledge and skills for independent research. The programme also gives an opportunity to develop new scientific ideas and prepares students for the master's research work.

3. Accreditation process

The programme evaluation was carried out with a peer review based on a self-evaluation report (according to the Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes and **evalag**'s criteria catalogue) provided by the MRU, a site visit of an expert team, an assessment report by the experts and the accreditation decision by **evalag**'s accreditation commission.

The programme 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 evaluation of study programmes in the Republic of Lithuania (Procedure of the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes, approved by the Order No ISAK-1652 of 24 July 2009 (revision of Order No V-1487 of 29 July 2011) of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes, approved by the Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education etc.).

The expert team formed by **evalag** consisted of two professorial experts and one student expert:

- Prof. Dr. Uwe Blaurock, Freiburg University
- Prof. Dr. Ursula Fasselt, University of Applied Sciences Frankfurt am Main
- Susann Schultz, Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-University Greifswald

The site visit took place on 1 to 2 April 2014 at MRU. During the site visit, the expert team met with the members of the MRU rectorate, representatives of the programme, students, teaching staff, graduates and employers and visited the library and seminar rooms used by the students of the programme.

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 the final accreditation decision on 7 July 2014.

From **evalag**'s side, Dr. Anette Köster coordinated the accreditation.

4. Programme assessment

4.1 Learning outcomes

Current situation

The self-evaluation report describes the programme aims and intended learning outcomes of the study programme and links them to the curriculum. The intended learning outcomes encompass professional knowledge and competences as well as general and soft skills. In the description of the course units' students find the intended learning outcomes of the course related to the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

The objective of the programme is to provide a broad range of theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for understanding and solving problems pertaining to Financial Law. It is expected that MRU graduates from the Financial Law programme will have adequate knowledge and skills as necessary to participate in the formation of finance policy of the Republic of Lithuania, to deal with banking, taxation, public finance issues and processes, to become engaged in professional services industry, to solve

the problems arising in these sectors, to analyse and evaluate issues in taxation and budgeting critically as well as to understand specific features of the EU financial support.

The intended learning outcomes of Financial Law Master's programme are:

- “to represent the interests of public or private legal or natural persons’ in disputes arising in the financial sector;
- to self-identify minor offences committed by the financial sector actors, and to apply the appropriate measures of responsibility for natural or legal persons;
- to self-identify and propose a situation or dispute resolution tools and techniques;
- to develop and manage documents and provide legal advice on their drafting;
- to analyse the elements of the European Union financial support management and control, to provide an overview of structural funds in Lithuania and to examine the legal aspects of the regulation;
- to find solutions to the complex problems of legal regulations, law interpretation or practical application of legal problems;
- to plan complex activities, which include a range of interrelated legal questions;
- to analyse documents and complex practical situations independently;
- to understand the essence and nature of Finance Law institutes, their mission in the society, as well as social and economic relations and accomplish multidisciplinary researches;
- to make proposals on the development of financial institutes’ legal regulations;
- to provide a detailed knowledge about the latest scientific theories of Finance Law, separate institutes, their functioning mechanisms, mission and evolution, development outlook and comparison with the foreign policy of legal trends;
- to identify, analyse and evaluate financial entities’ practical activities;
- to offer legal solutions for the current public sector legal problems, affecting the social, political and economic development processes;
- to analyse the practical situation in the financial sectors (taxes, banking, insurance, etc.) and to assess financial bodies’ activity critically.”

As described in the self-evaluation report the programme aims and intended learning outcomes are based on academic and professional requirements, public needs and needs of the labour market. The Financial Law programme is of applied nature and oriented to the practice. Training of practical skills is combined with scientific research activities. Graduates offer legal services needed in business and are able to build their own business in the EU and internationally. They find jobs in private Limited Companies and the State Tax Inspectorate, in ministries or institutions under ministries, in credit institutions, insurance companies, leasing companies or other public sector institutions as well as in international and EU organizations. For the programme development the interests of employers under the new labour market conditions are taken into consideration.

The Financial Law programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are publicly accessible on the university's website.

Graduates are mostly absorbed by the local and regional job market. According to the statistics, more than 90 % of the full-time graduates from the year 2013 found a job in their professional field.

Assessment

According to the expert team, the intended learning outcomes describe well the contents and the qualifications offered by the Financial Law programme. They are clearly defined and publicly accessible. The intended learning outcomes describe the professional orientation of the programme and fully meet the European academic and professional requirements of a graduate in the field of Law. The intended learning outcomes on programme as well as on course level are consistent with the university type studies and meet the required level of qualifications. This is applicable to the full-time as well as to the part-time programme.

Employability is one of the programme aims that is realised in an exemplary manner. The expert team values the good employment opportunities of the graduates, which are linked to the practice-oriented education and the good cooperation of MRU and Lithuanian employers in developing and evaluating the study programme. Employers, who participated in the site visit, confirmed the very good qualification of the graduates and their ability to introduce themselves in specific fields. Due to their statements, it is advantageous for graduates, first to work some time in companies and to gain the practical experience that is needed, when they later on like to change e. g. to a court as a judge with a special focus on Financial Law.

Most of the students on master level completed internships before master studies or have professional experiences. These widespread practical experiences are according to the expert team an enrichment for the study programme, because they are adequately integrated in course units and examinations. The discussion with employers confirmed the expert team's impression, that Financial Law combines the two fields Finances and Law in a balanced and enriching way. The thematic focus of the programme has a level of quality that is also required in other European countries. The expert team explicitly appreciates the university's strategic aim to embed entrepreneurship skills in all study programmes. The programme makes an outstanding contribution to this.

In a useful addition to employability, the expert team appreciates the scientific level of the programme which is well incorporated in programme aims and contents as well as in intended learning outcomes and examinations.

A good approach to motivate bachelor students to continue their studies in a master programme is the so called MRU Leader Diploma. The two or three best bachelor graduates of the academic year get this award and additionally two credits towards the master study programme.

Recommendations

The expert team encourages the MRU to expand their scientific approach in all academic fields. The programme authors of Financial Law have fully implemented this aspect in the study programme, but the Faculty of Law should attempt to get more doctoral students for the support of research activities. The expert team is aware of the impulse of students to earn money in the labour market. Therefore, it is a common task of the university and the faculty to create more or new ways of students' financial support. The experts suggest that they convince the social partners of the faculty, to offer special scholarships for doctoral students. This can be a win-win-situation if students

do their research on relevant subjects for the social partners and they make their social support public.

4.2 Curriculum design

Current situation

The curriculum and study subjects are described in the self-evaluation report, the study plans and – more detailed regarding content and working methods – in the programme description. The Financial Law programme consists of ten compulsory study subjects including the master thesis: Budget Law and Process, Control of Public Finance, Legal Regulation of Public Security, Management of European Union Financial Funds, Municipality Finances, Banking Law, Competition Law in Public Finance, Direct and Indirect Taxes, Finance and Tax Law of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Personal Tax in Lithuania. Within a semester not more than five subjects can be studied.

The programme pays much attention to taxation matters. Students discuss successful strategies of combating the VAT fraud to improve the tax administration. Especially these courses deal with current practical examples.

In the seminars and lectures of the study programme a variety of teaching and learning methods are used. In addition to traditional information-sharing and graphical visualizations, the methods of problem-based learning, case study and case reports, process-based learning and cooperative learning are also applied. To ensure the opportunity to consult teachers in the performance of individual tasks, on-line and e-learning methods are introduced.

To meet the needs of the Lithuanian society and labour market as well as European and international interests in the programme, the teachers participate in international scientific conferences and they are members in international organizations. Representatives of various institutions of national and international organizations are frequent guests, e. g. members of the Lithuanian Parliament, judges of the European Court of Human Rights, the European Union Court of justice etc.

Students' individual work makes up 77 % of the study volume in full-time studies, and respectively 88 % of the study volume in part-time studies. The teaching workload gradually decreases from the first to the third semester, while the independent workload gradually increases. About 33 % of the volume of the Financial Law programme is devoted to the Master's thesis.

In described in detail in the self-report, the Financial Law programme is designed in accordance with several Lithuanian legal acts, international legal acts and MRU legal acts.

Assessment

The expert team acknowledges that with the Financial Law programme MRU has reached a good position in the competition between Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions. While other Higher Education Institutions offer more traditional law study programmes, MRU has developed a modern approach, which is attractive for young people. With the combination of Finance and Law contents, they provide an interface of these two fields. This has a promising future in the context of globalization and will be still highly demanded in the next decades.

The expert team assesses the curriculum as well-balanced, well-structured and logical. The courses cover the relevant contents and competences to meet the programme objectives and prepare the graduates for their professional tasks. The contents of the curriculum also reflect current developments in the field. Especially the labour market and society-oriented choice of study subjects (e. g. personal tax and municipality finances) are positively emphasized by the experts. They support explicitly this strategic decision of the faculty.

The expert team also commends the comparative approach of the study programme. The comparison of Lithuanian, European, CIS countries and other international law and financial systems trains students' ability to act across borders.

The experts also appreciate that students are encouraged to work not only empirically but to deal with cases, coming from current topics like VAT fraud.

The experts appreciate the variety of learning methods used in the curriculum and especially commend the possibility to discuss cases with invited experienced Financial Law professionals (e. g. State Tax Inspectorate Under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania, Law Firm Kručauskas & Partners ConsulTax). The use of the moodle platform in the faculty is assessed as exemplary. It is an important tool for teaching and learning and the contact between teachers and students. The access for students via smartphone is an attractive technique.

The study subject descriptions are mostly exemplary and give students and teaching staff a comprehensive overview over content, learning outcomes, working methods, assessment and workload of the study subjects.

4.3 Teaching staff

Current situation

Most of the academic staff teaching in the Financial Law programme have a PhD degree. The composition of the teaching staff meets the legal requirements that not less than 20 % of master degree courses have to be taught by professors and not less than 80 % by the staff with doctorate degree. The absolute majority of the staff are professionals of the subjects they are teaching. Some of them work in part-time at MRU and are additionally working in enterprises, consulting companies, as lawyers, as experts for organizations or as consultants of ministries.

According to 2013-04-02 Mykolas Romeris University Senate Resolution on accounting norms of teacher's workload No. 1SN-40, teacher's workload of Financial Law Master's Degree Programme is distributed as follows: Full-time teachers have to work 1,530 hours per year and 36 hours per week. Their yearly workload is allocated to lecturing (1,000 hours), scientific/research work (400 hours) and organizational work (130 hours).

As described in detail in the self-evaluation report most of the academic staff members take part in international projects and conferences (e. g. the Department of Finance and Taxes (three lecturers from this Department participate in the Programme) hosted the International scientific conference „Problems in Tax Policy“) and publish scientific articles in Lithuanian and international scientific journals. They receive invitations to give lectures at foreign universities or to go on internships. Furthermore, the university attracts external specialists from authorities like e. g. the State Tax Inspectorate of the Republic of Lithuania. Most of the teachers are fluent in two foreign languages, English and Russian.

According to the self-evaluation report teachers continuously participate in internal and external trainings to acquire new knowledge, experiences and skills required for teaching and learning processes. The involved departments and institutes organize internal trainings in which teachers share their experiences, present and analyse teaching and learning processes and methods. The teachers also participate in internal qualification improvement courses organized by the university (for example, since autumn 2009, the university organises training sessions/ lectures of professional development for its academic staff on an on-going basis), which seek to improve employee qualifications, to support their interest in innovations, and to strengthen the community of the university. Teachers also improve their qualification through active participation in projects and working groups initiated by respective institutions at the national, regional and international level.

Assessment

The expert team assesses the qualification of the staff as adequate to offer a professional university-level study programme and to provide the students with a qualified learning experience. The experts acknowledge that the staff members are publishing a lot, that they have international teaching experience (e. g. lectures were given at the University of Savoy, (France), Iceland University (Iceland), or professional experience and are overall highly and appropriately qualified. The research interests are relevant for Financial Law and therefore support the quality of this programme. The combination of full-time and part-time professors and lecturers is also a gain for the practical relevance.

The experts were very impressed by the high motivation of teachers, which was clearly visible during the site-visit. They are ambitious and communicate their high standards to the students. This is a good basis for constant high-level developments.

Especially the system of allocation of work capacity in the areas of teaching, research and organization contributes to the overall good working conditions at the MRU. The experts have gained the impression that there are sufficient opportunities for further trainings in didactics and that staff members use it well and regularly.

4.4 Facilities and learning resources

Current situation

The MRU is located in a modern accessible building with pleasant interior and elaborate technical equipment. There are 40 auditoriums with 2,051 seats in that part of the building, where lecturers of the Financial Law programme are given.

One of the basic objectives of the MRU is its integration into the European Higher Education Area. Therefore, the university gives special attention to and invests in the provision of modern information technologies and computer networks as well as its implementation into the study process of the study programme. The modernisation of the library and services provided for students and teachers are also part of these activities.

All the auditoriums, where the lectures of the programme take place, are equipped with modern furniture and media equipment like e. g. writing boards and screens, personal computers, television sets, video recorders, sound recorders, multimedia system projectors and smart boards.

A network data storage facility is installed in the data centre of the University alongside with virtual servers. The worldwide roaming access service eduroam and email service are implemented too. Furthermore, numerous other technical services are provided (e. g. storage of data, assignment of personal identifications, installation and update of operating systems etc.) and professionally maintained to support teaching and learning. The requirements for e-learning are developed extensively.

The Mykolas Romeris University library provides – according to the self-evaluation report – traditional and electronic resources of scientific information. Readers can select between different working areas: reading rooms, silent reading rooms and internet reading rooms. The library is accessible for readers with disabilities and offers two specialized computer work stations for persons with motoric and eyesight impairments. In total, the library accommodates 410 places for reading (with wireless internet and power sockets for laptops), 145 computer work stations and seven scanners. The library in the central building is open seven days and with 141 hours nearly around the clock. In 2013, the library collection consisted of 240,700 copies of publications and 200 periodicals have been subscribed. 29,700 e-journals and 241,800 e-books are accessible. Readers can use international databases, which provide a lot of information related to legal regulation of financial law, such as: Academic Search Complete (via EBSCO), Beck-Online, Cambridge Journals Online, HeinOnline, Kluwer Law International Journal Library (via HeinOnline), Oxford Journals Online, Oxford Reference Online: Premium Collection, Oxford Reports on International Law, Regional Business News (via EBSCO), WestLaw International, WestLaw UK etc. The list of subscribed new databases is supplemented with important Lithuanian legal databases: In-folex.Praktika – resolutions, decisions, reviews, consultations of the Lithuanian courts, and LitlexInternet – an online version of well-known database LITLEX.

Furthermore, the university created the mobile applications “MRU” and “MRU contacts”, which are available at Apple App Store and Google Play. They enable the university members to read MRU news, check the studies calendar and search for contacts.

Assessment

The expert team acknowledges the very good facilities of the MRU. The buildings and rooms are of adequate size to produce a pleasant teaching and learning atmosphere. The team commends the MRU for its excellent and up-to-date media equipment, which provides very good conditions for a diversified education of the students. Especially noteworthy is the professional technical care and support, that helps the teaching staff using the benefits of such tools.

Most of the teachers do not have their own office. However, the experts assess the pleasant furnished common room for teachers as a good way to get in touch and communicate.

The experts are impressed by the excellent facilities of the library. In the context of the site visit, they could see that all important standard literature and literature on the key topics of the study programme are available. Many publications are available in several languages (e. g. English, French, and German). Access to major international databases is given. With this equipment, the students get the best conditions to work comparatively and to experience international best practice examples. From the experts' view, this is a gain for the study programme. It opens students the opportunity to get international jobs. The experts assess the numerous services of the library staff (e. g. to compile bibliographies) as a special feature that benefits both students and teachers.

4.5 Study process and student's performance assessment

Current situation

The procedure of admission to the study programme, the number of students and the rules are set by the MRU. The admission requirements are regulated by MRU Senate Resolution No. 1SN-46 Rules of Admission of Persons to Mykolas Romeris University Second Cycle (Master's). The rules are updated annually.

Graduates holding a Bachelor's Degree of Law (from a university) or graduates of first-cycle studies and bridging courses in law may apply for the Financial Law programme. Students who do not hold a bachelor university degree in law can attend an additional one-year course to obtain the credits required for the Financial Law programme. The admission depends on a ranking of the sum of the following two scores:

- Arithmetic mean of the assessments (grades) of final examinations and (or) final work multiplied by weighted coefficient of 0,8;
- Arithmetic mean of the assessments (grades) that remained in the diploma supplement.

One additional score is added for students, who have passed a final examination of the same branch of law. Those who have a MRU leader diploma are given two extra points. The application procedure is described in detail in the self-evaluation report and is published on the websites of MRU.

The programme is offered as a full-time and part-time option. The part-time option offers the same content, but is spread over two instead of one and a half years to allow students to work during their studies. The main differences between full-time and part-time studies are the arrangement of the time of studies and distribution among contact hours and independent work. The studies for full-time students are organised each week (except internships or holidays), part-times students attend one course unit after the other.

In 2008/2009 the MRU started the programme with 16 full-time (56 applicants) and 30 part-time students (251 applicants). In 2013 19 full-time (90 applicants) and 22 part-time students got the admission to the programme. Currently there is a student/teacher ratio proportion between 1:2 and 1:3.

The dropout rate for the study programme is by 6 % for full-time and 14 % for part-time students in 2012/2013. According to the faculty members as well as the students the main reasons for the drop-outs or the suspension of studies are various e. g. disease, the birth of a child and taking care of it, difficulties to reconcile work and studies and financial problems. One explanation for the higher dropout rate of the part-time students is the fact that they face greater difficulties in compatibility of studies, work and family.

Students have the opportunity to participate in mobility programmes. The MRU takes actively part in the Erasmus programme and has about 287 partner institutions in Europe. The bachelor students participate more actively in mobility programmes, whereas most master students are working and have families. Therefore, it is difficult for them to reconcile academic mobility, family and work activity.

Every course unit ends with a student assessment. The Procedure for the Assessment of Mykolas Romeris University Learning Outcomes should establish principles and criteria for the assessment of the learning outcomes of study subjects and study programmes, the procedure for the preparation and assessment of the fulfilment of examinations and other academic credits, of students' written works, final examinations and theses at the university. In the description of each study subject, the assessment system is presented. With exception of the master thesis, the subject assessment is com-

posed of elements of cumulative assessment and combined according to a predefined formula. This leads to a variety of different examination methods, e. g. written and oral exams, colloquia, case studies, mind and concept mapping method, presentations, synopsis etc., which assess different competences. Knowledge and skills are evaluated on a ten-point grading system (ten = excellent, one = totally bad). The assessment methods and formulas to create the final mark are described in the description of the course units, which are publicly available. The lecturer of the course unit assesses and processes the individual marks. The final mark is submitted to the electronic information system "Studies" which is linked with information for students and with study administration process.

The master thesis (30 credit points) is mostly written at the MRU under the supervision of a lecturer. Upon the supervisor's approval of the prepared final thesis, a student of the Financial Law programme should be obliged to upload it in the University's information system "Studies" not later than within 10 working days before the defence, and the supervisor should mark in the system his or her consent for the defence of the paper. If the supervisor does not authorize the defence of the paper, the student should be entitled to apply to the chairperson of the Public Law second cycle study programme Committee, who should decide whether the paper can be defended. If the Chairperson of the Public Law second cycle study programme Committee does not authorize the defence of the paper, the student may suspend his or her studies for a period not longer than one year. The final work must be substantiated by independent scientific or applied research, application of knowledge or it must be prepared as a project that demonstrates abilities that conform to the objectives of the programme.

The MRU offers both a psychological service as well as a large number of individual consultation hours for full- and part-time students. Both involved faculties offer advisory hours face-to-face, on-line and via moodle. As described in detail in the self-report, several services supporting the students learning processes are offered by the library, the Student Affairs Office, the International Exchange Unit and the Electronic Studies Unit. MRU offers favourable conditions enabling a wide segment of high school graduates and other interested groups, despite any handicaps or disabilities, to attend and study the programmes. There is a regulation for the procedure for granting scholarships to students. The Procedure for Administration of Payment of Tuition Fees establishes conditions for paying, returning, reducing etc. of students' tuition fees. Full-time students have to pay 6,240 Litas for the whole programme; part-time students pay 2,340 Litas for one semester.

Assessment

The expert team assesses the admission requirements as well-founded and the study process of the programme seems to be very well organised and balanced. The organisation of the study process seems to be adequate to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The students and graduates also confirmed this assessment during the site visit. They were very satisfied with their study situation and appreciated MRU due to its good reputation and good job opportunities. The students also mentioned the very close and easy contact to their lecturers. The examination scheme is described transparently and uses multiple assessment methods to check different competences of the students. The study programme documents are publicly available on the MRU's websites.

MRU, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics and Finance Management are offering opportunities for international mobility for students and academic staff. Within a period of accreditation 3 full-time Master students participated in Erasmus mobility for studies. The expert team encourages the MRU and the faculties to strengthen

these mobility programmes and to further motivate master students to participate in student exchange. The social partners could support this and the Erasmus cooperation should be further expanded.

The academic and social support of the students is excellent. The services offered by the Faculty of Economics and Finance Management and the University ensure an adequate level of academic and social support. The lecturers are highly committed to find individual solutions for students in special situations. The experts are impressed by the diverse support activities of the university and encourage the MRU to pursue these measures, and monitor the results with regard to the dropout rates in the study programme.

The students reported during the site visit a clearly structured study process and that they are encouraged to participate in (applied) research activities. All in all the students are very satisfied with their situation at the university. Lodging seems to be no problem, also due to the good supply of student housing by the MRU.

Due to the close cooperation with social partners and employers in updating the study programme (e.g. State Tax Inspectorate, law firms, private companies offering financial services, performing diverse legal work, especially in the field of financial market.), almost all students are able to find appropriate jobs in their profession. The students as well as the graduates mentioned during the site visit that finding a job is not a big issue as they see themselves largely well prepared to work in the field of Financial Law in Lithuania or in other countries.

4.6 Programme management

Current situation

According to the self-evaluation report, the policy of quality assurance at MRU is based on a general agreement of the academic community with regard to the application and development of a quality culture. That means that the entire academic community participates in the processes of evaluation, monitoring and assurance of quality. Each member of the MRU is responsible to contribute to the quality of the study programme(s) according to his/her duties, competences and commissions. This policy is written down in several legal acts e.g. in the MRU strategy, Quality Policy Provisions for the Studies and Research at Mykolas Romeris University, Regulations of the System of Internal Study Quality Assurance at Mykolas Romeris University, Regulations of the Committee for Study Quality Assurance of Mykolas Romeris University, Regulations for Study Programme Committees, Procedure for Organizing Feedback on Studies of Mykolas Romeris University and in different information packages. The efforts of the MRU to foster the quality of study programmes have been rewarded with two EU awards: the Diploma Supplement Label (2010) and the ECTS Label (2012).

The university uses the following tools and procedures of quality assurance: procedure of approval, monitoring and periodic evaluation of study programmes, assessment of learning outcomes, recruitment process, qualification improvement system, students and graduates surveys. Additionally there are several meetings between students and teaching staff, the members of the dean's office and members of the rectorate concerning the quality of study programmes and their improvement. Changes in the labour market, expectations of employers and pupils are analysed on faculty and institute/department level. The competences of the teachers servicing the Financial Law Master's Degree Programme is ensured by strict staff selection procedures. The Faculty Board applies a competition procedure to select faculty teachers and research fel-

lows for the term of five years. Each year, every teacher must perform a self-evaluation by completing a questionnaire, which is used for teacher ratings. Academic-methodological work, scientific publications, other research studies, participation in organizational work and project implementation as well as participation in public activities are evaluated.

MRU publishes all legal acts, orders, process descriptions and documents as well as qualitative and quantitative information on the study programmes, qualifications and achievements of the University and the teachers on their website.

The internal system of quality assurance is based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Teachers, students and committees reflect results of surveys and analyses, and measures are taken to improve quality. Summarized poll data are submitted to the Centre of Academic Affairs, which announces the results to the community of the University. There is a clear distribution of responsibilities for quality assurance, divided between the senate, the rectorate, the university's study quality assurance committee, the faculty, the institute/department and the individual teachers. In MRU's view, students are responsible for their personal learning results and the quality of their studies. They are expected to comply with academic discipline, university ethics and other requirements of the university community, which are intended for the quality of the study process.

The study programme is monitored by the Finance law second cycle study programme committees, where teachers, students and representatives of social partners are involved.

Subjects of the revision processes are the learning outcomes and student's competencies, programme contents and structures, exam results, student's data, student's workload, causes for dropout and the services for students.

Based on the system of quality assurance Financial Law Master's Degree Programme is renewed, study plans are corrected, new learning and assessment methods are introduced.

On the management level, there is a Study Programme and Quality Assurance Group that supports faculties, institutes, departments and study programmes in their quality assurance efforts.

Assessment

The experts certify that the MRU has implemented a comprehensive quality management system. It can be assessed as exemplary in the European Higher Education Area. All organisational levels and necessary stakeholders are involved and their responsibilities and tasks are clearly described and published. During the site visit, the students have confirmed that they are involved in all processes and they have plenty opportunities to participate and criticize. It is their impression that their own concerns are taken seriously. A strictly systematic and methodologically sophisticated approach of quality management is visible. The quality cycles are closed on all levels and work steadily and reliably. For this, MRU, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Economics and Financial Management and the involved institutes/departments are investing enough time and resources.

The expert team was particularly impressed, how dedicated the representatives of the programme are to its quality and continuously further development. Obviously, quality management is an important approach for keeping Financial Law Master's Degree Programme internationally competitive and innovative. The programme representatives have achieved this.

The experts emphasize the good integration of the employers into the development of the programme and the orientation on the labour market. This shows the importance of employability that is achieved by the study programme.

Also noteworthy is the good cooperation between Study Programme Committee and the stakeholders involved in the programme. The support is efficient and target-oriented. Regarding the instruments and procedures, there is a good balance between effort and benefit. The staff members do not feel disproportionately burdened by bureaucracy. They rather share the overall objectives of the quality management system and accept it as part of their work.

It is the expert team's impression, that the representatives of Financial Law programme are using the quality management system for constant improvements. The self-evaluation report and the discussions during the site-visit showed, that data and developments are differentiated and analysed.

5. Overall assessment

In general, the expert team assesses the Financial Law programme positively. MRU provides a very good education on the level of European Universities and prepares the students well for their future profession.

In several aspects of the study programme, the competition with other local, national and European universities is noticeable. This generates high motivation for the MRU, the faculties and the programme representatives. An atmosphere of continuous development and innovation was evident for the experts. They would like to strengthen MRU's focus on quality, internationalisation and interdisciplinarity. In all three aspects, the university and the faculties show remarkable success. However, the international orientation of Financial Law programme is to be developed. The experts encourage the programme representatives explicitly to follow and expand this way. It was a strategically wise decision to combine Law with questions of modern social life. For this approach, good conditions are given at the MRU.

A strength of the programme is the very good students' employability. It is a vital indication that the study contents are well placed to prepare students for the practice.

From the experts' view, a future challenge for MRU will be the financial support of the working students and the further expand of the academic education in Lithuania. The university and the faculties should work together to raise even more scholarships and to explore new avenues in this field. As a result, the dropout rate of students should be lowered.

According to the expert team, the Financial Law programme meets the Lithuanian requirements for programme accreditation. Therefore, the team recommends the programme for accreditation.

The expert team also recommends awarding the **evalag** label for international programme accreditation as the programme meets the Lithuanian evaluation criteria for study programmes on which the label is based. The experts recommend that the MRU consider and implement the recommendations in this report to improve the programme further.

6. Decision of the accreditation commission

The accreditation commission of **evalag** accredited the master programme Financial Law of the Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) and awarded the **evalag** label for international programme accreditation. The accreditation is valid **from 7 July 2014 until 31 August 2020**.

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

7. Evaluation Scores

Evaluation scores of the Financial Law programme

No	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of the area, points
1	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2	Curriculum design	4
3	Teaching staff	4
4	Facilities and learning resources (facilities, equipment, learning materials)	4
5	Study process and students' performance assessment (student selection, performance assessment, support)	4
6	Programme management (administration of the programme, internal quality assurance)	4
	Total	23 Maximum score: 24

Evaluation scale

Level/Score	Evaluation	Description
1	Unsatisfactory	There are essential irregularities to be eliminate
2	Satisfactory	Meets the minimum requirements, requires improvement
3	Good	The area is systemically developed and possesses original features
4	Very good	The area is exceptionally good