



**Assessment Report  
of the Application by  
Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius,  
Faculty of Politics and Management  
on accreditation request of the  
Bachelor Study Program  
“Public Policy and Management”  
(Bachelor of Political Science)**

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This report is confidential. Disclosure to third parties without the consent of the applicant institution or the office of the AHPGS is not allowed.

In the interest of readability, the AHPGS used the masculine noun in the following documents, representing both the feminine and the masculine form.

## 1. Introduction

Study programs in Lithuania are required by order No. ISAK-1652 from the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2010 to be accredited.

The decision regarding the accreditation of a study program is carried out by the Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, authorized by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science for this purpose. The accreditation decision of a particular study program is based on results and evaluations established in an external assessment. In order for the external assessment to be implemented, a University may commission agencies listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) (verification of the accreditation request). The AHPGS is listed in the EQAR since 2009.

In this context, Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania, has contracted the AHPGS for the external assessment of 10 study programs: "English for Specific Purposes and the Second Foreign Language" (Bachelor), "Law and Customs Activities" (Bachelor), "Organizational Management" (Bachelor), "Philosophy" (Bachelor), "Public Policy and Management" (Bachelors), "Performance Audit" (Master), "Biolaw" (Master), "Environmental Law" (Master), "EU Law" (Master), "Mediation" (Master).

The verification of the accreditation request focuses, on the one hand, on the assessment spheres laid out in the afore-mentioned order (No. ISAK-1652, paragraph 1); on the other hand, it takes into consideration the standards for international surveys of the AHPGS.

The external assessment procedure is carried out in four steps:

### I. The University's Application

The AHPGS verifies the sufficiency of the documents submitted by the University, namely the Application and its corresponding annexes. These are to fulfill the assessment spheres, as well as the AHPGS standards. As a result, the AHPGS produces a summary (see 2.-5.), which is to be approved by the University and subsequently made available for the expert group, together with all other documentation.

### II. Written review regarding the content of the programs

The main documents are reviewed by the expert group assigned by the accreditation commission of AHPGS. This is done in order to verify the compliance of the study program with the applicable accreditation criteria valid

in Lithuania. Consequently, the experts comprise a short summary regarding the study programs.

### III. On-site visit (Peer-review)

The experts carry out the external on-site visit at the University. During this, discussions with members of the University take place, from University and department administration to degree program management, teachers and students. This offers the expert group details about the degree program beyond the written documents. The task of the experts during the on-site visit is the verification and evaluation of the objectives of the program and its projected study results, its structure, staff, material resources, course of studies and methods of assessment (selection of students, assessment of achievements, students' support), as well as of the program management (program administration, external assurance of study quality).

Following the on-site visit, the expert group issues the expert report. This is based on the results of the visit, the written review of the study programs, and the documents submitted by the University. This is made available to the University, in order for it to issue a response opinion.

The expert report, as well as the University's response opinion – together with the submitted documents – is submitted to the accreditation commission of the AHPGS.

### IV. The AHPGS recommendation regarding accreditation

The accreditation commission of the AHPGS examines the documentation made available, namely the University's application, its annexes, the summary comprised by the AHPGS, the expert report, as well as the University's response opinion. These documents represent the basis of the commission's decision regarding the recommendation for accreditation of the study programs. Consequently, this decision – together with all other documentation – is forwarded to the Lithuanian Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education in order for it to reach a decision regarding the accreditation of the study programs.

## **2. General**

The Application for accreditation (without the awarding of the official seal of the Accreditation Council of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programs in Germany) of the above-mentioned study programs (hereinafter Application) of the Mykolas Romeris University was submitted to the Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science (AHPGS e.V.) in electronic format on the 30.04.2013.

The contract between the Mykolas Romeris University and the AHPGS was signed on the 26.02.2013.

On the 22.08.2013 the AHPGS forwarded the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter OQ) pertaining to the Application for accreditation for the study programs to the University. On the 27.09.2013 the University submitted the answers to the open questions and explanatory notes (hereinafter AOO) to the AHPGS in electronic format.

The present document presents the summary of the AHPGS for the Bachelor study program "Public Policy and Management". The first cohort for this program was admitted in 2011.

The application documentation submitted by the Mykolas Romeris University follows the outline recommended by the AHPGS. Along with the application request towards accreditation of the Bachelor study program "Public Policy and Management", the following additional documents can be found in the application package (the documents submitted by the University are numbered in the following order for easier referencing):

Specific documents for the study program "Public Policy and Management":

<b>Annex</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Study plan (full-time and part-time)
2	Teaching interdependence matrix
3	Module description
4	Module overview
5	Brief CV of instructors

Alongside the study-program-specific documents, the following documents pertain to all study program submitted for external evaluation:

<b>Annex</b>	<b>Description</b>
A	Declaration on assurance of resources
B	Description of premises
C	Descriptions of the library
D	Databases subscribed to
E	Procedure for assessment
F	Computer/electronic equipment
G	Relevant regulations
H	Enrollment Chart 2012-2013

I	Quality assurance concept
J	Overview of evaluation results of all 10 study programs to be accredited
K	Constitutional Court Legal Education Regulations
L	Regulations on the granting of special-purpose benefits for disabled persons
M	Report of the Institutional Evaluation Programme by EUA 2006
N	Report of the ISAS Review of MRU 2011

The application, the open questions (OQ) and the answer to the open questions (AOQ) as well as the additional documents build the basis for the present summary. The layout bears no significance, as it solely reflects the agreed standard within the University.

### 3. Content issues

#### 3.1. Structure of the program and content requirements

According to the University, students of the Bachelor's program "Public Policy and Management" acquire knowledge in policy making processes and organizational and structural management, which will enable them to work in the field of public sector organizations and civil service system.

The program can be studied both in the full-time and in part-time form. It amounts to a total of 210 ECTS credit points (European Credits Transfer System). One ECTS credit point equals 26.6 study hours with a total of 5670 hours for the entire program (*see also Application 1.1.6*). The Bachelor thesis and the final Bachelor's exam are each awarded with 15 ECTS credit points. Open distance learning is also possible (for details on open distance learning, please see section 1.2.5 of the Application).

The organizational structure and the awarding of the workload of the study program are summarized in the following:

210 credits	Study length	Ø credits per year
Full-time	7 sem (3,5 y)	60
Part-time	10 sem (5 y)	42

	Estimated workload	Contact hours	Prognosticated individual work

Full-time	5.670 hours	1596 hours	4.294 hours (59.3%)
Part-time	5.670 hours	1284 hours	4.386 hours (77.1%)

According to the University, the structure of the program and its study plan is developed in conformity with relevant national regulations (*see also Application 1.1.3*).

The annual fee for the study program is set by the University Council (Resolution No. 1SN-40 of 27. April 2012) at 3.892,- Litas (approx. 1.127,- Euro) for the full-time form and 2.724,- Litas (approx. 790,- Euro) for the part-time form (*see also Application 1.1.10*). Tuition fees are granted to students who are orphaned and were born 1987 or later and students with disabilities of the first disability group (working capacity of 0 – 25 %) on the basis of providing adequate documents.

Since 2005, the University has been employing the electronic learning environment (“Moodle” e-learning platform). The platform holds available information regarding the modules and courses of the study program for both students and teaching personnel. It is also employed for open distance learning and for maintaining contact between students and teachers (*see Application 1.2.5*).

Internships have a total duration of 2.5 months and take place in state civil services institutions and public sector organizations. During this, students are meant to acquire knowledge in general management, planning processes and human resource management. The University states that it provides students with internship placements and that they are assigned a supervisor from the host institute.

Students and teachers have the opportunity of actively participating in foreign exchange programs. Students can study abroad within the Erasmus program and through bilateral agreements, as well as conduct their internship abroad. According to the University, students can access all relevant information regarding the possibilities of studying abroad on the University’s webpage. The University states that the teachers of the program “Public Policy and Management” participate in international conferences and seminars and that the program has been taught by teachers from foreign universities (*see Application 1.2.8 for details*). The Institute of Political Science, within which the present program is taught, is involved in national and international projects which are

aiming at increasing the international orientation of the program. Events that are listed in the Application are the 6th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6) and the Network of Excellence CONNEX (“Connecting Excellence on European Governance”).

### 3.2. Curriculum

The program comprises 36 modules, out of which 19 focus on public policy, 7 on EU public policies and international relations, 5 on economics and management and 2 on law. Three modules are general study subjects. The modules offered in the study program are listed in the following. Links to all module descriptions can be found in Annex 3.

Study plan for the full-time form:

Semester	Title	ECTS credits
1	Philosophy	6
	Basics in Political Communication	6
	Political Science	6
	History of Law	6
	Foreign Language of Specific Purpose	6
	Logics	6
2	Professional Lithuanian	6
	Political System of Lithuania	6
	Political Philosophy	6
	Elective studies	6
	Optional courses*:	
	Information Systems	6
	Policy Ethics	6
3	Constitutional Law	6
	Intercultural Interaction	6
	Statistics (in Policy)	6
	Microeconomics	6
	Elective studies	6
4	Public Policy Analysis	6
	EU Political System	6
	Elite and Leadership	6
	Interest groups and Lobbying	6
	Macroeconomics	6



5	Comparative Politics	6
	Organizational Behavior	6
	Optional courses (3 to be selected):	
	International Politics	6
	Education Policy	6
	Health Policy	6
	Environmental Policy	6
	Sustainable Development Policy	6
	Energetic Policy	6
6	Administrative Law	6
	Strategic Management	6
	Optional courses (3 to be selected):	
	EU Structural Policy	6
	Social Policy	6
	European Identity	6
	EU Reginal Development Policy	6
	EU Common Agriculture Policy	6
	Managment	
7	Internship	15
	Bachelor Thesis	15
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\* Optional course means that students are required to choose modules out of those listed below

Study plan for the 'part-time' form:

Semester	Title	ECTS-Credits
1	Philosophy	6
	Political Science	6
	Foreign Language of Specific Purpose	6
	Basics of Political Communication	6
2	Political Philosophy	6
	Elective course	6
	Optional course*:	
	Information Systems	6
	Policy Ethics	6
3	Political System of Lithuania	6
	Logics	6

	Professional Lithuanian	6
	Elective course	6
4	Constitutional Law	6
	Intercultural Interaction	6
	Microeconomics	6
	Interest groups and Lobbying	6
5	Statistics (in Policy)	6
	Public Policy Analysis	6
	EU Political System	6
6	Macroeconomics	6
	Comparative Politics	6
	Organizational Behavior	6
7	Administrative Law	6
	Elite and Leadership	6
	Strategic Management	6
8	Optional course (3 to be selected):	
	International Politics	6
	Educational Policy	6
	Health Policy	6
	Sustainable Development Policy	6
	Environmental Policy	6
	Energetical Policy	6
9	Optional course (3 to be selected):	
	EU Structural Policy	6
	Social Policy	6
	European Identity	6
	EU Regional Development Policy	6
	EU Common Agriculture Policy	6
	Management	6
10	Internship	15
	Bachelor Thesis	15
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\* Optional course means that students are required to choose modules out of those listed below

The description of each module covers the following aspects: name and contact details of the teacher, the structure of the course, study requirements, purpose

of the module, learning outcomes and methods of teaching and assessing, recommended optional study components, course content, work load and credits awarded and recommended reading.

Examinations taking place within the Bachelor's program are governed by the "Mykolas Romeris University Studies Procedures". Students' knowledge is assessed qualitatively and quantitatively through oral and written assessments, or through a combination of both. The form of assessment of every module can be found in the links to the module descriptions of Annex 3. The grades are cumulative, and are also said to be used by teachers as a feedback system to get an idea of students' knowledge at that point, which can guide the further content and method of teaching.

Timetables of examinations are prepared and announced no later than two weeks before the examination session. The timetable is said to be organized so that students have at least three days between examinations (and two days in between credit tests). Teachers provide individual or group consultation for students during the examination periods, either in person, via email or through the virtual learning environment. It is stated that students are given information about the examinations in the first lecture of the semester and may find all information on the evaluation methodology and its results on the website of the Department, the online network of the Faculty as well as on the personal websites of the teachers.

The University employs a 10-point grading system, 1 being the lowest grade and 10 the highest. The minimum pass grade is 5 (*see Table 4 in section 1.2.3 of the Application*). Should a student not be able to take an examination due to justifiable reasons, the Dean may decide upon rescheduling the examination. Students are permitted to take examinations in advance, i.e. prior to the fixed session, provided that they obtain authorization from the Dean. Examinations or pass/fail evaluations can be taken only once. Examinations or pass/fail evaluations taken in advance and failed are considered an academic debt<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> If a student registered for a course at the beginning of the semester, does not pass (either by failing or not attending the examination test), the student is considered to be holding an academic debt. Students, who hold a place financed from state budget and have no more than three academic debts, may redo the examination within the next semester. All students may redo the examination within the next semester while continuing with the regular study program, but they need to pay module credits to repeat the failed module if they hold an academic debt into the semester next after next. If they do not express their choice of repeating the failed course within 15 days from the end of the term, they are expelled from the University as non-achievers. A student holding a state-financed place may repeat a module once. When doing so, it is possible to take exams twice. Students paying tuition fees and holding such debts may choose individually when to eliminate them: they may indicate in their plans the terms of accounting. After failing an exam, a student may take it once again free of charge. For any other retakes, the student needs has to pay the fee set by the University.

### **3.3. Educational objectives**

Section 1.3 of the Application offers a detailed overview of the educational objectives of the program “Public Policy and Management”. Students of the program are meant to acquire competencies in public policy formulation, decision making and implementation, as well as in organizational and personnel management. Further, they are supposed to successfully identify and solve problems related to public sector economy, constitutional and administrative law, social and demographic processes, e-governance, e-record keeping and e-public services. The University has identified a number of competencies and abilities that graduate students are expected to have acquired, which are listed in section 1.3.3 of the Application.

### **3.4. Labour market situation and employment opportunities**

The University obtains data about the job market situation and graduate employability from a variety of sources, including graduate surveys. According to the University, the majority of career opportunities for graduates of the program “Public Policy and Management” are in the field of public sector organizations and civil service system. The University analyses data from a variety of different sources (i.e. from the Civil Service Department of the Ministry of Lithuania, from Lithuania Labour Exchange; see Application 1.4.1 for more details) that monitor the employment situation of graduates. Based on these data, the University states that the majority of graduates of political science and public administration study programs find employment. It is also stated that there will be an on-going need within the Lithuanian State and municipal institutions for professionals with an education in political science and public administration. According to statistics of the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, the number of job vacancies in public administration and related areas has been increasing in the last several years and makes up 10% of all job vacancies in Lithuania.

The University also states that, in response to the financial crisis, Lithuania has been able to be highly flexible in wage determination, which has led to an increase in economic growth; however, the labor market still remains a challenge for the country. Employment rates should therefore be seen in the light of this.

### **3.5. Access and admission requirements**

According to the University, the admission requirements to the study program are in accordance with corresponding legal regulations (see Application 1.5 for details on regulations). Applicants are selected on the basis of having obtained a

high score in History and Civil Upbringing in their secondary education. A competitive score is calculated based on both the weighted average of the final examinations and/or the grades of the final examination in higher education, and an average of the remaining grades of the diploma supplement.

In 2012, 92 students (out of 1166 applicants) were admitted to study full-time and 29 (out of 298 applicants) were admitted to study part-time. The drop-out rate was at 12%.

### **3.6. Quality assurance**

Information on the quality assurance procedures and regulations can be found in the Application in section 1.6. The University states that quality assurance in study programs is regulated by various legal acts on a European, national and institutional level.

The external quality evaluation and assurance in Lithuania is carried out by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, which is reported to be the only institution authorized by the Ministry of Education and Science to assess and accredit Higher Education Institutions (SKVC). The SKVC performs three main types of evaluation: evaluation of existing study programs, evaluation of new study programs, and institutional review of Higher Education Institutions. According to the University, the first external evaluation regulated under the Law on Higher Education and Research (2009) will be held in 2014. The University states that according to these regulations, Higher Education Institutions are accredited every six years for either two or six years, and study programs can be accredited for three or six years.

Regarding internal quality assurance, MRU has got a quality culture in place, which means that the entire academic community participates in the process of quality monitoring, evaluation and assurance. This is done by the principles of subsidiarity; the responsibility for the quality of studies is distributed among all members of the academic community, with their involvement being in accordance with their competences and authorization. Thus, students, teachers, department and faculties, administration and centers, the Senate, the Vice-rector and the Rector are involved in the quality assurance process.

Since 2008, the University has been applying the regulations of the "Methodology of the Evaluation and Assurance of the Study Quality Assurance," which include criteria in: quality assurance policy and procedures, certification, monitoring and periodical assessment of study programs and awarded

qualifications, assessment of study outcomes, assurance of the quality of the teachers' competence, resources for studies and support to students, information systems and public dissemination of information. In 2012, study program committees were established for each study program in order to ensure high quality level.

Feedback about the study programs and its subject is given by students and Alumni through various questionnaires, which are organized and implemented by the Study Program Committees of each faculty, together with the Academic Affairs Centre and Student's Representative Body. Results of the questionnaires are generally made accessible to students before the final examinations. Teachers can access feedback regarding their taught subject online. All questionnaires are completed voluntarily and anonymously.

All issues around the content of subjects, their evaluation criteria and structure are discussed during meetings within the departments, as well as with representatives of student organizations and representatives of the Committee of Academic Affairs.

Communication between students and teachers is possible through the online "Moodle" platform and through direct meetings. Every teacher has got certain contact hours during the week, which are shown on the University webpage.

The University regularly organizes events regarding career and employment issues, like the annual career day. To assess graduate employment, various graduate and alumni surveys are conducted using social networks. Cooperation with Lithuanian Labour Exchange and other social partners in the private and social sectors also allows the monitoring of graduate employment, and statistics from the State Social Insurance Fund Board of the Republic of Lithuania under the Ministry of Social Security & Labour provide some information about the average wage of graduates. Information regarding the program, modules, exams, etc. is available on the internet pages of the University and the faculties.

A Code of Ethics (see Annex M) is put in place, which sets moral principles and provisions of professional behavior that all members of the University, including students, are expected to abide by. In the implementation of the study programs, the University follows the "Law amending Equal Opportunities for Men and Women of the Republic of Lithuania" and the "Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania" as well as other legal acts. Social matters are taken care of by the administration of the Institute of Humanities and by the Division of Economy Science. The University reduces or dismisses the fees for students

facing financial difficulties and applies exemptions for receiving loans. Loans to finance the expenses of studies can be granted by the "Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation" and the University can support students from socially deprived families with the "student support fund". Free psychological service is provided for the student community. The University states that social problems of students with handicaps and of orphans are given special attention.

Many facilities, including the library, reading rooms, toilet facilities and the café are wheelchair-accessible, and some computers are designed for disabled people, including hand rails and an enlarged mouse. The computer program MAGic is installed on some dedicated computers, with which texts can be magnified and different colors and contrasts can be selected for easier reading. Annex N provides information about regulations regarding the special-purpose benefits for students with disabilities.

#### **4. Personnel and spatial equipment**

##### **4.1. Teaching Personnel**

Currently, 32 teachers teach in the program "Public Policy and Management". For 29 of them, working at the University is their primary job. There are 7 professors and 15 associated professors, as well as 1 teaching assistant. Those teaching applied subjects have at least 10 years of practical experience in the respective field. An overview of all teachers and their taught module can be found in Annex 3 and 4 and brief CVs of the teaching personnel can be found in Annex 5.

According to the University, the number, ratio and recruitment procedure of the teaching and academic staff is regulated by national law and University legal acts. A full-time teacher is assigned a 5-year position to a primary post by means of an open competition. The competition is announced by the Rector of the University. Not less than one third of the Admission Commission members consist of non-University employees. Upon opening a competition for the position of head academic or professor, there has to be at least one international, independent, member within the afore-mentioned commission. Teacher performance evaluation is conducted every 2.5 years.

Internal training for the teaching personnel is organized by the Personnel Centre, Research Centre and Academic Affair Centre. Teachers also take part in EU funded projects and by visit universities abroad. For an overview of seminars and

projects for teachers aimed at improving the quality of teaching, see section 2.1.3 of the Application.

#### **4.2. Equipment for Teaching and Research**

Section 2.3 of the Application offers detailed information about the premises and the technical equipment the University possesses. Further information about technical equipment can be found Annex G, and information about the premises in Annex C.

Currently, the University holds about 1300 stationary and mobile computer stations, and over 200 printers and scanners, which are available for students and employees. All working stations are connected to the Internet network, and laptop computers can connect to the wireless network in nearly all of the University premises including student homes. The University has a contract for leasing Microsoft programs as well as various other software programs.

The MRU library subscribes to 53 databases and contains a total of 2378000 copies of publications. The library is open 7 days a week or 141 hours (nearly around the clock). It is accessible for people with disabilities (for further information on facilities see section 3.6 “quality assurance” in this document). A “thematic librarian” has been appointed to each faculty. These librarians have specialized in the respective field of the faculty and can thus provide high quality service to students and teaching staff.

The University receives funds for staff (teachers and researchers) and materials from the State, University and external funds (European Social Fund, Education Exchanges Support Foundation, the Research Council of Lithuania) by ways of competition (*see Application 2.3.4 for more details on funding*).

#### **5. Institutional environment and structural conditions**

Mykolas Romeris University is a public higher education institution of the Republic of Lithuania. The University was founded by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (*the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania*) and was registered in December 1997. Its autonomy and activity are based on the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, and the University Statute.



The University comprises the following seven faculties: Institute of Humanities (7 study programs), Faculty of Economics and Finance Management (10 study programs), Faculty of Politics and Management (23 study programs), Faculty of Law (18 study programs), Faculty of Social Policy (34 study programs), Faculty of Public Security (9 study programs). Altogether, it currently offers 31 Bachelor study programs and 69 Master programs with about 11329 enrolled students (data from 22 March, 2013).

MRU includes following establishments: a Centre for Academic Affairs; a Research Centre; a Library; an Academic Ethics Centre; an International Relations Office; an India and a Francophone Study Centre; a Communication and Marketing Centre; a Project management Centre; a Services' Sale Centre; a Property Management Office; an IT Centre; a Health and Sport Centre; a Chancellery Office; a Cultural Activities Office.

The University states that since its registration, it has improved both qualitatively and quantitatively. It describes itself as a dynamic University which is constantly improving and expanding its spectrum of provided services and its sector of studies. Traditionally its research had been focused on social sciences, but in recent years there has been an expansion towards the sciences of biomedicine, technologies and humanities. Approximately 20 international and 30 national conferences are organized and held at MRU every year.

The program "Public Policy and Management" is taught at the Faculty of Policy and Management, in the Institute of Political Sciences. The Faculty of Policy and Management includes three institutes; the Institute of Political Sciences, of Strategic Management and of Public Administration. The faculty offers 3 Bachelors programs and 20 Master programs. The Institute of Political Sciences offers one Bachelor program and 4 Master programs. In 2012, a total of 3631 students were enrolled in this faculty.

## **6. Expert Report**

### **I. Preliminary remarks:**

The evaluation of the following study programs at the Mykolas Romeris University subject to accreditation was carried out according to a structured procedure:

Faculty of Politics and Management:

- a) "Organizational Management" (Bachelor of Business and Management);
- b) "Public Policy and Management" (Bachelor of Political Science);
- c) "Audit of Activities (Performance Audit)" (Master in Management);

Faculty of Economics and Finance Management:

- d) "Law and Customs Activities" (Bachelor of Law);

Faculty of Law:

- e) "Biolaw „ (Master of Law);
- f) "European Union Law and Governance" (Master of Law, in cooperation with the University of Montesquieu - Bordeaux IV);

Faculty of Public Security:

- g) "Environmental Law" (Master of Law);

Faculty of Social Policy:

- h) "Mediation" (Master of Law);

Institute of Humanities:

- i) "English for Specific Purposes and the Second Foreign Language" (Bachelor of Philology);
- j) "Philosophy" (Bachelor of Philosophy);

During the first step, the documents submitted by the University underwent a written evaluation by the expert group with regard to the specified criteria as well as disciplinary and substantive aspects.

During the second step an on-site visit at the Mykolas Romeris University was carried out. The results of the written evaluation served as a basis for the on-site visit by the expert group at the Mykolas Romeris University.

The following experts were appointed by the accreditation commission of AHPGS for the evaluation of the study programs:

As representatives of the higher education institutions:

Prof. Dr. Ursula Fasselt, Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Frankfurt

Prof. Dr. Wolfram Hahn, praxisHochschule für Gesundheit und Soziales, University of Applied Sciences, Cologne

Prof. Dr. Marion Halfmann, Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, Kleve

Prof. Dr. Maria-Eleonora Karsten, Leuphana University, Lüneburg

Prof. Dr. Axel Olaf Kern, University of Applied Sciences, Ravensburg-Weingarten

Prof. Dr. Jens Löcher, University of Applied Sciences for Police and Public Administration, Wiesbaden

Prof. Dr. Ute Kötter, Munich University of Applied Sciences, Munich

Prof. Dr. Gerd Morgenthaler, University of Siegen.

Prof. Dr. Peter Schäfer, Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, Mönchengladbach.

Prof. Dr. Burkhard von Velsen-Zerweck, Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Science

Prof. Dr. Sibylle Wollenschläger, University of Applied Sciences, Würzburg-Schweinfurt

As national representative:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jurgita Pauzaite-Kulvinskiene, Vilnius University, Law Faculty

As student representative:

Sarah Schmelzer, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster

Liliya Khazeeva, Albert-Ludwigs University, Freiburg

According to the applicable guidelines for international accreditation – in particular the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Areas (ESG) of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the „Rules of the Accreditation Council for the Accreditation of Study Programs and for System Accreditation“ (Decision of the Accreditation Council of 8 December 2009 in the version of 20 February 2013; Drs. AR 11/2013) – the responsibility of the experts during the accreditation process consists in the evaluation of the study program concept and the plausibility of its intended realisation at the higher education institution.

Taking into consideration the „Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of Description of External Assessment and Accreditation of Study Programs“ (24 July 2010, No. ISAK–1652), this pertains, in particular, to “program aims and learning outcomes”, “curriculum design”, “stuff”, “facilities and learning resources”, “study process and student assessment”, and “program management”.

## **II. The study program to be accredited:**

### **“Public Policy and Management” (Bachelor of Political Science)**

The study program “Public Policy and Management”, offered by the Faculty of Politics and Management, is a Bachelor program which awards a total of 210 ECTS credits according to the European Credit Transfer System. One ECTS credit point corresponds to an average workload of 26.6 hours. The study program is designed as a full–time program with an intended duration of seven semesters (3.5 years) and as a part–time program with an intended duration of ten semesters (5 years). The total workload amounts to 5.670 hours. For the full–time form, this is divided into 1.596 contact hours and 4.294 hours of

independent study. For the part-time form, the workload is divided into 1.284 contact hours and 4.386 hours of independent study. Studies complete with the higher education degree "Bachelor of Political Science". Students of the program are meant to acquire competencies in public policy formulation, decision making and implementation, as well as in organizational and personnel management. Further, they are supposed to successfully identify and solve problems related to public sector economy, constitutional and administrative law, social and demographic processes, e-governance, e-record keeping and e-public services. The study program is divided into 36 modules taught in Lithuanian. An internship stage is also designed in the program, covering 15 ECTS credits. The preparation and presentation of the Bachelor thesis covers 15 ECTS credit points. Students were first admitted to the program in 2011, of which 92 students to study full-time and 29 to study part-time. Admission requirements for the program specify the completion of secondary education; applicants have to perform a high score in History and Civil Upbringing in their secondary education. A competitive score is calculated based on both the weighted average of the final examinations and/or the grades of the final examination in higher education, and an average of the remaining grades of the diploma supplement. The annual fee is currently set at 3.892,- Litas (approx. 1.127,- Euro) for the full-time form and 2.595,- Litas (approx. 752,- Euro) for the part-time form. Graduates of the program are able to work at various levels in public administration and related areas: in ministries, departments, municipalities and other public sector organizations, as well as in the European Union public administration institutions.

### **III. Expert Report**

On 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013 the relevant documents were made available to the group of experts for written evaluation with regard to the specified criteria as well as the disciplinary and substantive aspects. The results of the written evaluation were sent back to the AHPGS up to the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2013. The results of the written evaluation served as a basis for the open questions forwarded to the University by 22<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

After the University had submitted the responses to the open questions by 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013, the AHPGS processed these and the application documents, as well as a summary of the application for each study program. These documents were forwarded to the members of the on-site expert group as basis for the on-site visit.

The on-site visit was carried out between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013 according to the specified schedule. The expert group was accompanied by representatives from the head office of the AHPGS.

The expert group met for preliminary talks in advance to the on-site visit. They discussed the submitted application documents and the results of the written evaluation as well as the resulting questions and problems. Furthermore, they planned the on-site visit at the higher education institution.

The experts conducted talks with university management, representatives of the faculties, program directors and teachers as well as with a group of students. The facilities including the library were evaluated.

The expert report is structured according to the assessment spheres provided in the document "Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of Description of External Assessment and Accreditation of Study Programs" (Order No ISAK-1652). The criteria will be discussed in a comprehensive manner in the following.

#### **(0) Introduction and comprehensive remarks**

Mykolas Romeris University is a public university of the Republic of Lithuania that was founded in 1997. The university is divided into five faculties "Faculty of Economics and Finance Management", "Faculty of Law", "Faculty of Politics and Management", "Faculty of Public Security", and "Faculty of Social Technologies". The university also houses the "Institute of Humanities". The faculties are divided into 10 departments and 12 institutes, including Business and Media School.

The study programs available for assessment are offered in the Faculty of Politics and Management (Bachelor programs "Organizational Management" and "Public Policy and Management", Master program "Audit of Activities (Performance Audit)"), Faculty of Economics and Finance Management (Bachelor program "Law and Customs Activities"), Faculty of Law (Master programs "Biolaw" and "European Union Law and Governance"), Faculty of Public Security (Master program "Environmental Law"), Faculty of Social Policy (Master program "Mediation"), Institute of Humanities (Bachelor programs "English for Specific Purposes and the Second Foreign Language" and "Philosophy").

The programs offered by the university span the areas of law, economics, management and business administration, psychology, informatics, political

sciences, public administration, social work, sociology and educology. As a new development, the university has developed two bachelor programs in the area of Humanities, the "Philosophy" program and the "English for Specific Purposes and the Second Foreign Language" program. Students of the Mykolas Romeris University can select from over 70 different study programs, thereof about 10 Bachelor and 60 Master programs.

The strategic objectives, in particular creation and implementation of international joint study programs, creation and implementation of new national study programs in response to the market needs, development of distance learning and continuing education study programs and promotion of scientific research activities were discussed in the meetings with the university administration as well as with the faculty representatives of the relevant for assessment study programs.

Discussions held during the university visit showed the international orientation of the university. Challenges such as the problem of falling enrolment figures, related to the demographic change within the country, implement the need for this international orientation.

Another aspect within the discussions had been the strict requirements placed by the Lithuanian Ministry upon the structure of study programs to organise interdisciplinary study programs (cf. e.g. "Description of general requirements for the Master's study programs", approved by Order No V-826 adopted by the Minister of the Republic of Lithuanian on 3 June 2010<sup>2</sup>). From the viewpoint of the expert group, some of these requirements hinder the university from more successful and efficient management of international study programs. Bearing this in mind, some of the following recommendations have to be addressed to the Lithuanian Ministry, if applicable with the goal of modification of the current requirements for study programs.

The following aspects had already been discussed at the university, but it could be necessary to repeat them again:

One of the main advantages of the university from the viewpoint of the expert group is clearly its course towards innovation, which is vividly shown in the development of new study programs that are relevant to the Lithuanian labour market. Some of the study programs available for assessment are specifically designed with an orientation toward specific vocational fields (e.g.

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<sup>2</sup> E.g. the requirement that at least 30 ECTS credits are to be awarded for the completion of the final thesis

“Environmental Law”, “English for Specific Purposes and the Second Foreign Language”, “Audit of Activities (Performance Audit)”, or “Biolaw”).

According to the experts, such orientation of the study programs at the labour market primarily involves the risk that the graduates might find only a few alternative employment options if there are changes of requirements within the intended vocational field or if there is any decrease of the program’s relevance to the labour market in individual areas. Potential employers should be able to draw upon the interdisciplinary and basic skills of expertise of the applicants, e.g. in the form of more generic and methodical capabilities.

On the other hand, as had been discussed in different meetings, the expert group acknowledges the reasons for implementing more interdisciplinary programs by Mykolas Romeris University. Due to the restricted public financing of the universities in Lithuania, all universities are anxious to find as many students as possible. In this case, labour market related, specific study programs seem to be more attractive to prospective students than broadly based programs.

A significant challenge in some of the existing study programs is the fact that it is difficult to achieve an adequate cohort size that is economically appropriate for the university. The university administration requires a minimum enrolment of 15 students per study program. In view of the fact, that the number of students is expected to fall, this issue could become an even more serious problem.

The expert group also discussed the question of whether the legally stipulated awarding of 30 ECTS credits required by the Lithuanian Ministry is thoroughly justified for the Master's thesis in the study programs with an explicit orientation toward practical application. With a study program comprised of a total of 90 ECTS, one third of the entire scope of the program would thereby be spent on developing and writing of the thesis, which is reasonable for the development of general theoretical knowledge and to enable students to create and carry out an extensive independent research project. Nevertheless, according to the aforementioned recommendations addressed to the Lithuanian Ministry, the study programs (curricula and structure) should be more flexible and content related. Hence, it is considered to be meaningful to reduce the scope of the Master’s thesis in exchange for more courses directly related to the learning outcomes of the program. Moreover, with these transitions of the requirements, especially for Master degrees, the study programs could be designed to require certain postgraduate work experience along with practical skills given higher priority.



Profiles of the assessed study programs became an object of close investigation during the on-site visit. While taking an overall view it is difficult to distinguish the strategy across the entire university and the uniqueness of each specific study program within a faculty. For instance, the Master Program "Environmental Law" with the final degree "Master of Law" is offered by the Faculty of Public Security, located in Kaunas, and not by the Faculty of Law. Moreover, some of the courses seemed to be quite similar. As an example, the "Organizational Management" (Bachelor of Business and Management) and the "Public Policy and Management" (Bachelor of Political Science) could, from the experts point of view, been put together to a more general Bachelor program with specialisations. The subsequent panel sessions with the representatives of each faculty helped to clarify these questions concerning the subject-specific curriculum and distinctive educational objectives of these programs.

Another aspect was the discussion about the final degree to be awarded for the completion of the study programs. As a background, the final degrees to be awarded in Germany are only divided in "Bachelor/Master of Arts" and "Bachelor/Master of Science" at which the programs "of arts" cover the area of social science and humanities and the programs "of science" cover the area of natural science. In Lithuania the Universities are more or less free to grant degrees in different fields, e.g. "Master in Management", "Master of Law" or "Master in Political Science". In this case, the experts are wondering, why e.g. the Faculty of Public Security grants the final degree "Master of Law" by completion the Master program "Environmental Law" and why it is not part of the Faculty of Law. In this aspect, the experts make two recommendations: On the one hand, the ministerial regulation could be reconsidered. Perhaps, it could be clarified, which degrees are to be given under which content related needs to which study programs. On the other hand, the University could review whether the offer of study programs should be done regarding the final degree to be awarded. For example, the Faculty of Law could offer all "Law Programs". But it should be bear in mind, that there are comprehensible arguments against that recommendation.

Overall, the experts see a large amount of potential in paying more attention to the development of general faculty-specific Master's degree study programs in addition to the sometimes-specific study programs being offered. On the one hand, the subject-specific curriculum profile of the respective faculty or departments is to become more clearly visible in these Master's degree study programs with a generalist orientation. In doing so, the issue should be discussed of which excellent subject-specific skills the students will demonstrate

after graduating. Furthermore the focus of Master's degree study programs with a generalist orientation should be more intensively placed upon the acquisition of scientific skills. There is also the option to develop doctoral programs out of these study programs to create faculty-specific "Graduate Schools" or something similar. Another advantage of such study programs would be the fact that even in the case of the removal of specialised Master's degree study programs, e.g. due to changes in the envisioned vocational fields or even due to falling enrolment rates, there would still be options for being able to offer the corresponding curriculum, e.g. via specialisations within the study programs. From the viewpoint of the expert group, this would enable the sustainable development of the faculties independently of the labour market and the falling enrolment figures. In conclusion, the internal cooperation between the teachers within the faculties that has been less marked so far could be improved, as all of the teaching staff could be involved in the development of these study programs.

From the viewpoint of the expert group the objective of the international orientation of the university is sensible and particularly reasonable against the background of the falling enrolment figures. Nevertheless there are also some unresolved aspects with regard to the study programs available for assessment. So far it has not been structurally stipulated at Mykolas Romeris University that at least the Master's degree study programs include obligatory portions taught in English (entire semesters or modules), for instance. Even with regard to study programs such as "Environmental Law" English skills would be sensible, if not actually necessary. Offering modules taught in English could also strengthen exchange programs with other universities, for instance.

Within this context the experts view the offering of "joint study programs" to be a sensible development and supplement to the current portfolio of the university. Nevertheless it is to be taken into consideration for these procedures that the administrative effort required for these study programs can be considerably high. This should be taken into consideration in the workload planning of the university administration. During the discussion of their study conditions with the students, some of them expressed critique of how the joint program "European Union Law and Governance" offered in cooperation with the University of Montesquieu - Bordeaux IV is being organized; namely that the schedule of the lectures was often published too late for the students to have enough time to prepare for classes. The schedule of this program should be published as early as possible.

The administrative effort that was mentioned also gains significance within the framework of the quality management of the university. So far the teachers have

been legally required to spend a portion of their working hours on administrative and organisational tasks as well, for instance. With regard to the tasks for self-administration at the university, the expert group considers this to be sensible and reasonable. With regard to the quality management of the entire university, the experts discussed the profile and the responsibility of the interdisciplinary "Centre for Academic Affairs" that is intensively devoted to the subject of the quality development of the study programs as well as of the university overall. Within this context the experts appreciate organisation of the "Study Program Committees" and – overall – of the "Committee for Quality Assurance". Continuous evaluations of the meetings of these committees should be initiated.

Some of the specified potentials for development were already addressed in other accreditation procedures carried out at Mykolas Romeris University. It is to be noted that, on the one hand, accreditation involves checking compliance with certain specified criteria. In this regard the experts come to the conclusion that the existing study programs essentially fulfil the specified criteria as well as the national legal regulations. On the other hand, the recommendations for the quality development and improvement of the study programs offered by Mykolas Romeris University are considered by the expert group to be an important objective of the accreditation procedure. The focus of such is support of the teaching staff, the faculty as well as the university administration. The expert group is thoroughly aware of the fact that the university sees itself facing various internal challenges as well as externally stipulated basic conditions (e.g. requirements of the Lithuanian Ministry) that will take time to overcome. Nevertheless the potentials seen by the experts are to be understood as indicators to support the university in its development as much as possible.

The criteria for the accreditation of study programs in Lithuania as per the "Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of Description of External Assessment and Accreditation of Study Programs" (July 24, 2010, No. ISAK-1652) will be discussed below.

### **(1) Program aims and learning outcomes**

The study programs to be assessed during the current assessment procedure are divided into the undergraduate Bachelor's degree study programs

- "Organizational Management" (Bachelor of Business and Management),
- "Public Policy and Management" (Bachelor of Political Science),
- "Law and Customs Activities" (Bachelor of Law),
- "English for Specific Purposes and the Second Foreign Language" (Bachelor of Philology) and

- "Philosophy" (Bachelor of Philosophy)
- as well as the following Master's degree study programs:
- "Audit of Activities (Performance Audit)" (Master in Management),
  - "Biolaw" (Master of Law),
  - "European Union Law and Governance" (Master of Law),
  - "Environmental Law" (Master of Law),
  - "Mediation" (Master of Law).

The study programs belong to the following five faculties: "Faculty of Politics and Management", "Faculty of Economics and Finance Management", "Faculty of Law", "Faculty of Public Security" and "Faculty of Social Policy" and "Institution of Humanities".

The objectives of the study programs in connection to the structure of the study programs show that the university is successfully pursuing the realisation of its goal to develop nationally relevant study programs with reference to their significance to the labour market. These important aspects were discussed in the introduction.

The **Bachelor's degree study program "Public Policy and Management" (Bachelor of Political Science)** prepares students to acquire competencies in public policy formulation, decision making and implementation, as well as in organizational and personnel management. They are supposed to successfully identify and solve problems related to public sector economy, constitutional and administrative law, social and demographic processes, e-governance, e-record keeping and e-public services. Graduates possess skills in implementation of various contemporary information technologies and human resource management principles in public sector organisations. The broad range of curricula related to administration, organisation, economics and law are noted by the experts. The study program educates students for positions in public administration and policy making and in national and European institutions. In addition to the fundamentals of public governance, the study program also offers a wide variety of optional electives from general foundations on policy making (policy ethics, International Politics), to specific fields and cases of its implementation (e.g. EU Common Agricultural Policy, Central Eastern Europe in 20th and 21th Century). This contributes to the diversity of possible fields of employment. The students are enabled to sense social and legislative changes and to translate them into public administration. This is evidenced by areas of studies such as "Strategic Management", "International Politics", and "Environmental Policy". Lithuanian public sector organizations and civil service system are considered to be the main areas of employment for the graduates of the program.

According to the expert team the program has a great potential. Nevertheless, introduction of more courses taught in English is desirable, for the university aims to train specialists capable of working not only in the national but also in the European and international organisations and institutions. What needs to be taken into further consideration is that the objectives of the program in terms of its legal orientation and its interdisciplinary character require to be better specified; otherwise its uniqueness and difference from other managerial programs becomes blurred and undistinguishable. Such precision could be effective to present the advantages of the study program and thus promote it among the prospective students.

## **(2) Curriculum design**

All of the study programs are designed so that they conform to the full extent of the requirements specified by the Lithuanian Ministry.

One ECTS credit point covers approximately 26.6 hours of study. The total amount of work performed by students is divided into contact hours and predicted individual work. Students are required to obtain 120 credits in Bachelor degree programs and 90 credits in Master degree programs. Most of the programs are offered on both full-time and part-time basis. One module normally has a scope of 6 ECTS credits and is completed within one semester. This corresponds to the Lithuanian as well as the European requirements regarding modularisation. The Bachelor thesis covers as a rule from 6 to 15 ECTS credits and the Master thesis covers always 30 ECTS credits. In examination assessments the university applies a 10-point grading system, 1 being the lowest grade and 10 the highest. The minimum pass grade is 5. Most of the courses are offered in Lithuanian.

The Bachelor degree program **“Public Policy and Management”** covers 210 credits (a workload of 5,670 hours). It is offered in full-time (7 semesters) and part-time (10 semesters) forms. The total workload for full-time/part-time students is divided into 1,584/694 contact hours and 4,086/4,976 hours of individual work. The curriculum comprises 36 modules including Bachelor thesis. Obligatory internship is envisaged and amounts to 15 credits. The final paper is awarded 15 credit points. Courses are taught in Lithuanian.

The expert group evaluates the fundamental structure of the study program to be reasonable. Even with regard to the pressures of the examinations it is considered to be feasible to accomplish the tasks required in the study program.

According to the curriculum of some of the Master's degree study programs, for instance "Performance Audit" and "Mediation", thesis is completed in parallel to studies starting from the first semester. One advantage of this structure from the viewpoint of the expert group is the fact that it allows students to address research issues in a more in-depth way from the very beginning of their studies. On the other hand, as discussed in the introduction, the experts recognise the risk that the broad scope of the Master's thesis in the more application-oriented Master's degree study programs lacks room for imparting subject-specific curricula. Referring back to the recommendation made in the introduction, when implementing the generalist Master's degree study program the university should retain this high number of credits for the thesis and clearly declare it as research work. Therefore, the University could consider making an appeal to the Lithuanian Ministry for more flexible regulation of the scope of the Master's thesis and thereby to reduce it in exchange for studies relevant courses.

The development of modules that are offered across multiple different study programs is encouraged, insofar as their curriculum contents are appropriate. There are curriculum contents in the Bachelor's degree study programs "Organizational Management" and "Public Policy and Management" that should be offered for both study programs together. This will strengthen the interdisciplinary cooperation of the instructors across study programs and faculties as well as contribute to sparing of resources.

Given the international orientation of the programs evaluated and of the University policy in general, compulsory modules taught in English should be added to the study programs. Furthermore, the University is strongly encouraged to offer entire individual semesters in English or to design individual compulsory modules in English. This will contribute to the international orientation and profile of the university on the one hand, while significantly simplifying foreign exchange opportunities for students as well as for instructors on the other. Foreign language skills, comprising the abilities to lead professional correspondence and conduct negotiations with foreign partners, imply a valuable advantage for students to gain the interest of prospective employers. It should be mentioned that during the meeting with the expert group the students spoke fairly good English and showed an enthusiasm for more courses offered in foreign languages. As seen from the curriculum of the study programs, most of the Bachelor programs (except for "English for Specific Purposes and the Second Foreign Language") have the introductory course "Foreign language for specific purposes" only once during the whole period of studies; whereas the Master programs (except for the joint program "EU Law and Government" managed

exclusively in English) require no compulsory courses in foreign languages. Although it is claimed that the students are offered various print as well as digital resources in order to improve their foreign language skills independently, the expert group firmly recommends the faculty administrations to implement mandatory introductory classes along with content related courses taught in English.

All in all the experts conclude that the requirements of the criterion related to these 13 study programs for accreditation have essentially been fulfilled.

### **(3) Staff**

Teacher performance evaluation is conducted at Mykolas Romeris University every 2.5 years and a full-time teacher is assigned a 5-year position to a primary post by means of an open competition. The University offers regularly internal trainings and opportunities to take part in EU funded projects as well to visit universities abroad.

Overall, the teaching and the academic staff of Mykolas Romeris University shows high level of commitment and potential for the execution as well as further development of the study programs they are responsible for. The expert group came to the conclusion that there is a strong corporate identity and positive group dynamics among the university and faculty administrations.

There are 32 teachers employed in the Bachelor degree program **“Public Policy and Management”**, of them seven professors, fifteen associate professors, and ten lecturers. The number of teachers working on a full-time basis is 29. Teachers of applied subjects have at least ten years of practical experience in the respective field.

Due to the fact that the similar “Master of Law” degrees are being offered in different faculties, the expert group was concerned whether competition among the faculties is very strong and whether it creates any hindrances to the successful realization of their objectives. The answer was that there is almost no rivalry between the faculties due to the historically cohesive organization of the university as well as certain centralization of funds by its administration. Hence, there is much stronger outward-directed competition with other institutions than within the university itself.

The expert group reports that quantitative adequacy and qualitative development of the teaching staff should be further implemented and improved. The same observations have been made after the discussions with students. The university

has to be flexible and react accordingly to the changing conditions concerning the demand for teaching forces as well as the current stagnation and even falling enrolment figures in Lithuania. Therefore, the expert group advises the university to offer modules (or to create a whole faculty), which will stand for the “profile” of this or that faculty and, hence, delineate the main advantages of it as well as of Mykolas Romeris University in general. This is considered to be an effective way to attract prospective students as well as to establish contacts with employers. At the same time this accent on specificity has to be combined with the generalist orientation, especially concerning the Master degree programs, when due to these shared modules one could immediately recognise the profile and the educational aims of the faculty.

Further room for improvement the expert group sees also in the introduction of more courses (optional or obligatory) for those teachers who want to continue their education. This way the university could prepare new instructors who are trained according to the didactic requirements and the curricula needs of this particular institution.

The decreasing number of students at the Lithuanian institutions of higher education makes the problem of resources highly tangible. Since Mykolas Romeris University is partially financed by the tuition fees of its students, it is of great importance to keep the enrolment numbers at high as possible. The increasing workload of the instructors due their participation and preparation of various distance learning programs as well as extra hours during the examination periods constitute additional expenses for the budget of the university. The expert group suggests that under such conditions the university should review further financing options, such as promotions of projects concerning third-party financing, application for various scholarships, or the acquisition of endowed professors. Within this context the expert group also recommends stabilising the cooperation with external partners such as national and international companies and organisations and to represent this transparently.

With regard to the accreditation of the available study programs the expert group considers the criterion (3) Stuff to be fulfilled.

#### **(4) Facilities and learning resources**

During the on-site visit of Mykolas Romeris University the expert group had an opportunity to see the condition of study premises as well as of learning resources. Overall it was concluded that the university offers appropriate



facilities in sufficient number and good quality for the execution of the available study programs.

The study objectives of the Bachelor degree program **“Public Policy and Management”** are achieved through the use of modern physical as well as virtual spaces and facilities of scientific research and communication provided by the Mykolas Romeris University. The MRU library subscribes to 53 databases and contains a total of 2378000 copies of publications. The library is open seven days a week, nearly around the clock and is accessible for people with disabilities. Each faculty is appointed a “thematic librarian” who is specialised in respective field and can assist students as well as the teaching staff in finding necessary information.

The University maintains several auditoriums for lectures and seminars, an auditorium for special purposes with translation equipment, and a number of reading and internet rooms in the main building. There are sufficient classrooms throughout the university camp to conduct courses with larger as well as smaller number of students.

The library contains ample print and internet resources for academic research. Students can order books or find necessary scientific publications on the official website of the university library. It is considered worthy to underline the adequate number and high quality of computer stations available for students’ use.

It was observed that the university ensures suitable access and provides special equipment for students with disabilities to move within the university building, such as automatic chairs at staircases, for example. Additional facilities are also provided for sport and leisure activities (such as a gym with modern furnishings). The University receives funds for staff (teachers and researchers) and learning materials from the State and external funds (European Social Fund, Education Exchanges Support Foundation, the Research Council of Lithuania) by ways of competition.

Teachers working at the Mykolas Romeris University have their own recreation room where they can take a break before or after the classes. However, from the discussions with the teaching personnel it became clear that there is a certain lack of space explicitly designed for the instructors e.g. for preparation of a course, for conducting research, or holding office hours. The experts see potential for development in this area.

For most of the learning facilities in terms of lecture halls and library premises containing various print and technical materials are situated in the main building, the compactness of the university campus is acknowledged to be an important factor. Therefore the question arises whether the learning opportunities of the same quality and quantity are being provided in the Kaunas branch of Mykolas Romeris University. Moreover, it was not fully clear for the expert group why the university decided to locate the Faculty of Public Security, hence, the study program “Environmental Law”, in another city. These questions should be taken into further consideration by the university.

Concerning the facilities for distance learning, since 2005 the University has been employing the electronic learning platform “Moodle”. It holds available information regarding the modules and courses of the study program for both students and teaching personnel. It is also used to maintain contact between students and teachers. Although the university started to implement study programs for distance learning quite recently, there is great commitment among the teachers to develop and expand this method of education. This method is evaluated positively by the expert group, particularly considering the aforementioned challenges in financing and falling enrolment numbers, which the Republic of Lithuania and the university are facing at the moment. With corresponding effort the university can develop a unique feature in this field through highly professional implementation that would also be able to make an impact in Lithuania and Europe.

Interviews with students revealed that they are content with learning facilities the university offers them, though some expressed a wish to have more input from their teachers in terms of the complexity of lecture material as well as assistance to find additional sources for independent learning. Furthermore, the students strongly identify themselves with the university, which is particularly noticeable when they explain their choice of the place of studies and the advantages of the university in comparison with others.

All in all the experts conclude that the facilities and learning resources correspond to the criterion both qualitatively and quantitatively.

#### **(5) Study process and student assessment**

As an introduction, all of the study programs available for accreditation show a clear structure. As discussed, the set objectives of the study programs are reasonable and expedient from the viewpoint of the expert group.

The module structure of the study program “**Public Policy and Management**” is evaluated to be appropriate and ensures the acquisition of professional, intercultural, and special competences on the area of activity management. The amount of time foreseen for classes and independent work is evaluated to be expedient for reaching the set objectives.

The requirements for the exam system are regulated and transparently accessible to the students. The exam workloads are considered to be appropriate for the study program level from the viewpoint of the expert group. Mykolas Romeris University has an active engagement in the development of its distance learning study programs.

An important aspect in the meeting with the students was that they were very active and willing to share their experiences at the MRU with the experts group. The positive impressions of the experts were further enhanced by the enthusiasm the students showed when talking about the career perspectives the university education enables them with.

One of the critical points articulated by the students was lack of consistency in the organisation of joint programs; namely students of the program “European Law and Governance” complained that the perpetual changes and their short-hand announcement to students obstruct them from effective preparation for classes. Thus, the expert group highly recommends the faculty to solve this problem.

Within this context the efforts of the university to implement new methods of teaching and learning are noted. During meetings there are encouragements to increase the concentration on “problem-based” learning methods that could lead to further identification of the students with the university in the Bachelor's degree study programs in particular. A focus on corresponding methods of teaching and learning could also create a unique feature of the university.

Concerning the methods of teaching, the expert group had an impression that not all students fully comprehend the meaning of self-study time and how it should be implemented. The time given for independent work is not used effectively for learning purposes, which is proved by the fact that some students can combine full-time study with full-time employment. Hence, they achieve lower academic results and do not dedicate enough effort for the preparation of classes. Other students claimed that they are not given sufficient material to learn by their lecturers and therefore they have too much of free time. From this situation the expert group drew a conclusion that students, especially those

coming directly from school, still expect teachers to provide them with all required knowledge instead of working on themselves. Thereupon, the teachers should instruct the beginners to approach self-study with more responsibility and schedule it accordingly.

International direction and encouragement of exchange programs is a broadly propagated policy of the European universities. Mykolas Romeris University also claims to offer a vast number of opportunities for its students to attend educational institutions abroad. However, the students expressed certain doubts concerning the availability of such due to lack of informational and financial support. Within this context, the expert group suggests the university to be more assertive in inspiring its students to gather international professional experience, foreign language skills, and general maturation. The university should also strive to pay increased attention to imparting the curricula of the study programs in English at the module or semester level.

The options for the students to obtain information about the study programs being offered are extraordinarily well developed. The homepage of Mykolas Romeris University that is kept up-to-date and clearly designed is to be mentioned in particular. All of the necessary information about the course of studies, the modules, the international exchange programs, residential options in Vilnius and financial support options can be found on there.

In order to further improve the support options for the students, the experts suggest focussing more intensively on support options for the students across the study programs. The development of a "career centre" to accompany students in the transition from university to working life is suggested. Events with national and international organisations as well as "soft skills" courses offered across multiple study programs should be considered within this context such as application or assessment training courses and seminars on rhetorical or other types of communication.

In light of the business management orientation of some study programs, the establishment of an institution that supports students in founding their own companies is suggested. This is recommended taking into consideration the aforementioned partly challenging social framework conditions under which the university must act.

All in all for this criterion the experts conclude that the support options are thoroughly provided for the students. The criterion is considered to be fulfilled accordingly.

## **(6) Program management**

The achievements the university has made in terms of the quality assurance of the study programs available for accreditation are essentially convincing. The quality assurance system of the university encompasses the following structural divisions:

The university has developed a "quality assurance policy" from which the corresponding procedures are derived. The study programs as well as the awarded degrees are also examined at regular intervals and adjusted as necessary. Another component is the examination of the educational objectives of the study programs, its successes and the satisfaction of the students with their studies. Corresponding surveys are then carried out, even at the level of the instructors. The focus is on the skills of the instructors, according to the university. Another evaluation level is focussed on the structural conditions of the university. Issues such as the suitability of the facilities or the technical equipment are the focus of this evaluation. As previously addressed, great value is placed on transparently supplying the students with information that is relevant to them. According to statements from the university, it also wants to inform the public about the development of the university. Overall the structuring of the quality assurance of the university is oriented around the standards recommended in the "European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance" (ESG), which is positively noted by the experts.

Overall the experts come to the assessment that the quality assurance procedures related to the university and the study programs are clearly organised and structured processes.

For the further development of the system the experts recommend making the results of the evaluations of the study programs or modules accessible to the students as well. Although the students indeed impressively confirm that the university essentially acts upon their feedback, there was neither overview of the results of the evaluations nor a summary of the derived measures. In addition to making them accessible, the results related to the study programs should also be discussed with the students. Otherwise there is the risk that the students' identification with the quality assurance measures and their willingness to participate in the quality assurance will subside.

Within this context, the external perspective of the expert group on the various study programs of the different faculties should be noted. In addition to the various transfer errors in accreditation documents, the profile of the university or

even of the respective faculties in which different study programs are offered in particular is not clearly recognisable from the documents. The university should place more value on the external presentation of the profile of the university in order to make this profile clearly recognisable.

The national and international rankings held at regular intervals which include this university primarily show the high satisfaction of the students with their university.

#### **IV. Summary:**

##### **(1) Comprehensive Results of the External Assessment**

In summary it can be stated that all of the study programs fulfil the assessment criteria from the viewpoint of the experts. In addition to the overarching aspects that were presented in the introduction to the assessment, the qualification objectives, the design and the structure of the study programs in particular were the focuses of the assessment. Aspects related to quality management as well as the learning resources, facilities and staff were discussed.

The university's strategy and the involved objectives of "internationalisation", "orientation toward the labour market", "expansion of the distance learning portions" and "expansion of the research activities" in comparison with the study programs available for assessment shows that the university is on a good path. The university presents itself as a formative educational institution for the Republic of Lithuania that possesses significant unique characteristics in particular due to its innovative capacity and the modern study programs it offers that are relevant to the labour market. With regard to the challenges the university is facing such as the falling enrolment figures, these are necessary for the sustainable development of the university. From the viewpoint of the expert group the university should put more intensive efforts into the transparent and self-confident external presentation of these unique features and thereby the independent profile of the university in order to ensure the high degree of satisfaction of the students in the future as well.

As discussed in the introduction, the comprehensive suggestions of the experts are related to the following for issues in particular:

1. The university's implementation of its internationalisation strategy should also include requiring mandatory attendance of modules taught in English

as a portion of all study programs. Offers should also be established for promoting the exchange of students as well as instructors.

2. For the Master's study programs to be accredited, the curriculum should be strengthened with a more intensive orientation toward application that are relevant for the national labour market. Specifically it should be considered whether the scope of the Master's thesis (30 ECTS credits) could be reduced in exchange for program-specific curricula. Meetings with the responsible national offices may need to be pursued for this. New teaching and learning formats (such as problem-based learning) should be discussed for the level of Bachelor's degrees.
3. The expansion of the distance learning portions should be continued and implemented more intensively particularly at the level of the Master's degree study programs. The use of the distance learning elements to support and accompany periods of self-learning should be considered across all of the study programs.
4. The University should consider the time intended for self-study with more attention. As it was observed by the expert group, some students do not always realise the purpose of independent work and therefore cannot rationally organise it. One option could be the arrangement of explanatory sessions with first semester students where they are informed about their responsibilities as students of higher educational institution and are also instructed in using diverse research opportunities as well as various methods of independent learning.
5. The development of generalist Master's degree study programs that are faculty-specific or span multiple faculties should be more strongly promoted. On the one hand the orientation toward research should be taken into consideration more intensively in these study programs. From the viewpoint of the experts this would also make it possible to expand the doctoral programs and thereby the research activities of the university. In addition to these possibilities, the development of generalist Master's degree study programs also has the advantage that the study programs that may have previously been considered small in terms of the number of enrolled students perhaps due to the falling enrolment figures could now merge into these study programs as areas of specialisation. In conclusion comprehensive utilisation of resources is possible through increased cooperation within the faculties.

Furthermore the experts suggest establishing and expanding more intensively interdisciplinary support options for the students. A „career centre“ is conceivable for this that could support the students in the transition from university to working life as well as promote contact between the university and

potential employers. The recommendation that a centre should be established at the University for supporting students who are interested in founding their own businesses has a similar objective. This can promote the cooperation of the students across faculties and blends in seamlessly with the innovative capacities of the university.

## **(2) Results of the External Assessment for Specific Study Programs**

With regard to the accreditation of the available study programs the experts come to the conclusion that they will submit a recommendation to the accreditation commission of the AHPGS for a positive decision regarding the accreditation of the study programs by the Lithuanian Ministry.

Taking the results of the written „preliminary assessment“ as well as the results of the on-site assessment at Mykolas Romeris University into account, the results in the form of tables as well as the strengths and potentials for development of the respective individual study programs will subsequently be presented.

### **“Public Policy and Management” (Bachelor of Political Science)**

Item No.	Assessment sphere	Assessment of the sphere, points
1	Objectives of the program and projected study results	3
2	Structure of the program	3
3	Stuff	3
4	Material resources	3
5	The course of studies and its assessment (selection of students, assessment of achievements, support of students)	3
6	Program management (program administration, external assurance of study quality)	3
		<b>Total ø: 18</b>

The structure of the program and the amount of courses comply with the set objectives of the program “Public Policy and Management”. Since the program shares common features with other managerial programs, it is considered meaningful to introduce general or basic courses taught in other programs or as well. At the same time, it is recommended to specify the distinct political/legal direction of the courses and its subject-specific curriculum profile in order to avoid any confusion with other programs. Hence, the program will offer narrow



specialisation but not too restrictive due to the general courses. The expert group concluded also that the lack of courses taught in foreign languages is highly relevant for the program.

## **7. Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AHPGS**

The resolution of the Accreditation Commission is based on the university's application, as well as the expert review and the on-site visit covered in the assessment report. The on-site visit took place on November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2013.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS has discussed the procedural documents and the vote of the expert group. The Bachelor program "Public Policy and Management" is to be completed with the awarding of the academic degree "Bachelor of Political Science". The program was first commenced in 2012. The program covers 210 ECTS-Credits and is designed on a full-time basis with an intended duration of seven semesters and on a part-time basis with an intended duration of ten semesters.

The Accreditation recommendation grounds itself on the following documents:

1. Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania On the Approval of the Description of the Full-time and Part-time Study Forms. 15 May, 2009, No ISAK-1026. Valstybės žinios, 2009-05-21, Nr. 59-2325.
2. Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes. 24 July, 2009, No. ISAK-1652 (Revision of the 29 July, 2011 Order No. V-1487 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania). Valstybės žinios, 2011-08-06, Nr. 100-4702.
3. Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania On the Approval of the Description of General Requirements for the Degree-awarding First Cycle and Integrated Study Programs. April 9, 2010, No. V-501. Valstybės žinios, 2010-04-17, No. 44-2139.
4. Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania On the Approval of the Description of General Requirements for

the Master's Study Programs. 3 June, 2010, No. V-826. Valstybės žinios, 2010-06-10, No. 67-3375.

5. Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania On the Approval of the Description of the Law Study Field. 19 August, 2010, No. V-1385. Valstybės žinios, 2010-08-28, Nr. 102-5306.
6. Resolution of the Government of Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of the Qualification Requirements of the Higher Legal Education for Persons Wishing to Take up the Position of Judge Following the Procedure Laid Down by the Laws. 4 October, 2002. No. 1568. Valstybės žinios, 2002-10-09, No. 97-4288.
7. Resolution of the Government of Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of the Lithuanian Qualifications' Framework. 4 of May, 2010. No. 535. Valstybės žinios, 2010-05-15, No. 56-2761.
8. Republic of Lithuania Law on Higher Education and Research. April 30, 2009, No. XI-242. Valstybės žinios, 2009-05-12, No. 54-2140.

The AHPGS Accreditation Commission considers that the Lithuanian accreditation criteria elaborated in the documents listed above are fulfilled. The AHPGS Accreditation Commission recommends the accreditation of the study program to the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science for the duration of six years.

The recommendations formulated in the expert's report are to be taken into consideration.