



Final Study Programme Evaluation

Law and Pretrial Process

(1st cycle Bachelor's degree)

at

Mykolas Romeris University (MRU)

Assessment report

8 December 2014

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Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) commissioned **evalag** with the external evaluation of the 1st cycle Bachelor's degree study programme "Law and Pretrial Process". 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 the legal act of the Republic of Lithuania "Description of the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes". The assessment was carried out with the objective to accredit the programme according to the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and to award **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 where the programme "Law and Pretrial Process" is on offer, 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 Bachelor's and Master's degrees 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 and departments belong to the Faculty of Public Security:

- Department of Humanities
- Department of Law
- Department of Police Activities
- Department of State Border Protection

The Faculty of Public Security offers its students the following eight study programmes:

Bachelor's degree programmes	Master's degree programmes	Doctoral (PhD) programmes	Non-degree awarding programmes
Law and Police Activities	Law and Police Activities		
Law and Pretrial Process	Environmental Law		
Law and State Border Guard	Law and State Border Guard		
Police Activities	Criminalistics Examinations		

Responding to the needs 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. Law and Pretrial Process Programme

The Law and Pretrial Process programme has been registered since 9 May 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 Public Security – is offered both in full-time (three and a half years) and part-time study (five years) mode. The total number of credit points to be gained is 210; the estimated student workload is 27 hours per study credit.

The purpose of the programme is

- “to provide opportunities to gain competence in pretrial management, in execution proceedings in criminal tactics, in psychology and professional ethics and to develop organizational skills working in pretrial investigative agencies and other institutions, necessary to ensure a high level of professional competence in the legal system.
- to provide general education in humanities and social sciences and to develop necessary skills in those fields, to enable students to assess the situation and take appropriate decisions, to help students to develop ethical qualities necessary for legal work, to acquire skills to use accurate and correct legal concepts as well as to maintain and further develop professional competence throughout working life.
- to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for activities related to the qualification, and to help students to acquire awareness of the implications of the science of law for social life.”

The Law and Pretrial Process programme is of theoretical and applied nature. It provides a wide range of scientific approaches and prepares students for the Bachelor's work. The programme is taught in Lithuanian.

3. Evaluation and 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:

- Professor Dr. Jürgen Kohler, University of Greifswald,
- Professor Dr. Janez Kranjc, University of Ljubljana,
- Katharina Mahrt, student of University of Kiel.

The site visit took place from 20 until 21 October 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, employers as well as library employees of the library of Kaunas' campus and visited the library of the Vilnius' campus. Features of the Kaunas campus were shown to the team by means of photos of the facilities.

Based on their validation of the self-evaluation report and their insitu experience gathered on 20 October 2014, the expert team provided oral feedback to MRU on 21 October 2014 and 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.

According to the self-evaluation report there are three major sources for formulating intended learning outcomes. Firstly, the legal basis of the Lithuanian state, defining the expectations in higher education, including regulations for the study field in law. Secondly, the need of the labour market: the Governmental programme clearly identified the need to foster a much higher level of competence among the personnel of the law enforcement agencies. One of the stipulations aims at raising the levels of competencies of the officers who work in pretrial process, as significant numbers of them still do not hold qualifications in law. The same need was emphasised by the appeal of the Council of Judges to the Police Department and of the Prosecution Service of the Republic of Lithuania. Thirdly, there are increasing academic requirements; research results note the need for a higher level of competencies within this field, as the activities here need to be based on the most recent trends of scientific and technological innovations.

The generic intended learning outcomes of the Law and Pretrial Process programme are:

- to acquire diverse theoretical and professional knowledge in law in the sphere of pretrial investigation;
- to develop projects of laws and other normative legal acts;
- to implement laws and other normative legal acts;
- to systematize normative acts;
- to act in a professionally ethical way;
- to use legal databases;
- to apply law in market economy;
- to correctly use Lithuanian language;
- to develop and produce procedural documents;
- to collect and analyse data needed for solving important scientific, professional issues, to use achievements and methods of fundamental and applied research and formulate scientific objectives and conclusions, to develop and present reports;
- to raise and examine various hypotheses, to define research problems, objectives, goals as well as to analyse the data collected while using a variety of methods; to interpret the data and to present results and formulate conclusions;
- to find and critically evaluate sources of information and use modern information technology;

The specific intended learning outcomes of the Law and Pretrial Process programme are:

- to analyse conflict situations, provide solutions using legal basis, to examine the actual legal facts of the case, legally qualify the actual conduct and the resulting social relations;
- to work independently and in a team, collaborate with professionals and the public for the purpose of solving objectives of pretrial process;
- To be competent in psychology and to be able to ethically communicate with participants of the process (in pretrial process);
- to make the necessary process steps to quickly and accurately disclose an offense/crime;
- to identify the theoretical and practical problems arising in the field of pretrial investigation;
- to qualify breaches of law and provide legal and factual arguments for this qualification;
- to work effectively in an incident scene, to identify and collect evidences of a crime/offence and other material objects, also documents, significant for an investigation, will be able to plan further strategies for investigation and appoint needed tests/examinations;
- to offer first aid at the scene;
- to know the basics of forensic medicine and forensic psychiatry;
- to carry out interviews with witnesses, victims, suspects, and carry out other procedural steps involving participants of the pretrial process;
- to plan and investigate cases of different categories (robbery, murder, organized crime, criminal acts in cyberspace, etc.);
- to carry out covert (operational) actions;
- to use information technology and apply requirements for data protection;
- to learn in professional field and plan the process of one's learning;
- to understand the extent of one's moral responsibility for one's actions and the impact of the results of activities on social, economic, and cultural development, general welfare of the society.

The study programme Law and Pretrial Process enables graduates to work professionally as pretrial specialists in police departments, investigating agencies and other law enforcement agencies.

The objectives and intended learning outcomes of the Law and Pretrial Process 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 law and pretrial process.

The learning outcomes on the programme level 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.

The expert team appreciates that the faculty obviously spent a lot of work on the wording and rationale of the learning outcomes. They are very extensive and ambitious. While this is laudable in principle, there is, however, a risk that the objectives may not be sufficiently concrete in terms of identifiable competences aligned to them, and that they may therefore only be reached on a superficial level. As a result, the accomplishment of some of the learning outcomes seems to be rather vague and maybe even unrealistic. This could, for example, be the case with those course units which are concerned with matters of ethics. There is also some doubt if the teachers of this programme should be responsible for the “correct use of the Lithuanian language“ since achievements in this field depend on various factors apart from a law study programme at university level. While not denying that the aforesaid bear some value, in view of making the programme more focused and concrete in terms of tangible objectives and competences aligned to these, and to ensure fitness to measure outcomes reliably, the expert team suggests that MRU considers the potential for streamlining the ambitious set of learning outcomes through reduction and focusing on a few core objectives. However, the expert team realizes that MRU may be limited in doing so in view of legal requirements stipulated for law programmes of the given nature.

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. Students on the Bachelor’s level are given the opportunity to take part in internships, e. g. and in particular in prosecutors’ offices. Employers who participated in the site visit confirmed the very good qualification of the students especially in law and their ability to adapt to job demands in specific fields of the profession. The expert team was impressed by some statements of the social partners which indicated that they are waiting to hire the graduates and that they will have a very positive future in the labour market.

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 Law and Pretrial Process programme consists of 26 compulsory study subjects, three alternatives of professional foreign languages and a set of optional courses.

In the first study year students attend the courses Theory of Law, Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and Procedure, Foreign Language for Specific Purposes, Psychology, Philosophy, Civil Law, Civil Procedure Law, Criminal Law and Finance Law.

In the second study year students attend the courses Criminal Law (special part), Criminal Procedure Law, Criminalistics – Forensic Sciences, Forensic Medicine and Psychiatry, Basics of Criminal Intelligence, Rhetoric, Legal Information Registers and Technologies, Tactics of Evidence Collection. They can choose from the optional courses Ethics of Pretrial Investigation, Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment, Latin, Procedural Justice in Criminal Law and Sociology of Criminality.

In the third study year students attend the courses Legal Psychology, Special Knowledge in the Pretrial Investigation, The European Union Law, and Organization of the Activities Pretrial Investigation. They can choose from the optional courses Fun-

damentals of International Economics, Simplification of Criminal Procedure, Interests Protection of Victim of Crime, Political Science, Prevention and Control of International Delinquency, Enterprise Law, Legal Representation and Defense as well as Criminology. In the sixth semester students have to pass a traineeship (practical training), which prepares students for their future careers. Traineeships are offered by, e. g., the Forensic Science Centre of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Police Forensic Science Centre or the State Forensic Medicine Service under the Ministry of Justice. Full-time students' traineeships carry 18 credit points in the sixth semester; traineeships for part-time students are located in the eighth semester.

In the seventh semester students attend the courses Crime Investigation and Qualification of Criminal Activities. They can choose from the optional courses Legal Liability of the Officers or International Public Law. They also defend their Bachelor's thesis in the Department of Police Activities and the Department of Law and take their final exam in Criminal Law and Procedure in the Department of Law.

According to self-evaluation report, a variety of teaching and learning methods are used in the seminars and lectures of the study programme. In addition to traditional information-sharing, the methods of presentation/demonstration, problem-based learning, case studies, practical content-based teaching, simulation learning are applied as well.

In 2010 MRU was granted the ECTS Diploma Supplement label and in 2012 the ECTS label. As a result, all study programmes are – according to the self-evaluation report – 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 64 % of the study volume in full-time studies, and approximately 75 % of the study volume in part-time studies.

The Law and Pretrial Process programme is – as described in detail in the self-evaluation report – designed in accordance with Lithuanian study-related legislation, international legal acts and MRU legal acts.

Assessment

The expert team acknowledges that the Law and Pretrial Process programme has allowed MRU to reach a good position in the competition between Lithuanian higher education institutions. While other higher education institutions offer more traditional study programmes, MRU has taken up its tradition as the former police academy, now offering a valuable twofold approach with law on the one hand and investigation knowledge on the other hand. The expert team explicitly supports this study programme offer of the 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 (notwithstanding certain caveats as indicated above). Furthermore, they also appreciate that students are encouraged to deal with questions related to general elements of social science and psychology.

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.

The experts recognize that the programme, i. e. curriculum design is strongly determined and therefore restricted by prescriptive rules and regulations both at the national

level and to some extent also by general MRU policies. Obviously, and indeed inevitably, the study programme complies with those requirements. As for some aspects, e. g. with regard to courses being attributed six credit points – or multiples thereof in some cases – in a somewhat uniform manner, there seems to be an excess in regulation of the study system which causes negative effects on the curriculum since there is little scope for more concrete assignment of credits and, which is implicit, workload in order to address differences in significance of modules for the programme. While the experts recognize that remedying this factor is out of reach of those responsible for this programme, they would, however, like to encourage those responsible for the programme to make greater use of the freedom they appear to enjoy as regards internal structuring of modules to bring out the main points of relevance within each module more decisively and more explicitly. For example, when considering the civil law module, the expert team would strongly recommend to re-examine the proportions between different topics, i. e. how much time will be devoted to each topic, such as weighting of property law as compared to, e. g., inheritance law. A substantive shift towards property law would make more sense for the students of this programme in view of the specific challenges of this particular professional field.

According to the experts, the combination of law and investigation is a unique profile of the programme. From the experts' point of view a better connection of those two fields is necessary for the success of the interdisciplinary approach. Students should learn as early as possible how the two disciplines belong together and what this means for their professional future. This entails to provide certain modules – preferably for more advanced students – more specifically and explicitly which bring together several aspects of pretrial investigation in a truly interdisciplinary approach. For example, cases of “white collar” offences would need to be considered by bringing together company, business and civil law as well as tax law and EU law with related fields of criminal law, especially embezzlement, fraud, and tax evasion, as well as accountancy and specifics of due process in investigating such cases.

The use of the Moodle platform at the MRU 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 experts appreciate the variety of learning methods used in the curriculum and especially commend the possibilities to work practically in small groups in the size of 20-25 students. In this way students receive a lot of attention and can study in a comfortable learning environment. However, the experts are aware that this is an expensive way of teaching since it absorbs a lot of teaching capacities. Therefore MRU might consider whether some basic courses could be taught together in one or two bigger groups (while the experts realize that national legislation or general MRU policy may be an obstacle) and that, in exchange for resources thus saved, some more specific effort could be invested into courses for small cohorts which require, by their very nature, group work, e. g. by adding case studies more extensively to the curriculum, which would also provide opportunities for more interdisciplinary and correlated learning as indicated above. This should of course be done in accordance with the regulations for group sizes.

The expert team likes to emphasize the good quality achieved so far in implementing internships. It was in discussions with the social partners in particular where the expert team was informed that internships are structured and guided well, and that major social partners – notably the public prosecutors' offices – seem to have clear criteria for the process and assessment of students' work. Seminars are offered for the students to prepare and to reflect the internships and the social partners are committing supervisors for the support of the students within their institutions. According to the expert team this important part of the study programme is an enrichment and on a good way.

However, notwithstanding the aforesaid positive elements, due to young age of the programme and the diversity of internship partners, the faculty will still find some scope for fine-tuning in view of experience to be gathered over time in the near future, thus making sure that all internships are fully fit to secure a valid learning environment for students which allows them to develop specific competences relevant for the intended learning outcomes of the programme. During the site visit, the team felt that dealing with the English language was a challenge to some of the students. Since English is important for the academic approach of the programme – most of the relevant publications in the field of law and pretrial process is edited in English –, students must be enabled to read the research material, to make their own academic contributions, and – last but not in the least – to work in international cooperation, students' language skills should be more actively developed. Moreover, the experts recommend a concept for internationalisation at home, which should include some more approaches.

Recommendations

As stated above, the expert team would recommend to improve the connection of the two study fields, law and investigation, and its sub-specifications, such as criminal law and its link to various fields of civil law; this could be done, by, e. g., offering more specifically interdisciplinary courses aiming at this objective. In order to align the whole programme towards its objectives and to reach more depth of content, the programme managers and teachers should discuss re-balancing internal inputs within courses. By trying to reduce the teaching expense for small groups – as is already done by MRU in teaching some modules –, free teaching capacities can be used for new innovative and more complex teaching methods. Finally students should get more opportunities to improve their English skills. For this reason, some subjects of the programme should ideally be taught in English, while the expert team realizes that national legislation may be unduly restrictive in this respect and may therefore bar MRU from following this advice more extensively. Furthermore, the experts recommend the elaboration of a concept, which comprises different approaches for internationalisation at home.

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 Degree-Awarding First Cycle and Integrated Study Programmes for university teachers.

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

In the Law and Pretrial Process programme 33 teachers are involved, whose scientific research interests or fields of practical activities correlate with the subjects they are teaching. Four are professors, seven are associated professors, and the others are lecturers (five of them with PhD). Some scientists have taught several courses. Therefore the composition of the teaching staff meets the legal requirements for university first cycle study programmes: the stipulation that not less than a half of the subjects of the study field must be delivered by academics.

According to 2013-04-02 Mykolas Romeris University Senate Resolution on accounting norms of teacher's workload No. 1SN-40, teachers' workload of Law and Pretrial Process Bachelor'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 academic articles in Lithuanian and international scientific journals. They also receive invitations to give lectures at other national or international universities or to participate in internships and to take part in exchange programmes. Most of the teachers are fluent in several languages, e.g. English and Russian, some of them also in Italian, German and French etc.

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 Public Security 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 improve employee qualifications, in order 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 regularly publish 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 Law and Pretrial Process 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 visible 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.

In principle (for caveats see hereafter), the mode of allocating work capacity to the areas of teaching, research and organisation contributes to the good working conditions overall at the MRU. For staff members who excel in research, incentives are in place to ensure reduction in teaching load, thus allowing them to perform even better in research. The experts formed the impression that there are sufficient opportunities for further trainings in didactics, and that staff members use them well and regularly. It is remarkable that new hired associated professors coming from other institutions are given an induction course for professional teaching.

However, during the site visit the experts gained the impression that some teachers are burdened by very high teaching load of up to 22 hours per week. If the MRU – as reported by the Rectorate – aims for a general strengthening of research activities, MRU must be aware that such high teaching load cannot be permanently maintained and adjustments need to be made in favor of time for research. In addition, the faculty should ensure that its teaching staff members concentrate their academic activities rather than spread them excessively over too many areas of legal expertise, such as covering both civil law and constitutional law, in order to maintain in-depth expertise in

each staff member's teaching activity and in order to enhance their competence in their fields of research.

4.4 Facilities and learning resources

Current situation

Almost all studies of the Law and Pretrial Process programme take place in the premises of the Faculty of Public Security situated in Kaunas. The Faculty of Public Security has 37 auditoriums: one large auditorium (176 m²), a hall (417 m²) and a library. 1,210 students can be accommodated. On the campus there are three specially equipped classes for students. The equipment for basic and fundamental tests is available and used by students during practical seminars that are taking place on the campus. Furthermore, there is a specially designed simulative 'flat', where the simulations of crime scenes are organized by teachers to practice first-hand investigation skills. In Jure, an off campus (20 km off Kaunas) belonging to the faculty, offers opportunities for students to practice, e. g. practical skills of tracking and first-hand investigation. There are several premises (15 wooden and brick huts), suitable for the imitation of crime-scenes and the solving of simulative cases. The faculty has a criminalistics laboratory and three computerised classes in Kaunas, where three academic groups may learn at the same time. Two self-defence wrestling gyms and two gyms with simulators are offered for students' fitness. The wireless high-speed computer network covers 100 % of the faculty's territory, including students' dormitories.

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 it 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 modernisation of the library and services provided for students and teachers are also part of these activities.

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 MRU on the campus of Kaunas provides – according to the self-evaluation report – traditional and electronic resources of scientific information. It consists of four units: subscription (112 m²), a reading-room (51 m²), a specialized library (for closed type-documents (actual cases, etc.), 40 m²), and a repository (83 m²). The reading-room has 26 working places and the subscription area has five computerised working places where readers can use the library's electronic catalogue, subscribed databases, the Internet, Microsoft Office programmes, etc. The library is open on working days from 8.00 to 19.00 (on Friday until 18.00). For the convenience of readers, the library is also opened on Saturdays from 10.00 to 15.00. In 2014, the library collection in Kaunas consisted of 3,688 law titles, 1,864 criminalistics titles and 32 journals. Furthermore, there are e-journals and e-books accessible. Readers can also use a wide range of international databases.

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 that in general MRU provides good facilities. The buildings and rooms are of adequate size to provide a reasonable, adequate teaching and learning atmosphere. The expert 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. The professional technical care and support is particularly noteworthy, which helps the teaching staff to use the benefits of such tools.

Due to the development and history of MRU, the equipment and facilities at the Kaunas campus may not fully correspond to the level of the very modern campus in Vilnius. According to the expert team, adjustments should be made step by step. Regarding the equipment, the faculty should go on negotiating with the rectorate on the basis of students request and needs. This includes offers of student life such as sports courses. Furthermore, the results of student surveys – which have already produced important information – should be used for improvements.

The experts consider the general facilities of the library in Vilnius as excellent, while the Kaunas campus does not fully meet the same standards. However, based on the self-evaluation report and the presentations during the site visit – as for the Kaunas campus, by means of photos –, they could assure themselves of the availability of necessary library space and facilities; essential standard literature and literature on the key topics of the study programme are available to students, especially since access to major international databases is given. With this equipment in place, students are supplied with adequate 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.

However, it became obvious that there is a lack of on-site workplaces for students. The opening of seminar rooms helps for the moment to overcome the bottleneck. But these rooms cannot provide the working conditions like a library. Still, the team proposes to extend the opening hours of the library.

Recommendations

The expert team recommends to establish more workplaces in the library and to expand the opening hours for improvement of study conditions.

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 First Cycle (Bachelor's)". The rules are updated annually.

All the information that is needed for the students in order to enter the study programme is disposable on the university website, which serves as an informational portal and a guide for newcomers as well as for long-time community members. The admission requirements are determined in the Rules of Admission. During the admission period a special phone line is available to get additional information about the study programme and the admission procedure.

The admission depends on a ranking of the sum of the following scores:

- mark of the Matura examination (school certificate) in History multiplied by weighted coefficient of 0.4;
- mark of the Matura examination in Lithuanian language and literature multiplied by weighted coefficient of 0.2;
- mark of the Matura examination in a foreign language multiplied by weighted coefficient of 0.2.

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

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 the distribution of contact hours and independent work. The studies for full-time students are organised each week (except internships or holidays), part-time students attend one course unit after the other.

In 2012/2013, MRU started the programme with 73 full-time students (906 applicants) and 30 part-time students (334 applicants), in 2013/2014, 107 full-time students (1054 applicants) and 62 part-time students (416 applicants) enrolled to the programme. The drop-out rate is currently 11,8 % for the full-time and 13,2 % for the part-time students. According to the self-evaluation report, the main reasons for the drop-outs are opting for different programmes (especially for the Law and Police Activities programme offered by the faculty because statutory officers' social guarantees are attractive) or academic reorientation. Currently there is a student/teacher ratio of about 20:1.

Students are given the opportunity to participate in mobility programmes. The MRU takes part in the Erasmus programme actively; there are about 287 partner institutions in Europe. The Bachelor's students participate more actively in mobility programmes, whereas most Master's students tend to be employed 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 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 the exception of the Bachelor'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.

The students of the Law and Pretrial Process programme finish their studies by writing and defending the Bachelor's thesis. The number of credits intended for the final thesis is twelve; this meets the regulations of the Description of General Requirements for the Degree-Awarding First Cycle and Integrated Study Programs. Some of the teaching hours are dedicated to inform the Bachelor's students about the specific characteristics

of research logics and methodology (qualitative and quantitative research), by enhancing the understanding on the ethics of social research, and to develop the ability to apply a proper research strategy for the analysis of specific social phenomena. Students must select themes of their bachelor theses during the first stage of registering for studies in the second study year; as for part-time students, this must be done in the third study year. The supervisor of the Bachelor's thesis decides whether the student's progress is consistent with the applicable requirements by certifying or refusing to certify the students' thesis. The Bachelor's thesis must be substantiated by independent academic or applied research or it must be prepared as a project revealing abilities that meet the aims of the programme.

It is expected that first students of the programme would defend their Bachelor's thesis in 2016.

MRU offers both a psychological service and a large number of individual consultation hours for full- and part-time students. The Faculty of Public Security 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. of students' tuition fees. Full-time students have to pay 13,623 Litas for the whole programme; part-time students pay 1362 Litas for one semester.

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 study programme documents are publicly available on the MRU websites. 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. Students reported that there was a clearly structured study process in place, and that they are encouraged to participate in applied research activities. Students also mentioned the very close and easy contact to their lecturers. All in all the students are very satisfied with their situation at the university; they appreciate MRU due to its good reputation and good job opportunities.

The orientation on students' competences in examinations is an important part of the qualification of the students. The examination scheme is described transparently and uses multiple assessment methods to check different competences of the students. The experts explicitly support the opinion of teachers that reading and writing skills of students and showing their competence to formulate problems and solutions comprehensively and independently should be emphasized more strongly. Therefore they like to suggest that teachers keep the currently high amount of multiple choice examinations as low as possible. In case of good reasons for using multiple choice examinations this should only happen in combination with open questions.

MRU and the Faculty of Public Security offer opportunities for international mobility to students and academic staff. In 2013/2014 two students participated. The expert team took note of the fact that many students are strongly rooted in their home country and do not want to leave. Others obviously doubt their English skills. However, even though the experts see that the programme is focused on national affairs, they encour-

age MRU and the faculty to strengthen these mobility programmes and to further motivate Bachelor'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 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 activities and to monitor the results with regard to the drop-out rates in the study programme.

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 those professional occupations which the programme is aiming for.

Recommendation

The faculty should fully ensure competence-oriented exams. One of the elements fit for that purpose is strengthening open-question elements in assessments of students.

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. As a consequence, the entire academic community participates in the processes of evaluation, monitoring and assurance of quality. Each member of the MRU is responsible for contributing 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. In addition, there are several meetings of 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 school leavers are analysed at faculty and institute level. The competences of the teachers servicing the Law and Pretrial Process 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 its 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 Public Security 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 Law and Pretrial Process programme is updated, study plans are corrected, and new learning and assessment methods are introduced.

At 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 designed and put to work a comprehensive quality management system. It can be valued as being a well-developed example 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 that they have a number of opportunities for participation and 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 experts acknowledge that the MRU and the faculty have invested a lot of energy and know-how in the design of their quality management system. In terms of concept, the quality cycles are, in essence, closed at all levels. Relevant data are collected where necessary, and they are evaluated in a differentiated and self-critical mode.

However, the experts believe there is still scope for improvement as to fully "closing the quality loop". For example, as for the students' questionnaires the formulation of some questions are too vague and unspecific, thus not rendering to-the-point answers which are apt to serve for identifying the issue in question specifically enough to indicate possible strengths and weaknesses fully and coherently. In addition, the faculty should put more emphasis on more detailed analysis of the results and the deduction of measures, and to communicate these to students and stakeholders more consistently. In effect, while acknowledging the achievements already made, due to these observations the team recommends that there should be a regular reflection of the quality

management system and the quality assurance instruments to ensure that the MRU and the faculty achieves the intended objectives and results.

The experts nevertheless believe that MRU and the specific faculty in question shows commitment to quality and has developed 'quality culture' to a considerable extent. In particular, the expert team was impressed with the dedication of the programme representatives to its quality and to continuous development of quality. Obviously, quality management is an important approach to sustain the international competitiveness and innovativeness of the Law and Pretrial Process programme.

The experts emphasise the good integration of relevant employers into the development of the programme and the orientation towards 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. 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 Law and Pretrial Process programme use the quality management system for constant improvements, while there is some scope for improvement, as indicated above.

Recommendations

Regarding the Quality cycles the expert team recommends that the faculty should put more emphasis on the analysis of the quality assurance results and the deduction of measures, and in ensuring communication of these. Furthermore, there should be a regular reflection of the quality management system and the quality assurance instruments to ensure that the MRU and the faculty achieves the intended objectives and results. Questions in the students' questionnaires should be reconsidered in part to make them more targeted in order to allow more specific analysis and remedies. More open questions should be implemented to ensure that the faculty receives concrete hints for improvements.

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 Law and Pretrial Process programme positively. This MRU programme provides good education on the level of European universities and prepares the students well for future professions in this field. With regard to the final Bachelor's degree, the experts recognize the aspiration to offer a 'Y-model', i.e. a programme which is intended to offer both the content of a regular law programme and a specific focus on pretrial investigation. Thus graduates can eventually choose between a classic Law Master's programme to become a lawyer or a prosecutor and a future profession in the field of investigation. This amalgam of objectives was

reasonably well put into the study structure and contents, notwithstanding some risk that following both pursuits may to some extent be a challenge as to keeping the curriculum on track.

In several aspects of the study programme, 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 was evident for the experts. They would like to see MRU's strategic focus on quality, internationalisation and interdisciplinarity strengthened in this programme even more, while the experts acknowledge that the programme has already achieved remarkable success in these three aspects, too. The experts encourage the programme representatives explicitly to follow and expand into this direction.

It was particularly evident for the expert team that students show thorough engagement in their studies, even though most of them – evidently most of the part-time students – work for their livelihood. This creates a constructive learning atmosphere.

According to the expert team, the Law and Pretrial Process 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 further.

6. Decision of the accreditation commission

The accreditation commission of **evalag** accredited the Bachelor's programme Law and Pretrial Process of the Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) and awarded the **evalag** label for international programme accreditation. The accreditation is valid **from 8 December 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 Law and Pretrial Process programme

No	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of the area, points
1	Programme aims and learning outcomes	4
2	Curriculum design	3
3	Teaching staff	4
4	Facilities and learning resources (facilities, equipment, learning materials)	3
5	Study process and students' performance assessment (student selection, performance assessment, support)	4
6	Programme management (administration of the programme, internal quality assurance)	3
	Total	21 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