



**Assessment Report**  
**of the application by the**  
**Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius;**  
**Faculty of Social Policy, Department of Social Work,**  
**on accreditation postulate of**  
**Master Study program “Social Work“**  
**(Master of Social Work)**

<b>Table of contents</b>		<b>Page</b>
1.	Introduction	3
2.	General	4
3.	Content issues	
3.1	Structure of the program and content requirements	6
3.2	Modularization	10
3.3	Educational objectives	12
3.4	Labour market situation and job opportunities	13
3.5	Access and authorization requirements	14
3.6	Quality Assurance	14
4.	Personnel and spatial equipment	
4.1	Teachers	17
4.2	Equipment for Teaching and Research	18
5.	Institutional setting	19
6.	Expert's report	20
7.	Decision of the Accreditation Commission	29

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

The AHPGS used in the interest of readability, the masculine noun in the following forms representing the feminine and the masculine forms.

## 1. Introduction

Degree programs in Lithuania are required by order No. ISAK-1652 from 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2009 to be accredited.

The decision regarding the accreditation of a degree 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 assessments which are established in an External Assessment. In order for the External Assessment to be implemented, each university is allowed to commission agencies which are listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) (verification of the accreditation request).

The verification of the accreditation request of a degree program focuses, on the one hand, on the Assessment Spheres laid out in the afore-mentioned order (paragraph 1); on the other hand, it focuses on the standards for international surveys of the AHPGS agency.

The External Assessment procedure is carried out in 3 steps:

### I. The University's application:

The AHPGS agency verifies the sufficiency of the documents submitted by the university, namely the application and its corresponding annexes. Moreover, these are to fulfill the AHPGS standards, as well as the Assessment Spheres. The agency ensures that the legal relevant outline requirements issued by the Ministry of Education regarding the accreditation of study programs are met. 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. On-site-assessment (Peer-Review)

The expert group named by the agency carries out an external review. During the on-site visit at the university discussions with various members of the institution will take place, such as university administration, department and degree program management, lecturers and students. This will offer the expert group further details regarding the degree program, which the written documents might have omitted. The task of the review experts during the on-site-assessment will be the verification and evaluation of the Objectives of the program and projected study results, the Structure of the program, the Staff, the Material resources, The course of studies and its method of assessment (selection of

students, assessment of achievements, support of students) and the program management (program administration, external assurance of study quality). After the on-site review, the expert group will issue an expert report based not only on the results of the on-site-assessment, but also on the analysis of the application and other documents submitted. This report will be made available for the university, in order for it to issue an opinion regarding it. The expert report, as well as the university's opinion will serve – together with the submitted documents – as the basis for the accreditation recommendation of the accreditation commission of the AHPGS.

### III. The AHPGS recommendation regarding accreditation

For the accreditation recommendation, the AHPGS inserts in the afore-mentioned document as an annex the quoted index of the application submitted by the university, the expert report as well as the university's opinion. These, as well as all other documents will serve as the foundation for the accreditation decision of the Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

## 2. General

The Application for Accreditation of Master Studies programs in Social Work (here Application) of the Mykolas Romeris University (without the awarding of the official seal of the accreditation trust for study programs in Germany) was submitted to the Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Health and Social Science (AHPGS e.V.) on the 25.03.2010 in electronic format. The contract between the Mykolas Romeris University and the AHPGS was signed on the 17.04.2009. This stipulates the review and verification for accreditation of the Bachelor and Master Study programs “Social work”.

The approval of the summary prepared by the AHPGS took place on the 14.06.2010.

The application for the accreditation of the Mykolas Romeris University for the Master study program corresponds to the application outline structure provided by the AHPGS. Together with the application request for evaluation and verification for accreditation of the Master study program “Social work”, the following documents are to be found (the documents submitted by the applicant are numbered in the following order and dated after the newest version – in order to allow easier referencing):

MA	<b>appendix</b>
1	Module Descriptions
2	Module Overview
3	Plan of Course of Study
4	Regulations
5	Teaching Interdependence Matrix
6	Mobility of Programme Teachers and their Involvement in Project Activity
7	Link Between the Programme Outcome and Study Subjects
8	Collaboration of the Department of Social Work with Social Partners
9	Documents Regulating Social Work Studies
10	Scientific Activities of the Educators in the Social Work Programme
11	Professional Development of Programme Teachers
12	Curriculum Vitae of Academic Staff
13	Pedagogical Annual Load of Academic Staff
14	Learning Premises
15	Structure of Mykolas Romeris University
16	Diploma Supplement

The following documents refer to both study programs and serve to inform the expert group more accurately:

	<b>Annex</b>
a	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

The evaluation and verification procedure (without the awarding of the official seal of the accreditation trust for study programs in Germany) will be carried out on the basis of the assessment spheres as defined by the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as on the AHPGS standards for international reviews.

The on site-assessment took place on the 07.07.2010. The present assessment report is based on the university's application, the additional comments and the result of the on-site assessment.

Following the recommendation of the experts and of the Accreditation Commission, the AHPGS has reached a positive decision regarding the application towards accreditation of the Master study program "Social Work" of the University Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Faculty of Social Policy, Department

of Social Work. Thus, the agency recommends the accreditation of the present study program without further requirements. This is valid six years, starting 20.07.2010.

### **3. Content issues**

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

According to the university, the Master program “Social Work” aims at training social workers with a high degree of personal and professional competence. After completing the course of study, they should be able to conduct research, analyze social problems and their underlying causes, encourage social change in society, as well as provide means of solving personal social problems to individuals, various groups and communities. Moreover, they should be able to effectively organize human and financial resources, which are available in social work and social services and find the most effective solution to a various number of problems (*cf. Application, A2.3*).

The courses of the Master study-program “Social Work” will take place in English and will terminate with the awarding of the degree “Master of Social Work” (*cf. Application, A1.4 and Annex 17*). The program is worth 60 Credits (cr.) according to the Lithuanian Credit System, and 90 Credits according to the ECTS (European Credits Transfer System) (ECTS-Credit), respectively. One credit according to the Lithuanian System corresponds to an entire working week, and thus 40 hours. One ECTS-Credit amounts in the present program to 26, 6 hours. The program will be available in both 'full-time' and 'part-time' form – reaching a total study period of 1,5 years (3 semesters) and 2 years (4 semesters) respectively (*cf. Application, A1.3*). Annexes 2 and 3 contain a detailed structure of the study program in both forms. Accordingly, in the 'full-time' form there is 20cr./30ECTS-Credits to be completed each semester. In the 'part-time' form there is an average of 13,3cr./ 20 ECTS-Credits to be gained each semester. The final workload of the study program amounts to 2400 hours. These are divided into 482 hours of attendance at the university and 1918 hours of individual study (*cf. Annex 3*). The preparation and presentation of the Master Thesis is included in the individual study time and covers 24, or 36 ECTS-Credits respectively (*cf. Application, A1.6*).

Related to the execution of the Master program, the courses for the full-time students are organized weekly during the second half of the day (except for the periods when students attend field practicum or are allowed a day-off for voluntary work). The course of study of the part-time students is divided into sessions.

According to the University, the program, its aims, objectives and trained competences are designed in accordance with the General Requirements for Study programs (2005)(A1.3, A1.16). The study subjects, their succession and interdependence has been thus developed in the same manner (Annex 2, *cf. Application, A1.11*). The study also focuses on the formation of cultural, professional, specific and general competences – all of them projected in the objectives of the program. Its logical structure interweaves compulsory (49 cr./ 73, 5 ECTS) and optional modules (11 cr./16,5 ECTS).

Postgraduates are able to choose one of the three alternative modules meant to guide students towards work and scientific researches in the following fields: I alternative – Social Work in Community; II alternative – Social Work in Correctional Institutions; III alternative – Social Work with Migrants. The module “Social Work in Community” (I alternative) encompasses the following subjects: Sociocultural Community Education, Social Work Mediation, The Institutional Social Welfare System, Social Management Practice.

The module “Social Work in Correctional Institutions” (II alternative) encompasses the following subjects: Progressive Alternatives for Imprisonment, Penitentiary Psychology, International Standards for the Treatment of Convicts, Practice of Social Work in Correctional Institutions.

The module “Social Work with Migrants” (III alternative) consists of the following subjects: Sociocultural Anthropology, Refugee Law, Migration Sociology, and Practice of Social Work in Migration Services. The theoretical content of the subjects is based on already-acquired knowledge and abilities and is intended to consolidate these. In order to fully grasp it, it is therefore necessary to hold certain background bachelor knowledge; this, however, can also be gained during the program (Annex 1). The content of the alternative modules is related to the field of the chosen option. During the first semester, along with theoretical specific subjects, the students will study topics related to the chosen study alternative. They will also be required to select their topic for the Master’s thesis. During the second semester students will study another set of theoretical subjects and carry out their field practicum in the chosen alternative. During the third semester (for part time students also during the fourth semester) students will continue to study theoretical subjects and at the same time prepare their Master’s paper (*cf. Application, A1.11*).

A description of the program contents can be found in the Application under A2.2. The first-semester subjects aim at deepening students' knowledge and skills concerning a broad range of theories which social workers employ in order to understand people in the relevant contexts. A wide range of issues relating to the role and nature of social policy in contemporary welfare states is discussed. Social

research methodology is taught in order to help students start preparing their Master's paper. In the second semester, students are introduced to social work research, thus being provided with the knowledge and skills which will allow them to scientifically investigate social issues by using appropriate strategies. Students will learn to understand the structure of social subjects, identify the main social problems and use strategic planning. A considerable attention will be paid to developing the competence of social policy sophistication. By studying the EU social policy students will be able to identify and analyze social problems at an European level, as well as find satisfying solutions. Students will also be introduced to the field of sociology in order to provide them with both theoretical and practical knowledge. This will prove helpful when handling practical applications in social work. In addition to this, students will continue working on their Master's paper under the supervision of their tutors. In the third semester the courses comprise a broad range of aspects concerning the human life-cycle, usually drawing on research findings, which will provide the basis for developing and improving students' knowledge in both the academic and practical field. Apart from this, great attention will be paid to the development of knowledge and skills in social work management and social program evaluation. Thus, students will learn to efficiently evaluate social programs. They will also acquire the skills necessary in managing and administrating practical social work in Lithuania. They will also be provided opportunities to practice leadership skills in class settings, discuss and analyze management strategies with the help of case studies, perform group exercises and experience examples derived from real-life settings. During this third semester, full-time students will also have to finish their Master's thesis and prepare in order its presentation. Part-time students will finish their Master's thesis in the 4th semester (*Cf. Application, A2.2*).

The program's focus on education-for-use receives its practical application in the curriculum's field-practicum component (5 credits/7, 5 ECTS/200 hours). This is oriented towards social work research and highlights the organization, quality evaluation and development of social work. Students can choose one of the three following alternatives: Practice of Social Management, Practice of Social Work in Penitentiaries and Practice of Social Work In Migration Services. According to the university, the practical assignments for students are designed according to the Qualification requirements for social workers (2006), the Field practice regulation approved at the Council of the Faculty of Social Policy (2008) and the methodical book prepared by the lecturers of the Department of Social Work.

Since 2005 the University has been employing the electronic learning environment ("Moodle" e-learning platform), including electronic/media teaching devices in its lectures. (*cf. Application, A1.18*).



The earliest beginning of the Master “Social Work” took place in the year 1999. The number of students in the program is 100 per year (cf. Application A1.9).

In 2009 the annual fee for the Master Studies Programs in “Social Work” decided by the Ministry of Education and Science and reduced in accordance to the permission of the Senate of the University was of 8.088 Litas.

Overall, the study program is divided into 23 subjects (cf. Annex 3). 15 subjects have to be completed. Students can choose one of the three optional subjects “Social Work in Community”, “Social Work in correctional institutions” or “Social Work with Migrants” (cf. closer 3.2 Modularization).

International aspects of the curriculum are described in the application under A1.14. According to the University, the international context is reflected in most of the content of the study subjects, with more emphasis in some as in other (e.g. EU Social policy). The extensive experience the university has with foreign students, as well as its participation in several international projects, has – since 2009 – made possible to offer the master study program to foreign students, too (cf. Application, A1.14).

The inter-cultural aspect of the study program is described in detail in the Application under A1.15. To sum up, the university presents its expanding international orientation as an active participant in the European and global education market. This reflects itself in the intense participation within international organizations, the mobility of students and teachers, and the development of joint study programs and scientific projects. Furthermore, the afore-mentioned annex describes activities supporting teachers in this matter and the university's international relations. Annex 6 offers specific information regarding the number of students and teachers – ingoing and outgoing – within the study program, as well as details regarding initiated and implemented international projects.

Related to the research aspect of the program, information is given in the Application under A1.21. In order to strengthen students' scientific research competencies, 28 credits/42 ECTS are assigned to analytical scientific work and the elaboration of the Master's paper. It is described *ibid* in more detail.

### 3.2 Modularization

The program is divided into subjects. The offered subjects are listed below (cf. Annex 3). They are further described in Appendix 1.

Name of the subject	Scientific workload throughout semester					
	I		II		III	
	h.	cred.	h.	cred.	h.	cred.
<b>Obligatory subjects</b>					<b>I. Theoretical studies</b>	
Methodology of social research	80	2				
Theoretical models of social work	120	3				
Social security law	120	3				
Methods of social work research			80	2		
European Union social policy			80	2		
Social demography			120	3		
Sociology of social sphere			80	2		
Life development sociology					80	2
Systematic evaluation of social programs					120	3
Management of social institutions					120	3
<b>Total of the group</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Alternatives of speciality subjects</b>						
<b>I alternative "Social work in community"</b>						
Sociocultural education of community	80	2				
Mediation in social work	80	2				
Practice of social management			200	5		

Institutional system of social welfare					80	2
<b>II alternative "Social work in correctional institutions"</b>						
Progressive alternatives for imprisonment	80	2				
Penitentiary psychology	80	2				
Practice of social work in penitentiaries			200	5		
International standards of the treatment of convicts					80	2
<b>III alternative "Social work with migrants"</b>						
Sociocultural anthropology	80	2				
Refugee law	80	2				
Practice of social work in migration services			200	5		
Migration sociology					80	2
<b>Total of the group</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II. Social research and final paper (minimum 30% of program)</b>						
Scientific research work	320	8				
Scientific research work			240	6		
Scientific research work					400	10
<b>Total of the group</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total of the study program</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>20</b>

The course of study for the part-time version can be found under Annex 3. This offers the same subjects as the full-time one.

The substantive descriptions of the subjects comprise the following areas: "Course extend", "Objectives and expected abilities", "Brief annotation", "Main topics", "Teaching and learning methods", "Assessment of knowledge and abilities" and "Recommended literature" as well as information about the "Coordinating teacher".

The tests within the program are governed by the "Study rules and Regulations of Mykolas Romeris University" (cf. Annex 4). The afore-mentioned letter also indicates the basic study rules at the Mykolas

Romeris University, Vilnius (forms of study, duration, number of credits, course regulations and university change, etc.). In the Application under A1.13, the tests are described in more detail. Thus the achievements' evaluation is an integrated and constantly planned part of the study process, combining teaching and study systems, "i.e. it involves student's aims, teacher's foreseen study aims, results of study program as well as standards regulated by Lithuanian education system" (*Application, A1.13*). The examination system is divided into subject-trials and interim evaluations. According to the information in Appendix 1 and in Appendix 4, no. 110, the Departments announce the topics of the term papers two weeks after the beginning of the fall semester" (*cf. Annex 4, No. 110*). The individual votes are explained in more detail in the description of each subject.

Part-time students are able to take examinations in advance, i.e. before the examination session. Full-time students are allowed to take examinations prior to the fixed period only with special permission from the Dean. Examinations or pass/fail evaluations can be taken only once. Examination or pass/fail evaluation taken in advance and failed is considered an academic debt. Timetables of examinations and pass/fail evaluations are prepared and announced not later than two weeks before the examination session" (*Application, A1.13*). Ibid, tables that specify the number of examination per semester - each of full-and part-time-variant can be found (max. number of tests/semester for full-time students: 8; max. number of tests/semester for part-time students: 7).

### **3.3 Educational objectives**

The overall aim of the Masters program "Social Work" at the Mykolas Romeris University is to train social workers with a high degree of personal and professional competence. Having been awarded a master's degree in the field, they should be able to conduct research, analyze social problems and underlying causes, encourage social change in society and provide individuals, as well as various groups and communities, with opportunities to discover their own solutions to personal and social problems. Moreover, the graduates should be able to effectively organize human or financial resources available in social work and social services - as specified in the Application under A2.3 regarding the associated areas of competence:

- preventing and solving social problems,
- managing social Institutions,
- implementing social policy,
- organizing and conducting scientific research by employing analytical thinking,
- learning and career planning.

Ibid, these competences are specified. For example in the area “Management of social institutions”, the competences are described as follows: “Students will be able to build up a team of professionals working in an institution, company or organization in order to provide social assistance needed; train and initiate social services programs in the community, institution or organization; analyze the effectiveness of aid provided; make proposals on company’s or organization’s service provision and quality improvement” (*Application, A2.3*).

The University states that the goals, objectives and competences which are to be developed within the program:

- meet the principles provided for in international and national legal documents and ensure that a graduate of the program will have become a social work specialist of high professional and research competence;
- establish the conditions for the assimilation of social work values and principles of ethics, as well as for the acquisition of knowledge and abilities necessary for managing social service provision, carrying out research, cultivation of social policy and its implementation (*Cf. Application, A2.6*).

### **3.4 Labour market situation and job opportunities**

According to the university, graduates within the program find employment and become competitive in the labor market. As the information offered by the university's Career center states (2007), all graduates of Bachelor's and Master's degree in Social work were employed at the time the survey was taken. According to the university, the degree holders are able to work in institutions of social security, education, health care, penitentiary law, social care, as well as in or with day-centers for children, disabled people, gender, community centers, foster home, boarding houses for disabled people, hospitals, schools, jails, different nongovernmental organizations and communities. A social worker's activity takes place in both governmental and nongovernmental organizations and consists of administrating; preparing and managing various national and international projects (*cf. Application, A3.1*). Information regarding graduates of degree programs in “Social Work” is offered in the application under A3.2. To sum up, “the program qualifies the demand of the market, requirements for higher education and provides an opportunity to prepare qualified social workers that seek social justice and positive changes in society, as well as social welfare expansion, workers that are able to solve the social problems of individuals, families and communities, and pursue their prevention” (*ibid.*).

### 3.5 Access and authorization requirements

Graduates of the Bachelor (undergraduate) study program in Social Work, as well as graduates who hold other Bachelor degrees are entitled to enter the program. Additional courses are offered to the latter, in order for them to meet the program requirements. According to the Decree of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania „Concerning the general requirements for study programs“ No. ISAK-1152 Item 9:

- a one-year (40 cr./ 60 ECTS) supplementary study is organized for the students who completed non-university studies in social work (Annex 3);
- those students who do not hold a Bachelor degree in Social work from the university are required to attend compensatory studies. These are necessary in order for the student to gain sufficient knowledge for completing the Master's degree.

The compensatory studies (12 cr./18 ECTS) consist of the following subjects: Introduction to Sociology (2 cr./3 ECTS), Social Work Theory and Practice (general and specific parts - 4 cr./6 ECTS), Methods of Social Work (general and specific parts - 6cr./9 ECTS(Annex 3 ). All cases which do not fall under the above-mentioned rules are to be decided by a commission appointed by the Rector. Further details are offered in the application under A4.

### 3.6 Quality assurance

The quality assurance concept is described in the Application under A5.1. The university reached an agreement which involves sharing the responsibility for the quality of studies within all levels, starting with students and up to the Senate and Rectorate (*cf. ibid.*).

The university's quality standards and guidelines regarding the internal assurance of studies are established on the basis of the “European standards and guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (*Annex a*). These are divided into seven groups, which include, among other, a separate section on study quality assessment<sup>1</sup>. The program's quality assurance is based on the Guidelines for the Quality Assurance of University studies. The University has been implementing the rating procedure for academic teachers and the faculties of the University for 3 years

---

<sup>1</sup> Policy and procedures for quality assurance; Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programs and awards; Assessment of students; Quality assurance of teaching staff; Learning resources and student support; Information systems; Public information.

now, assessing the impact of the following areas of activity: academic – methodological work, scientific publications, other scientific research (excluding publications), organizational work, participation in project management and public activity. The 2009 rating results at the university show that the Faculty of Social Policy holds second position. The content of the program is reviewed, evaluated and updated annually, study plans and structures are continually adjusted. The study process is also constantly improved by adopting innovative teaching methods and technologies. Increased attention is given to the development and update of program resources. Whereas the responsibility for program quality assurance lies within different University departments, the coordination of the higher education quality assurance at the institutional level is ensured by the Center for Academic Affairs, with the Higher Education Quality Assurance Group as its subsidiary (*cf. Application, A5.1*).

Each semester, the teachers involved in the program conduct a survey among students regarding the quality of the studies. Students are thus asked to share their positive or negative observations and offer feedback on what could be improved. (*cf. Application, A5.4*). “In May 2009, a questioning was conducted among the students who completed their social work studies in 2008-2009 in order to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the study program. The graduates expressed their views on the professional competences they acquired at the University (Annex 12). Learning conditions and teaching quality were positively evaluated by students: 97.8% of the respondents indicated that the teachers used various technical equipment during lectures; 98.8% of the respondents reported that the teachers used different active learning methods during the lectures. 47.8% of the respondents fully agreed and 45.7% partially agreed upon an in depth and detailed explanation of the content of the lectures. 58.7% of the students fully agreed and 28.3 % partially agreed that the time was used efficiently. The graduates also had to assess the improvement of other skills during their studies. Respondents evaluated positively the following aspects: handling information, i.e. finding, filtering, organizing and utilizing it (100% of students), employing legal instruments (99.6% of students), giving practical application to the theoretical knowledge acquired (74.7%), rationally planning the available time (59.9%); hosting various workshops, events etc. (74.3%); adequately preparing for meeting the challenges of the profession, e.g. new, difficult situations (63.0 %); cooperating with other specialists (88.7%), pursuing innovations (73.9%); being in a leader position (42.6%), self-study (82.1%). The ability to apply methods of individual work with a client was assessed as satisfactory by the majority of students (76% of the respondents) and as excellent by 21% of the respondents. Only 3% of respondents reported their knowledge as poor or nonexistent. Half of the respondents (51%) indicated that their knowledge concerning the ability to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of social work methods was excellent, 41% evaluated it as satisfactory, and only 7% as poor” (*Application, A5.4*). The

annex also presents the changes made as a result of the students' feedback and implemented due to further requirements (Regulations). Moreover, the annex states that students are actively involved in the quality assurance process and through their representatives in the Senate, Study program Committee and the Faculty Council provide their suggestions regarding the improvement of the study process (*cf. Ibid.*).

Of particular importance for the evaluation of the study program and its direct application in the professional field is the support from teachers who have already acquired field experience in social work and thus are directly involved in the development of the social service system. The teachers who work or have worked in social work teach relevant subjects. Apart from this, they practice-mentors are responsible for organizing the social work practicum, oversee students throughout the practicum and discuss the problems encountered (*Application, A5.5*).

The University offers its teachers opportunities to improve their professional qualifications by attending courses, gaining teaching internships at foreign universities (Annex 6, Table1) or participating at conferences (Annex 11). After returning from an internship, teachers present it and its results, and discuss their experience of a different teaching system with their colleagues at department meetings.

Details about student support are given in the Application under A5.3. Student assistance on general requirements is provided by:

- The academic assistants of the Faculty of Social Policy.
- the Career Center personnel responsible for introducing professional career opportunities.
- Full- and part-time students are provided with individual consultations after the schedule established by the Department. Part time students also can receive consultations every Thursday from 2pm to 7pm. Consultations are also available from 10am to 3pm on the third Saturday of each month.
- Students can contact teachers using information technologies or receive teachers' advice on key issues regarding the studies via e-mail without abandoning their personal responsibilities.
- an individual study plan is available for working students which allows them to manage both work and studies.
- students' social needs are the concern of the Dean of the Faculty, the divisions of Welfare and Facilities under the Directorate for Economics, and Commission for Social Affairs of the University. According to the University, increased attention is paid to disabled students and orphans and the social problems they encounter. Since December 2002 there has been



established a Psychological Office at the University which provides free psychological services to the community (*cf. Application, A5.3*).

All information regarding the program, subjects, exams, etc. is available on the Web sites of the University, the Faculty of Social Policy and the Department of Social Work (*cf. Application, A5.2*).

The implementation of the program in Social Work the University follows Article 6 of the Law amending the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women of RL (June 17, 2008; No. X-1602) and the Constitution of RL. The principle of gender impartiality is guaranteed by equal opportunities regardless of gender in the following cases: admission to the program; granting scholarships or loans; design and approval of educational programs; and the evaluation of students' academic achievements.

Details about the special support offered to disabled students are given in the Application under A5.10. This includes help concerning specific questions and problems which can arise during their study due to their disability.

#### Overall

- the students who choose the program in question are motivated; their number and dropout rate correspond to the organizational development and assurance of study quality;
- the university's facilities and experience are satisfactory and contribute to a high-qualitative level of improvement regarding the Master study program in Social Work;
- students are provided with comprehensive support. This is a continuous process, and students and program graduates are satisfied with the provided services.

## **4. Personnel and spatial resources**

### **4.1 Teachers**

Annex 5 presents an overview of the program's lecturers. There are 22 teachers active within it: 5 professors (24%) (out of which four teaching deepening study subjects), 14 associate professors (64%), 3 lecturers (13%) (2 of them currently holding a Doctor's degree)(Annex 5). The University is the main workplace for 17 (77 %) teachers. It is important to point out that Mykolas Romeris University is the main workplace for all the professors teaching within the program and only approximately one fourth (23%) of the teachers hold guest positions. According to the University, not less than 20% of the study subjects in the Master program have to be taught by professors. The annual teaching load of professors

in the program (both in full-time and part-time studies) adds up to a total of 25.6%. Associate professors carry 63% of the pedagogical load, whereas the rest of 11.3% of the annual teaching load in the program is supplied by other teachers (cf. Annex 13).

Each full time teacher is appointed 5-year position to a primary post by way of public competition. The competition is announced by the Rector. The teachers are certified by orders outlined in laws and other legal acts, as well as in procedures laid down by the Senate. Starting 2010, the candidates for a teacher position are evaluated by the Lecturers and Academic Employees Admission for Primary Posts Commission, which are named by order of the Senate. Not less than 1/3 of the Admission Commission members consists of non-university employees. When organizing a competition for the head academic employee or the position of professor, there has to be at least one international expert within the Admission Commission. Such a situation creates the prerequisites for choosing the most qualified personnel (Annex 13). The problem regarding teachers' recruitment mostly relates to the fact that social work is not separated as an independent field of science in the classification of science areas and fields approved by the Research Council of Lithuania. Therefore, there is no possibility to obtain a doctoral degree in social work at scientific institutions in Lithuania. As a result, social work Bachelor's degree programs are taught by professors and associate professors who obtained their degrees in related fields (sociology, educology) (*cp. Applicatioon, A5.7*).

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

Detailed information about the premises and the equipment of the university can be found in the application under A3.1. Under Annex 15 in Table 1 a corresponding list can also be found (cf. Application, B3.1).

According to the University, its library is one of the most modern among those of Lithuanian higher education institutions (*cf. Application, B3.2*). The application also offers information on the resources of the library (216.500 volumes, see also Annex 15, Table 2) and other organizational details, such as opening hours.

Information about the University's computer resources can be found in the application under B3.3. In 2007, the entire computer network (a total 1171 computers) was modernized and renewed. W-LAN is available throughout the entire university. Annex 15 offers more information about the matter.

## 5. Institutional Environment

Mykolas Romeris University is a public organization of the Republic of Lithuania. The University was registered on December 22, 1997; its founder is the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. 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 as well as on the University Statute. Currently it has approximately 21 000 students enrolled, out of which 200 students in doctoral programs of law, psychology, management and administration. Annex 16 offers more information on the university structure: it has 6 faculties, 39 departments and also a renowned Institute of Humanitarian Sciences (*cf. Application, C1.1*).

The main research areas of the University include (*cf. Application, C1.2*):

- The strengthening of Lithuanian economic competitiveness, entrepreneurship and social cohesion;
- The Development of human resources: challenges for social policy;
- Multi-level governance;
- Rule of law and social cohesion in the 21st century;
- Efficient public administration.

The Department of Social Work was founded on March 17, 1998 following the Resolution of the Senate of the University in the Faculty of Penitentiary Activity, which was operative at the time. Since then, the Department has further expanded into two distinct divisions, namely the Department of Social Policy (2002) and the Department of Educology (2006). On the basis of the Resolution of the Senate June 28, 2000 the Faculty of Social Work was established and later on renamed as the Faculty of Social Policy (November 7, 2005). The Faculty of Social Policy has five departments (Social Work, Educology, Psychology, Social Policy, and Mediation); apart from these, it also holds a Laboratory of Psychology, a Psychological Service office and a Career Planning Academy for students.

There are 15 teachers (10 permanent, 5 invited) working in the Social Work Department: 1 professor, 7 associate professors, 5 lecturers and 2 assistants. 8 teachers currently hold a Social work Master's degree. In the academic year 2009-2010 the Faculty had 2175 students enrolled: 1115 full-time students (958 in Bachelor and 157 in Master studies), and 1060 part-time students (404 in Bachelor and 656 in Master studies). The Department of Social Work implements two study programs: the undergraduate study program of Social Work under assessment at the moment and the Master of Social Work study program. Currently the study program of Career Management is being developed, which aims to train social workers that are able to provide vocational counseling services (*cf. Application, C2.1*).

## 6. Expert's Report

The on-site visit for the external assessment of the Bachelor's and Master's study programme "Social Work" submitted by the Mykolas Romeris University took place on 06./ 07.07.2010 in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The following experts took part in the assessment:

- as representatives of the Higher Education Institutions:

Mr. Prof. Dr. Ulrich Bartosch, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Faculty of Social Work, Chair of the national representatives of the departments and faculties of Social Work of universities in Germany as well as Chair of the Federation of German Scientists (FGS)

Mrs. Prof. Dr. Renate Oxenknecht-Witzsch, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Faculty of Social Work, Chair of the Federal Association of the university teachers of law at universities/ departments of social work in Germany

- as representative of professional practice:

Mrs. Renata Katinaitė, Prison department of Lithuania

- as representative of the students:

Mrs. Iveta Verpeja-Wichter, Student at the Cologne University of Applied Sciences

The expert group was accompanied by the AHPGS Accreditation Agency. The expert group met on 06.07.2010 in the premises of Mykolas Romeris University. The expert group of the Accreditation Commission carried out an inspection of the rooms and facilities available for the study programme under guidance of the responsible persons of Mykolas Romeris University. Discussions were held with the university heads.

The subsequent dinner of the expert group served the purpose of collection and discussion of questions and impressions of the documents sent earlier. Furthermore, the further on-site assessment was structured.

The second day of the on-site assessment was carried out on 07.07.2010. The experts held discussions with the faculty heads, the persons responsible for the programme and with a group of present students of the study programmes to be assessed.

The expert report is structured according to the assessment spheres given by the Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Lithuania in the document “On the approval of the description of the procedure for external assessment and accreditation of study programmes” (Order No ISAK-1652).

### **Assessment sphere 1: Objectives of the programmes and projected study results**

The broadly designed Bachelor study programme “Social Work” of the Faculty of Social Policy, Department of Social Work, of the Mykolas Romeris University pursues the aim of educating social workers and providing them with strong professional and personal skills, enabling them to work in as many relevant areas as possible in Lithuania. The main emphasis is placed on the classic social work methods “individual help”, “group work” and “community work“, which - with a focus on “helping people help themselves” - are scientifically analyzed and trained in practice to ensure the highest possible level of quality. One main focus of the study programme is placed on law enforcement. The academic objectives conveyed in the study programme such as the selection, planning and evaluation of the effectiveness of social work interventions for the concerned persons (or groups), skills for project development and organization and scientific skills are realistic with regard to the objectives of the study programme.

The expert group regards the aspects relevant to the study programme, which was elaborated on by the programme directors, as entirely appropriate. Furthermore, the paths for achieving the mentioned objectives are also viewed as coherent. The methods of teaching and learning have been explained in detail by the study programme directors. The statements provided by the higher education institution were emphatically confirmed by the surveyed students. The design of the study programme gives us reason to expect that students will acquire the necessary competences to find employment consistent with their qualifications and become involved in civil society, while also gaining skills for further personal development. The education goals are defined based on the quality assurance system for the study course, which the expert group regards as carefully elaborated and highly differentiated. There are plans to carry out analyses on the situation of alumni.

When completing the Master study programme the students are supposed to be capable of scientifically analyzing the causes of social problems and contributing to promoting positive social change in society by means of applied scientific social work. The study programme is supposed to enable graduates to efficiently organize, acquire and manage the human and financial resources for social work facilities and

social services. Accordingly, the Master study course – as compared to the Bachelor study programme – focuses on the specific skills for public administration and supervising social facilities, the development and implementation of social policies and the organization and realization of scientific research.

With regard to the Master study programme, the expert group is of the opinion that the content of the study programme ensures that the academic and professional objectives can be reached in their entirety. The experts have discussed, however, why the directors of the study programme have decided to develop a separate Master study programme “Protection of Children Rights“, as these aspects can also be integrated into a Master study programme for “Social Work”. The programme directors have stated that the study programme “Protection of Children Rights” is necessary due to the enormous demand and the high significance of this area and it has been received positively by all participants – students, practitioners and teachers.

## **Assessment sphere 2: Structure of the programmes**

The Bachelor study programme “Social Work” has been offered since 1999. The undertaken modifications and further developments concern, in particular, a stronger orientation towards and implementation of the Bologna criteria. This concerns, for example, the structure of the study programme and a more “outcome-oriented” and thus more employment-oriented design of the programme. Starting next year the students will be finishing the study programme with a scientific Bachelor thesis for the first time. The experts explicitly welcome these modifications.

The structure of the study programme can be described as follows: the study programme follows a logical structure in which “general education subjects” are combined with general skills such as systematic thinking and action and the capacity to collect and process information. The taught subjects are psychology, law, sociology, pedagogy, ethics, and philosophy. Building on this, a second area – “Study Program Basic Subjects“ – serves to convey primarily knowledge and skills in the theoretical domains of social work with the objective of promoting general career-specific skills. The third block - Study Subjects of Specialized (professional) Education – builds on fundamental knowledge of social work and specializes the students in various relevant areas, for example in work with families or community work. A subject of this block is also the implementation of social work projects. After completing the first year at the university the students complete a one-month internship in various areas every year.

In view of the altogether highly convincing design of the study programme and based on conversations with students, the expert group has raised the question whether the extension of the duration of the internship to three months would be feasible in the future. The expert group believes that the possibility of becoming acquainted with a work area in depth and over a longer time period is very useful. The increased application of means of learning through practical experience is highly recommended for the applied science of social work.

The experts suggest further developing the concept of the study programme to the extent that larger, interdisciplinarily taught blocks with two to three times the scope of the previous subjects (ECTS-Credits) can be offered as modules, in order to better accommodate the guiding principle of “output orientation”. By doing so, the students could also deal with different themes in greater depth. Moreover, this would correspond with the Bologna objectives and enable better compatibility with foreign partner institutions of higher education.

In summary, we affirm that the concept of the study programme in its present form fulfils all legal requirements for study programmes in general and for Bachelor study programmes in social work in Lithuania. The study programme demonstrates a clear and coherent structure and concentrates on the consistent development of general, intercultural and career-specific skills, which contribute to the achievement of the stated objectives of the programme. The means for conveying specialized knowledge and interdisciplinary knowledge, methodological and generic skills as well as the pedagogic and didactic foundations of the study concept are regarded as entirely plausible. As a possibility for organizational learning, the expert group recommends the continuous documentation of all measures taken to further develop the study programme.

The convincingly structured Master study programme “Social Work”, its objectives and the conveyed skills have been developed in accordance with the general requirements for study programmes in Lithuania. During the first semester the students have the option of choosing between the three academic specializations Social Work in Community, Social Work in Correctional Institutions and Social Work with Migrants. Furthermore, the themes for the Master thesis are selected during the first semester. During the second semester, the students deal with theoretical issues in greater depth and complete an internship on their respective academic specialization. The main focus of the third semester of the full-time study programme is placed on writing the Master thesis. In terms of its scientific disciplinary and applied practical orientation, the expert group believes that the study programme is entirely plausible, comprehensible and designed in a target-oriented manner.

### **Assessment sphere 3: Staff**

As for the personnel involved in carrying out the Bachelor study programme “Social Work”, the expert group positively highlights the very high motivation of the teaching staff in terms of all programme-relevant concerns. It is clear that the committed staff of the university, which was founded in 1997, is willing and able to carry out the study programme with at a high level of quality. This applies to university management, to faculty management as well as the teaching staff. The strong motivation and the excellent support for the students have been mentioned as reasons for selecting the Mykolas Romeris University during talks with students. In summary, the expert group is convinced that the qualitative and quantitative personnel resources are guaranteed in order to carry out the study programme. The teaching-related quality assurance system can also be viewed as a reason for the high quality of the teaching staff. For example, the teachers are initially employed for a limited period of five years, during which their teaching performance is evaluated. After an additional five-year period they can be appointed as professors. By doing so, the higher education institution wishes to ensure a high degree of motivation among the teaching staff over a longer time period. According to the talks with the study programme directors, one distinctive characteristic is that the faculty regularly publishes its own scientific magazine on social work, in which both the university teaching staff and the students have the possibility of publishing their academic work. This is also viewed positively by the expert group.

The mentioned aspects are also to be maintained for the Master study programme. However, the experts recommend an increase of the professorial staff, in order to also assure a high level of learning for Master students as well. The expert group explicitly encourages the directors of the higher education institution to continue with their efforts to implement a Ph.D. programme for Social Work at the university, in order to further educate its own young academics in the medium-term. By doing so, the institution can live up to its aim to be received positively at the European level and to be viewed as an attractive higher education institution both for student as well as teacher exchanges. Not least, the university can invite top-class graduates from other European countries to Lithuania for a PhD programme and thus play an important role in the scientific development of social work in Europe. This opportunity is realistic because the possibilities for doctoral students in Germany, for example, are also limited.



#### **Assessment sphere 4: Material resources**

After the on-site visit of the facilities of the higher education institution on the first day of the assessment, it was concluded that the teaching and learning infrastructure are of very high quality. Thanks to the new facilities completed in 2007, the higher education institution has a well endowed library with several learning and seminar rooms, which are equipped with computers with standard software programmes for qualitative and quantitative social sciences research. The courses are taught in several lecture halls as well as in several seminar rooms for small group courses. All parts of the buildings are handicapped accessible. The computer equipment is up-to-date and WLAN is available in the entire building. The accessible electronic book and magazine library with teaching material is also worthy of mention. The university offers catering and sporting activities. Furthermore, there are numerous flat screens in the building that provide slide shows of current events at the university. This enables students and teachers to strongly identify with the higher education institution. The expert group is convinced that the qualitative and quantitative material and spatial resources are guaranteed in order carry out the study programmes.

#### **Assessment sphere 5: The course of studies and its assessment (selection of students, assessments of achievements, support of students)**

In the view of the expert group, both study programmes “Social Work” can be successfully completed by students with the given time period. The positive reports from the surveyed students also contribute to this assessment. Both study programmes are clearly structured and the demands placed on the students are transparently explained. Based on the views of the students, the schedules for completing the study programmes laid down by the university can be regarded as realistic. With regard to examinations conducted in the study programmes, the expert group suggests carrying out more skills-oriented examinations, which goes hand in hand with the mentioned recommendation to consolidate individual subjects into larger teaching and learning units. As alternatives to the subjects primarily tested in the form of a written examination, the university may also consider presentations, project work or written term papers.

In contrast, one must however keep in mind that the strong motivation of the teaching staff is also carried over to the students, which requires a continual strong commitment on behalf of the students. The examinations function as “learning process controls” and span across the entire semester. The students regard the workload associated with this more as a challenge to continually learn than as an

excessive demand.

The experts view the homepage of the Mykolas Romeris University and the information provided with regard to the study programmes as very revealing and informative. All information on the study programmes, the course of studies, and the examinations carried out are published. Details are also provided on the student support system, which is very good and transparent according to statements by students.

Another particularly positively highlighted aspect is the consistent orientation of the higher education institution towards international exchange both for teaching staff as well as students (Erasmus). Talks with students have revealed that there are sufficient possibilities for the uncomplicated recognition of credits obtained abroad and that they are particularly supported in becoming acquainted with the international aspects of the foreign partner higher education institutions.

In this regard the experts recommend continuing with the previous efforts and further pursuing and implementing the strategic aims of the higher education institution, such as the active participation of the Mykolas Romeris University in the European Higher Education and Research Area as well as the active mobility of teaching staff and students. The membership and active participation of the higher education institution in the European University Association (EUA) as part of its internationalization activities is also viewed very positively.

Based on the statements provided by the directors of the study programme concerning gender equality, equal opportunity and regulations for disability compensation for students with handicaps and chronic illnesses, the expert group deems this criterion to be fulfilled in entirety.

#### **Assessment sphere 6: Programme management (programme administration, external assurance of study quality)**

The concept for quality assurance for the higher education institution and study programmes, which was presented in the documents and is viewed by the expert group as clearly structured, was discussed in detail with the university management. Particular attention was placed on the description of the feedback possibilities for students and teaching staff. In view of the statements by the students, in particular, the higher education credibly demonstrated that a functional quality assurance system is in place. The efforts by the higher education institution in this area are worthy of particular recognition. In

terms of its design, the quality assurance system is aligned with the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”.

The national and international rankings, in which the higher education institution participates, are also viewed positively. At the national level, the higher education institution is ranked third according to its own information, while it comes in first place with regard to the satisfaction of students. This impression is also confirmed by the surveyed students.

### **Summary:**

In summary, it is evident that both study programmes fulfil the necessary requirements in terms of their objectives as well as structure. The material and spatial resources of the Mykolas Romeris University can be viewed particularly positively. Furthermore, the study programmes thrive on the strong motivation of the people involved in the development and realization of the study programmes. Aspects such as the support services for the study programmes and quality assurance fulfil the requirements in an exceptional manner. The university entirely lives up to its claim to be an internationally recognized higher education institution. The faculty offering the research and teaching programme in social work particularly demonstrates that it is continuously building on and increasing its potential to become a true scientific “hot spot” for social work.

The experts recommend that both the Bachelor study programme as well as the Master study programme in “Social Work” be accredited. The following points and recommendations should be taken into account:

#### **Bachelor study programme**

The study structure of the Bachelor study programme could be developed in the future to enable the consolidation of several, thematically related subjects into larger modules offered on an interdisciplinary basis.

#### **Master study programme**

With all due respect for involved scientific staff, it is noticeable that their scientific competences are still being developed. This is reflected by the many doctoral candidates among the teaching staff. Unfortunately, they complete their doctoral degrees at other higher education institutions. In order to increase the attractiveness of international exchange programmes, the experts explicitly recommend increasing the number of professorial positions in the faculty and to grant the faculty the right to offer

doctoral degrees in social work as soon as possible – and if necessary on a limited trial basis.

#### ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME “Social Work” (Bachelor)

Item No.	Assessment sphere	Assessment of the sphere, points
1	Objectives of the programme and projected study results	4
2	Structure of the programme	3
3	Staff	4
4	Material resources	4
5	The course of studies and its assessment (selection of students, assessment of achievements, support of students)	4
6	Programme management (programme administration, external assurance of study quality)	4
		Total: 23

#### ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME “Social Work” (Master)

Item No.	Assessment sphere	Assessment of the sphere, points
1	Objectives of the programme and projected study results	4
2	Structure of the programme	4
3	Staff	3
4	Material resources	4
5	The course of studies and its assessment (selection of students, assessment of achievements, support of students)	4
6	Programme management (programme administration, external assurance of study quality)	4
		Total: 23

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

### **Decision of the Accreditation Commission from the 20.07.2010**

The present resolution of the Accreditation Commission is based on the university's application, as well as the expert review contained in the assessment report. The latter was comprised following the on-site visit which took place on the 06./07.07.2010.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS has discussed the procedural documents and the vote of the expert group.

The program is to be completed with the awarding of the academic degree "Master of Social Work". The earliest beginning of the Master program took place in 1999. The program covers 90 ECTS-Credits and has a full-time study period of 1, 5 years / 3 semesters.

The Accreditation Commission recommends the accreditation of the study program to the Ministry of Education and Science. The expert assessment reviewed the distribution of the points and concluded that these are fully accounted for.

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

Freiburg, 20.07.2010