



Final Study Programme Evaluation

Communication and Creative Technologies

(II cycle Master's degree)

at

Mykolas Romeris University (MRU)

Assessment report

8 December 2014

Assessment report of the II cycle Master's degree programme Communication and Creative Technologies. The final programme evaluation was carried out by **evalag** as part of the external evaluation of I cycle Bachelor's study programmes Internet Management and Communication, Translating and Editing and II cycle Master's study programmes Communication and Creative Technologies, Management of Educational Technology.

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Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) commissioned **evalag** with the external evaluation of the II cycle Master's degree study programme "Communication and Creative Technologies". 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 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's degrees (I cycle) and Master's 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's and Master's 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 16,000 students and offers 92 study programmes in the study fields (branches) of Law, Public Administration, Political Science, Territorial Planning, Human Resource Management, Economics, Business Studies, Business and Administrative Studies, Finance, Accounting, Management Studies, Management Studies (Project Management), Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, Communication, Education, Education Studies, Teachers training, Translation Studies, Philology, Philosophy, Informatics, Informatics (Applied 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 belong to the Faculty of Social Technologies:

- Institute of Educational Sciences and Social Work
- Institute of Digital Technologies
- Institute of Communication and Mediation
- Institute of Psychology

The Faculty of Social Technologies offers its students the following 36 study programmes:

Bachelor's degree programmes	Master's degree programmes	Doctoral (PhD) programmes	Non-degree awarding programmes
Business Informatics	Biotechnology Business Management	Education	Teachers Training
	Business Informatics	Psychology	
	Business Informatics (joint study programme)		
Communication and Creative Industries	Business Psychology	Management	
	Cybersecurity Management		
Internet Management and Communication	Communication and Creative Technologies		
Law and Penitentiary Activities	Comparative Social Policy and Welfare (joint study programme)		
	Electronic Business Management		
Psychology	Educology of Entrepreneurship		
Social Communication and Mediation			
Social Pedagogy	Educology of Law		
Social Work	Electronic Government		
Sociocultural Education	Health Education		
Sociology			
Informatics and Digital Contents (joint study programme)	Management of Educational Technology		
	Mediation		
	New Technology Law		
	Child Rights Protection		

Bachelor's degree programmes	Master's degree programmes	Doctoral (PhD) programmes	Non-degree awarding programmes
	Social Technology Management (joint study programme)		
	Social Work		
	Welfare Sociology		
	Legal Psychology		
	Work and Organizational Psychology (joint study programme)		
	Social Work with Children and Youth (joint study programme)		

Responding to the need of society, the labour market and the feedback from employers, the study programmes of MRU are – according to the self-evaluation report – continuously being 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. Communication and Creative Technologies Programme

The Communication and Creative Technologies Master's degree programme has been registered since 5 December 2012 and complies therefore with the Lithuanian law, regulations and general requirements for currently operating study programmes. The programme – carried out by the Faculty of Social Technologies – 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 hours per study credit.

The programme is oriented towards creative persons who seek to be proficient with modern communication tools and channels while fostering the communication processes among interested parties, as well as being able to choose proper media channels and creative technologies while distributing the message to various audiences.

The Communication and Creative Technologies programme is theoretical and applied in nature. It provides a wide range of scientific approaches and prepares students for the Master's research work. The programme is taught in Lithuanian and in English. The program taught in English also has dual degree program status which is confirmed by the validation of Middlesex University in London. The cooperation agreement was signed on 22 August 2013.

3. Evaluation and accreditation process

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 three professorial experts and one student expert:

- Prof. Dr. Gerald Lembke, Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University Mannheim
- Prof. Dr. Ralph Sonntag, University of Applied Sciences Dresden
- Prof. Dr. Erich Steiner, University of Saarland, Saarbrücken
- Arne Nowacki, Technical University Ilmenau and University of Erfurt

The site visit took place from 29 until 30 September 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 as well as 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 8 December 2014.

evalag was represented by Dr. Anette Köster who coordinated the assessment procedure.

4. Programme assessment

4.1 Learning outcomes

Current situation

The self-evaluation report describes the programme objectives as well as intended learning outcomes of the study programme and links them to the curriculum. The intended learning outcomes are structured into professional knowledge and competences as well as general and soft skills. The description of the course units specifies the intended learning outcomes of the courses related to the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

The aim of the programme – according to the self-evaluation report – is to prepare highly qualified specialists in the communication field, to foster the capacity of an integrally understanding of modern networked environments, to use this knowledge in a creative and meaningful way, as well as to make comprehensive solutions related to the challenges of modern interactive communication technologies in various fields, their organizational, managerial, legal and security aspects. Students of the programme are also able to apply the concepts of strategic communications in changing

social, economic and cultural contexts, design the complex communication systems by adopting multistage innovative solutions and create effective media environments. The study field of the programme is Communication and after graduation a Master of Communication studies is awarded.

The intended learning outcomes of the Communication and Creative Technologies programme are:

Generic learning outcomes:

- Students will be able to examine the communication technology and creative theories in networked environmental aspect as well as to ensure progress against the background of the increasing importance of new technologies in society and a decision complexity arising as a result of globalization and global trends.
- Students will acquire the competencies to live and work in heterogeneous networked environments and contexts according to the principles of sustainable development in a holistic communication paradigms, applying methodologies and the latest “smart” as well as other technologies.
- Students will understand how communication and creative technology is implemented in a networked environment of modern forms of communication, including the development of interdisciplinary and international ranges and structure as well as how the added value for society, economy, culture, and the public or business sector can be creatively communicated.
- Students will evaluate application possibilities of integrated creative communications technology by using specialized academic achievements as well as through interdisciplinary knowledge and research methodologies.
- Students will be able to assess the state of the art of communication technologies and acquire creative expertise to analyse the application of networking and social, economic and cultural environments of opportunities, enabling them to develop effective and creative public learning environments and to plan their strategies for implementing a holistic approach aiming for sustainable choices.
- Students will be able to organize the creative process of building networked technological platforms in complex evolving social, economic and cultural environments as well as to develop and manage communications development projects.

Subject specific learning outcomes:

- Students will be able to scientifically analyse the creative application of technology cases and evaluate development opportunities, articulate them, and develop in creative industries based on innovative ideas. In addition they will be able to implement creative solutions, and to carry out innovative creative technology projects, using knowledge in new and unfamiliar environments as well as defined multicultural globalized contexts.
- Students will be able to confidently plan communication and use creative advances in technology, new media and other emerging technologies, as well as to follow their trends and perspectives in Lithuania and the world resulting in a diverse, creative interpretation of the scope of technology, which finally can be integrated and rebuild in the form of new ideas, products and services in development.

- Students will be able to use communication technologies and creative knowledge in a socially responsible way, e. g. the creative use of networked decision-making environments in dynamic situations. They will be able to reflectively respond to changes in society through the application of creative technologies in the defence of universal values such as human rights, freedom of speech and freedom of information, as well as improving public governance, reducing social exclusion, developing e-forms of democracy, as well as fostering the harmonious coexistence and social capital development.
- Students will be able to rearrange integrated communications and creative technological principles of transmission and distribution using traditional and networked environments skills. They will be able to establish an effective creative communication suitable for the environments of co-operation, implanting adaptation projects of combinations of composition locally, nationally and internationally. Also they will achieve the ability to plan strategically and expeditiously implement creative technology projects in Lithuania and EU policy context.

As described in the self-evaluation report the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are based on academic and professional requirements, public needs and needs of the labour market. Regarding the further development of the programme under the new labour market conditions the interests of employers are taken into consideration.

The graduates of the Communication and Creative Technologies programme should be able to ensure their working place in the global market, since the competences acquired during the studies are equally applicable in national and global contexts. The digital market is generating huge amounts of income worldwide, and creative industries take a fair share in it. The unified digital market is considered as one of the main priorities of the European Union as well. The implementation of this programme allows the developing of the knowledge-based economy while ensuring the existence of a sustainable information society. A strong field of creative technologies would significantly contribute to the fulfilment of that conception in the European context.

The objectives and intended learning outcomes of the Communication and Creative Technologies programme are publicly accessible on the university's website.

Assessment

According to the expert team, the intended learning outcomes are described in detail and are publicly accessible in the course descriptions. The course descriptions are highly elaborated, so that students find all the information they need. The intended learning outcomes principally meet the European academic and professional requirements of a graduate in the field of Communication. Nevertheless, the experts have the impression, that the outline of the intended professions for the graduates is not visible clearly enough. In addition, the title of the programme, Communication and Creative Technologies, might lead to expectations of a higher amount of technology based contents and competences. As the experts learned in the discussions with the programme directors and the teachers, 'technology' is used in a broader sense and is understood in the sense of social technology and involves working methods. According to the experts, it is worth considering, whether students should actually get more really technical skills for example for programming on a basic level.

The learning outcomes on the programme as well as on the course level are consistent with studies of the university type and meet the required level of qualifications. This is applicable to the full-time as well as to the part-time programme. Comparing the in-

tended learning outcomes of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes of the whole evaluation cluster, the experts think, that there should be a more obvious distinction between these two levels. It would be worth to consider to enrich the Master programme in the field of research.

Employability is one of the programme objectives that is realised in an exemplary manner. The expert team values the good employment opportunities of the future graduates, which are linked to the practice-oriented education as well as the good co-operation between MRU and Lithuanian employers for developing and evaluating the study programme. Most of the students on a Master's level have completed internships and are working in fulltime jobs in the field of communication. Employers, who participated in the site visit, confirmed the very good qualification of the students and their ability to introduce themselves in specific fields. According to the expert team, the widespread practical experience of the students is an enrichment for the study programme, because they are adequately integrated in course units and examinations.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends a clearer distinction of programme aims and learning outcomes on the Bachelor's and Master's level in general. This distinction should refer to contents, scientific methods and the level of difficulty in examinations. A more differentiated study programme description should be adequately published for the students. Furthermore, there should be a more concrete description of the intended professions for the future graduates. This is essential for the students' orientation right from the first semester and allows them to go their individual and targeted way through the study programme. Because of the ambiguous expression of 'Creative Technologies' in the programme title, the expert team recommends either to change the title or to adjust the contents towards a more technological direction. Basic skills for example in writing codes would be a useful benefit for employers. An additional involvement of technologies is also a request from the students.

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 Communication and Creative Technologies programme consists of nine compulsory study subjects including the Master's thesis and four optional study subjects.

In the first semester, students attend the courses Communication Theories for Contemporary Society, Gamefication in Educational Systems, Research Methods for Media Technologies and one of the optional courses Creative Knowledge Society or Philosophical Principles of Social Modelling (six credit points each, together with the six credit points for the preparation of the Master's thesis 30 credit points in total).

In the second semester, students attend the courses Communication in Technological Innovations, Creative Industries, Entertainment Technology and one of the optional courses Networked Sociocultural Technologies or Political Media Technologies (six credit points each, together with the six credit points for the preparation of the Master's thesis 30 credit points in total).

In the third semester, students attend the courses Intercultural Interactions and New Media Intellectual Property. They also finish their Master's thesis and prepare the defence (30 credit points in total).

Interdisciplinary studies are – according to the self-evaluation report – the main feature of the programme, combining social science and technological aspects of contemporary communication environment. The Communication and Creative Technologies Master's programme is unique in Lithuania in encompassing technical features in communication and creative studies. Visiting lecturers from Lithuania and abroad are invited in order to introduce the latest achievements, both in science and practice. Also, students can attend international conferences, workshops, summer schools and exchange programmes.

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 studies and case reports, simulations, exploratory methods, practical assignments with computer software, cooperative learning are applied as well. On-line and e-learning methods ensure that teachers can supervise students while they perform individual tasks.

In 2010 MRU was granted the ECTS Diploma Supplement label and in 2012 the ECTS label. As a result, all study programmes – according to the self-evaluation report – are learning outcome-based, learning activities are defined on the basis of the standard size of the components and the student workload is consistent with the number of credits allocated to that component.

Students' individual study hours makes up approximately 75 % of the study volume in full-time studies, and approximately 85 % of the study volume in part-time studies.

The Communication and Creative Technologies programme is – as described in detail in the self-evaluation report – designed in accordance with Lithuanian legal acts, international legal acts and MRU legal acts, legislation which regulates the study in Lithuania.

Assessment

The expert team acknowledges that with the Communication and Creative Technologies programme MRU has reached a good position in the competition between Lithuanian higher education institutions. While other higher education institutions offer more traditional study programmes, MRU has developed an interdisciplinary approach with modern components, which is attractive for young people and which is very future-oriented. The expert team supports explicitly this strategic direction of MRU.

The expert team assesses the curriculum as 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, for example entertainment technologies.

The experts appreciate the variety of learning methods used in the curriculum and especially commend the possibilities to work with different computer software. Furthermore, they appreciate that students are encouraged to work not too much with computers but to deal likewise with questions coming from society and philosophy.

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.

So the expert team see a good mix of E-Learning and blended learning arrangements. 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, intended learning outcomes, working methods, assessment and workload of the study subjects.

Recommendations

The study programme of Communication and Creative Technologies is predestined to incorporate start-ups after graduation. For this reason the experts were astonished, that most of the students they met during the site visit don't think about self-employment as a future perspective. The expert team recommends to sensitize the chances and spirit of entrepreneurship, to point out the entrepreneurial components of the study programme and to strengthen the corresponding skills. A profile as a university of young entrepreneurs would be useful for MRU in the competition of Lithuanian higher education institutions. This entrepreneurial spirit should be fostered by MRU. The number of start-ups and the number of employments could be a key performance indicator in the internal as well as in the external competition with other higher education institutions.

The expert team supports the research parts of the curriculum, however, in their view those parts are not clearly visible in the course descriptions. They recommend to find a better balance of practical and research parts. This might become underrepresented because of the intensive participation of social partners and their strong interest in practice-oriented study contents. It is the task of the teachers in their role as scientists to ensure an adequate basic education in research methods to give the study programme more stability and future.

4.3 Teaching staff

Current situation

The qualifications and practical work experience of the academic staff of the programme correspond to the requirements of the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and Description of General Requirements for the Master's Study Programmes for university teachers.

The selection of academic staff at MRU is performed on the Statute of Mykolas Romeris University and the basis of general job requirements of Mykolas Romeris University for the qualification of university teachers and scientific workers (2012).

In the Communication and Creative Technologies programme ten teachers are involved, whose scientific research interests or fields of practical activities correlate with the subjects they are teaching. Six are professors, one is associated professor, and the others are lecturers. Some scientists have taught several courses. Therefore the composition of the teaching staff meets the legal requirements that not less than 80 % of Master's degree courses have to be taught by teachers with a scientific degree and not less than 20 % of the volume of the field subjects must be taught by teachers acting as professors.

According to 2013-04-02 Mykolas Romeris University Senate Resolution on accounting norms of teacher's workload No. 1SN-40, the teachers' workload of Communication and Creative Technologies Master's degree programme is distributed as follows:

Full-time teachers have to work 1530 hours per year and 36 hours per week. Their yearly workload is allocated to teaching (1000 hours), scientific work (400 hours) and organisational work (130 hours).

As described in detail in the self-evaluation report all academic staff members take part in international projects and conferences and publish scientific articles in Lithuanian and international scientific journals. They also receive invitations to give lectures at other national or international universities (e. g. in Croatia, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Turkey) or to go on internships and take part in exchange programmes. Most of the teachers are fluent in several languages, e. g. English and Russian, some of them also in French and German.

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 Faculty of Social Technologies organises 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 organised by the university, which seek to advance employees' qualifications, to support their interest in innovations, and to strengthen the community of the university.

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 regularly in relevant journals, that they have international teaching and professional experiences and that they are highly and appropriately qualified. The research interests are relevant for Communication and Creative Technologies and therefore support the quality of this programme. The cooperation of full-time and part-time professors and lecturers supports the practical relevance of the courses.

The experts appreciate very much the high motivation of teachers, which was clearly observable during the site visit. They are ambitious and communicate their high standards to the students. This provides a good basis for constant high-level developments.

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

4.4 Facilities and learning resources

Current situation

The MRU is located in a modern and accessible building with pleasant interior and elaborate technical equipment. There are four auditoriums of general lectures with 1140 seats, 66 auditoriums for seminars with 1798 seats, one internet reading room with 31 workplaces and one internet parlour with 33 workplaces in the central building, where the Communication and Creative Technologies programme is also lectured. All University area is computerized. There are 18 specially computerised auditoriums:

- Statistical analysis laboratory with IBM SPSS Statistics Standard Desktop (Statistics Base, Regressions, Advanced Statistics, Custom Tables Sample power) and other software (11 workplaces),
- Foreign languages laboratory with Auralog Tell MeMore and Sanako Lab software for teaching English, German and French (2 rooms with 32 workplaces),
- Rooms for teaching foreign languages with Robotel SmartClass + (2 rooms with 32 workplaces),
- Geographic information system computer room with ArcGIS software (13 workplaces),
- Psychology laboratory with SuperLab, LabTutor, LabAuthor, LISREL, IBM SPSS Statistics software (6 workplaces),
- Computer rooms in the Faculty of Social Technologies (7 rooms with 110 workplaces),
- Two computerised rooms for exams (Moodle Quiz , 62 workplaces),
- Computer room with graphic design software Adobe Creative Suite Master Collection (9 workplaces)
- Computer room with Microsoft software (11 workplaces)
- Conference hall (21 workplaces).

Currently students and employees of MRU use more than 1,300 stationary and mobile computer workplaces as well as more than 200 printers and scanners.

One of the basic objectives of the MRU is – according to the self-evaluation report – 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 programmes. The modernization of the library and services provided for students and teachers are also part of these activities.

All the auditorium designated to the Communication and Creative Technologies programme are equipped with modern furniture and media equipment like e.g. writing boards and screens, computers, multimedia system projectors. There are even a few auditoriums equipped with 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 library of the Mykolas Romeris University provides – according to the self-evaluation report – traditional and electronic resources of scientific information. Readers can choose 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 2014, the library collection consisted of 244,916 volumes and 207 periodicals subscriptions. 29,132 e-journals and 315,949 e-books are accessible. Readers can also use a wide range of international databases.

Furthermore, the university created the mobile applications “MRU” and “MRU contacts”, which are available via the 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 to use 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 good general facilities of the library. During the site visit, they could assure themselves of the availability of important standard literature and literature on the key topics of the study programme. Many publications are available in several languages (e. g. English and Russian). Access to major international databases is given. With this equipment, the students get good working conditions. 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 “Rules of Admission of Persons to Mykolas Romeris University Second Cycle (Master’s)”. The rules are updated annually.

Students with a university communication Bachelor’s degree may apply for the Communication and Creative Technologies Master’s programme. Students with other university Bachelor’s degrees must gain extra credits of subjects if not studied before. Applicants who do not hold a university Bachelor’s degree can attend an additional one-year course to obtain the credits required for the Communication and Creative Technology 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.

The application procedure is described in detail in the self-evaluation report and is published on the websites of MRU.

Students of the dual degree programme whose first language is not English are required to have IELTS 6.5 (with minimum 6.0 in all four components) or TOEFL internet based 87 (with at least 21 scores in listening and writing, 22 in speaking and 23 in reading).

The programme starts once a year in September. The programme is offered as a full-time and part-time option. The main differences between full-time and part-time studies are the arrangement of the time of studies and distribution of 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 2013, the MRU started the programme with 18 full-time students (61 applicants), of whom in the meantime seven dropped out. 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, birth of a child and taking care of it, difficulties to reconcile work and studies as well as financial problems. Currently there is a student/teacher ratio of about 2:1.

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's students participate more actively in mobility programmes, whereas most Master's students are working and have families. Therefore, it is difficult for them to reconcile academic mobility, family and work activity. Although master students more actively participate in intensive programmes, summer schools and international trainings.

Every course unit ends with a student assessment. The Procedure for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes at Mykolas Romeris University establishes principles and criteria for the assessment of the learning outcomes of study subjects and study programmes, for 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's thesis, the subject assessment is composed of elements of cumulative and combined assessment according to a predefined formula. The final grade is made up of the grades of interim credits and grades of the examination. This leads to a variety of different examination methods, e. g. written and oral exams, colloquia, case studies, presentations, individual research course papers, assessing 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 grades of interim credits and grades of the examination are submitted to the electronic information system "Studies" which is linked to information for students and to the study administration process.

According to the Procedure for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes at Mykolas Romeris University students have to choose topics for the final Master degree theses (30 credits) within 15 calendar days from the beginning of the first semester in their first year of study, in part-time studies – according to study schedules posted in the intranet websites of faculties. The Committee provides students with a list of the themes of the final theses, supervisors and consultants. While selecting themes, students are recommended to consult supervisors and consultants. Students wishing to write a final thesis on the theme proposed by him/her should consult with the chairman of the Committee. Having stated conformity of the theme to the requirements due for the final thesis the Committee appoints a supervisor of the final thesis.

The final work must be substantiated by independent scientific or applied research, application of knowledge or it must be prepared as a project revealing abilities con-

forming to the aims of the programme. The commission assessing the final work and its defence must consist of specialists competent in the study field – scientists, practitioners-professionals and representatives of social partners.

A student hands in the final thesis to the supervisor not later than one month before the beginning of the term of the defence of the final thesis indicated in the study timetable. Only final theses that have gone through the formal counter-plagiarism check shall be defended. Final theses are to be defended in the open meeting of the final theses qualification commission. At the time of the defence, the author of the final thesis introduces briefly (up to 10 minutes) the work while critically reviewing the research problem, aims and hypothesis of the work, research object, results of research obtained, reliability of methods applied, presents the findings and recommendations and substantiates them. After that, the student has to answer questions. Finally the final theses and their defence is assessed by the members of the final theses defence commission.

It is expected that students of the programme will defend their Master's thesis on December 15, 2014.

The MRU offers both a psychological service as well as a large number of individual consultation hours for full- and part-time students. The Faculty of Social Technologies offers advisory hours face-to-face, via e-mail and Moodle. As described in detail in the self-evaluation 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. students' tuition fees. Full-time students have to pay 6240 Litass/1807 Euro per year, part-time students pay 4680 Litass/1355 Euro per year, non EU members of the dual degree programme pay 2880 Euro and EU members 2105 Euro per year.

Assessment

The expert team assesses the admission requirements as well-founded and the study process of the programme as very well organised and balanced. The organisation of the study process seems to be adequate to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The students of the programme 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 and the Faculty of Social Technologies are offering opportunities of international mobility for students and academic staff. So far only four students have participated. The expert team was astonished to see, that many students are strongly rooted in their home country and do not want to leave. Others obviously doubt their English skills. The experts want to clarify, that the language level of the students they met is very good compared to students of other countries, so that doubts concerning English skills are unfounded. However, the expert team encourages the MRU and the faculty to strengthen these mobility programmes and to further motivate Master's students to

participate in student exchange activities. The social partners could support this as well and the Erasmus cooperation should be further expanded.

The academic and social support of the students is excellent. The services offered by the faculty and the university ensure an adequate level of academic and social support. The lecturers are highly committed to finding 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 activities and to monitor the results with regard to the drop-out rates in the study programme.

During the site visit, the students reported 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.

Due to the close cooperation with social partners and employers in updating the study programme, the expert team is sure that students will be able to find appropriate jobs in their profession.

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. Consequently, 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 programmes according to his/her duties, competences and commissions. This policy is documented 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 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 level. The competences of the teachers servicing the Communication and Creative Technologies programme are ensured by strict staff selection procedures. The Faculty Board applies a competition procedure to select faculty teachers and research fellows for the term of five years. 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 is 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 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 Faculty of Social Technologies study programme committee, involving teachers, students and representatives of social partners.

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

Based on the system of quality assurance, the Communication and Creative Technologies 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 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 organizational levels and necessary stakeholders are involved and their responsibilities and tasks are clearly described and published. During the site visit, the students confirmed that they are involved in all processes and they have plenty opportunities for participation and the articulation of critique. According to them, 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 and the Faculty of Social Technologies are investing enough time and resources.

Particularly, the expert team was impressed with the dedication of the programme representatives to its quality and continuously further development. Obviously, quality management is an important approach to sustain the international competitiveness and innovativeness of the Communication and Creative Technologies programme.

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

The good cooperation between the Study Programme Committee, the stakeholders involved in the programme and the central study programme and quality assurance group is also noteworthy. 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 Communication and Creative Technologies 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 self-critical analysed.

5. Overall assessment

The experts acknowledge the open and respectful communication culture, pleasant working environment and visibly high commitment and dedication for continuous development and innovation of the university's rectorate and administration, programme representatives, teachers and students.

In general, the expert team assesses the Communication and Creative Technologies programme positively. MRU provides a very good education on the level of European universities and prepares the students well for future professions in this field.

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 faculty and the programme representatives. An atmosphere of continuous development and innovation was evident for the experts. They would like to strengthen MRU's strategic focus on quality, internationalisation and interdisciplinarity. In all three aspects, the university and the faculty show remarkable success. The experts encourage the programme representatives explicitly to follow and expand into this direction.

Particularly evident for the expert team was the high level of satisfaction and of engagement of students in their studies. Even though most of them are working full-time, they take part in creating a constructive learning atmosphere.

This accreditation of Communication and Creative Technologies is the second within a relatively short time. According to the expert group, at this point the programme should have time to run and to develop over some years.

According to the expert team, the Communication and Creative Technologies programme meets the Lithuanian requirements for programme accreditation. Therefore, the expert team recommends the programme for accreditation.

The expert team also recommends awarding the **evalag** label for international programme accreditation since 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 into this direction.

6. Decision of the accreditation commission

The accreditation commission of **evalag** accredited the Master's programme Communication and Creative Technologies of the Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) and awarded the **evalag** label for international programme accreditation. The accreditation is valid **from 8 December 2014 until 31 August 2021**.

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

7. Evaluation Scores

Evaluation scores of the Communication and Creative Technologies programme

No	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of the area, points
1	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2	Curriculum design	3
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	22 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