



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

LIETUVOS SPORTO UNIVERSITETO  
**PROGRAMOS *SPORTO PSICHOLOGIJA* (621C67001)  
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT  
OF *SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY* (621C67001)  
STUDY PROGRAMME  
AT LITHUANIAN SPORTS UNIVERSITY**

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## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<b>Sporto psichologija</b>
Valstybinis kodas	621C67001
Studijų sritis	Biomedicinos mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Sportas
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Sporto psichologijos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19

## INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	<b>Sports Psychology</b>
State code	621C67001
Study area	Biomedical Sciences
Study field	Sports
Kind of the study programme	University Studies
Level of studies	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (2)
Scope of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications	Master of Sports Psychology
Date of registration of the study programme	1997-05-19

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The programme Evaluation team for May 2014 comprised:

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**Prof. Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos**, an International Consultant who has more than twenty years' experience in higher education as a lecturer, researcher and senior administrator, United Kingdom (Group leader).

The second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* is delivered by Lithuanian Sports University (hereinafter the University). The University delivers research-based studies of all cycles in the areas of biomedicine and social science in the fields of medicine and health, life sciences, business and management, education and pedagogy. The Council and the Senate are the collegial governing bodies of the University and the Rector is the sole governing body. Higher education activities are coordinated by two faculties: the Faculty of Sport Biomedicine and the Faculty of Sport Education; research activities are coordinated by four departments: Department of Applied Biology and Rehabilitation, Department of Coaching Science, Department of Health, Physical and Social Education, and Department of Sport Management, Economics and Sociology.

The self-evaluation of the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* was undertaken by the team of 8 members (Rector's Order No ISAK\_27/S of 12 June 2013). The work of the self-evaluation team was coordinated by the study programme director.

The previous external evaluation of the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology*, carried out by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, resulted in the programme being approved until 2014-12-31 - Minister for Education and Science Order No ISAK-1794 of 18 June 2008. The study programme *Sports Psychology* was first registered on 1997-05-19, No 565, state code - 62108S10 and is the sole postgraduate study programme in Lithuania for Masters of *Sports Psychology* with appropriate competencies who can work in the fields of sport and *Sports Psychology* (state code - 621C67001).

The evaluation visit for the *Sport Psychology* (Master degree) programme took place on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Following the visit, the Team finalized its report, detailing the findings and outcomes for the *Sports Psychology* Master programme at the Lithuanian Sports University.

In 2007, the programme received full six-year accreditation from an Evaluation Team appointed at that time.

## II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### *1. Programme aims and learning outcomes*

The second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* closely relates to the University's mission to be an open European university, developing and offering programmes for all cycles of studies, based on the latest research and technologies, continuous education and sustainable development of the country.

Information about the second cycle study programme *Sports Psychology*, programme aims and learning outcomes is publicly available at the University's website (<http://www.lsu.lt/en/studies/study-programmes/master/sports-psychology>), AIKOS database, LSU Sports Psychologists' social networking site on Facebook. Information about the study programme is presented in annual national and international career events and fairs, such as the Fair of Higher Education Institutions in Kaunas, Learning, Studies and Career Fair in Vilnius, sent to Lithuanian sports federations, sports associations, public health offices and other LSU social partners.

Sports specialists with competences corresponding to the Master of *Sports Psychology* degree able to work with and provide sports education to adults, youth and children, represent an integral and necessary element in the realisation of a progressive multi-dimensional approach to sports where a team of specialists from different fields, creating a medium and environment for optimal interaction, together conduct scientific research and/or develop competences of athletes and physically active people.

Lithuania aims to modernise and change the mental health system by giving priority to mental health in healthcare and social security policy. The National Sports Strategy approved by the Lithuanian Seimas on 24 March 2011 (No XI – 1296) highlights the importance of strengthening human resources in the field of sports. From the experience of Lithuania and other countries, sports psychologists and sports specialists with competences in the field of *Sports Psychology* represent an important element in successful building physical skills. They play an important role in the planning and successful implementation of the coaching process where the development of mental qualities and mental health care of the trainees constitute an inseparable element.

The second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* delivered in LSU is the only study programme in Lithuania, where future or already practising sports specialists can acquire *Sports Psychology* competences. The study programme consists of broadening courses focused on fundamental and applied research, preparation to conduct such research and use the research findings in the professional practice of sports specialists. The learning outcomes are related to the competences of the master in *Sports Psychology* and the ability to analyse the sports-related issues from psychological perspective and to provide psychological help by using psychological testing methods and applying psychological influence technologies.

Programme learning outcomes are implemented through the main aim of the study programme and are achieved through the study modules. The aim of the programme, through applied interdisciplinary science and technologies, within an ethical code, is to educate and train students in planning, organizing and performing research in *Sports Psychology* and related fields of social science and in evaluating psychological-behavioural risk factors, acquiring the skills for offering psychological support and undertaking educational activities in the field of *Sports Psychology*. (SER, p.5, 2.1). The programme aim is appropriately scientific, although the tenor of its

presentation would benefit from a stronger behaviourist focus. The breadth of the aim, though in one sense laudable, in another may just be a little extensive.

The difficulty level of the programme learning outcomes is consistent with Lithuanian Qualification Framework Level 7 qualification requirements. Theoretical and practically-applied studies are important for the development of sport science and integrated approach to scientific research objects, for example, the integration of the knowledge of human behaviour and mental processes functioning into fundamental and applied research in sports and adjacent fields. The 13 general and subject specific competences areas directing the programme learning outcomes: scientific knowledge and management of ideas; communication; change management; psychological ethics and statutory acts; methodology of sport science and psychophysiology; problem solving and athlete coaching technologies; psychological testing methods; enhancing of athletic performance; psychological counselling and its application; the psychological analysis of practical situations; the design of educational programmes, training courses and the provision of methodological assistance; planning and conduct scientific research; the professional application of psychological ethics and statutory acts in professional practice are situated within a clear applied field of professional practice.

Learning outcomes of the second level study programme *Sports Psychology* have been regularly revised in line with the latest scientific achievements and changes in the labour market. The European Credit Transfer System was implemented in LSU in several stages (Rector's order No 655-s of 7 February 2011). The revised learning outcomes were introduced in module descriptions on 17 June 2011 (Rector's order No 1440-s of 2011 06 08). On 29 September 2011, the LSU Senate (minutes No 1) adopted the procedure of interdisciplinary studies in order to optimize the modular learning system. The latest revisions of the study programme were set forth in the description of the general requirements for the implementation of the concept of general meeting of 30 April 2012, Minutes No 7). These requirements were aimed to harmonize the integrated curriculum reform processes and to implement a learner-centered approach and the concept of interdisciplinary studies (Senate meeting of 30 April 2012, Minutes No 7).

Social stakeholders (representatives of other higher education institutions, employers, social partners, and alumni of the study programme), as well as study programme teachers, researchers and students were also involved in the work of the study programme committee, where the learning outcomes were developed and reviewed. With respect to the national labour market, it became clear to the Evaluation Team that the government is not creating sufficient openings for graduates who are qualified as psychologists, and therefore can be employed as Sport psychologists, that is graduates, who hold the Bachelor level of Psychology and Master level of Sport psychology. Notwithstanding this external problem, the field develops systematically and has distinctive features.

## **2. Curriculum design**

The second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* was revised and improved on a regular basis. In 2012 a new credit system based on the credit volume and learning outcomes was introduced. The last revision of the study programme was undertaken on 26 June, 2012 in line with the implementation of ECTS conception at LSU. The credit volume of the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* delivered in academic year 2012-2013 was 120 credits (4 semesters each having 30 credits). The credit volume meets the general requirements for the second-cycle study programme established by the order of the Minister for Education and Science. The subject modules are: *Methodology and Statistics of Biomedical Research; Psychological Evaluation of Athletes; Psychology of Sport and Elite Sports Performance; Psychology of Health; Modern Integrated Motor Learning Technologies; Modern Athlete Coaching Management Technologies; Psychology of communication, Leadership and Social*

*Education in Sports; Psychological Counselling of Individuals and Groups in Sports; Scientific (research) Practice; Elective; Final Master Thesis.*

The programme structure and content are designed in accordance with expected study programme competences and learning outcomes that are consistently developed in the study programme modules. Subjects in the modules are grouped following the principles of interdisciplinary learning and the contents of the modules are refined and focused on the achievement of the learning outcomes. Each module is important for the achievement of the study programme *Sports Psychology* learning outcomes. 60-80% of the module time is allocated to self-study.

Thorough consideration of the content of the subjects and/ or modules allows the Evaluation Team to affirm that they are in correspondence with study type and level. It is also possible to conclude that current content of subjects (modules), as well as study methods, enable the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, and the study methods are sufficient to encompass them. The programme uses the 120 ECTS credit system. The number of modules dedicated to general competences is proportional to the modules dedicated to professional competences.

The content of the programme is in accordance to the latest scientific developments as the majority of subjects (modules) were designed in collaboration with Social Partners. When working on the programme, authors were referring to the newest literature, experience drawn from other countries and the needs in Lithuania as well as the application of this profession to the labour market.

Table 3 (Learning outcomes of the second cycle study programme *Sports Psychology*) and Table 5 (The mapping of learning outcomes, programme modules and learning methods) could, helpfully, be cross-referenced, and made somewhat clearer, in that Table 5 contains mostly description rather than mapping; and the illustrated competences could be more convincingly phrased in terms of intended achievements (SER, Table 5). Moreover, the modules do not contain many applied sport psychology subjects; an overall estimate would be 50 credits out of 120, which the Evaluation Team believe to be a little short of what might be expected from a behaviourist programme at Master level. The Evaluation Team while acknowledging the importance of biomedical subjects, suggests that these subjects might be subject to review. This being said, the programme team duly acknowledge that the areas of Sports science, as well as the practical application of sports science, is a multifaceted area and therefore it is fundamental to combine physical skills from psychological, moral, ethical and social personality development processes. (SER, 2.1, para.4) Possible integrative relationships with Psychology departments in other Lithuanian universities should also be explored

The Master thesis is defined in the *Regulation for the second cycle studies final paper writing and defence* (Senate meeting minutes No 10 of 2 May 2013). A thesis is an autonomously undertaken student's survey based on autonomous applied research. The thesis is aimed to deepen research skills (survey planning, organizing, statistical processing of data) that were built and supervised in the study modules. Prior to the thesis defence the students may publish the research findings in reputable scientific journals (the article must be accepted for publication; this provision applies since academic year 2012-2013); one additional point is given for published research papers. The Evaluation Team sampled the theses made available and found them to be of a good standard. Concerning subject modules and the main teaching provision, the Evaluation Team believes that the field meets the established minimum requirements and needs some review and improvement.

### 3. Staff

The academic staff of the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* meets the general requirements for Master's degree programmes (Minister for Education and Science Order No V-826 of 3 June 2010). All teachers delivering the study programme hold doctor's degrees and the research areas of 92.3 % teachers correspond to the subjects taught. 54 % of teachers hold professor's positions (professor's positions make 47 % of the total teaching positions in the study programme, Table 15). The staff qualification requirements are set forth by the Senate in the Procedure for teacher and research fellow certification and selection of candidates for teaching jobs (2012 11 29, minutes No 29).

Teaching workload is governed by the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Procedures for Workload Planning and Accounting (approved by the Senate meeting of 29 November 2012). The workload of a full-time teacher may not exceed 36 hours per week and 1440 hours per academic year (before the academic year 2012–2013 the workload ranged from 500 to 700 hours).

The qualifications of the study programme academic and research staff are adequate to reach the study programme aims and achieve the intended learning outcomes.

During the academic year 2012/2013 the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* was delivered by 13 teachers (Table 9, Annex 2), of these: 7 professors (54 %), 5 associate professors (38 %), 1 lecturer (8 %). Most of the study programme teachers have considerable academic experience, conduct relevant research and development in their scientific field, participate in scientific projects and publish their research findings. 12 teachers have full-time jobs with LSU, of these 7 professors, 4 associate professors, 1 lecturer.

In 2008-2013, the turnover of the staff was not large. Four employment contracts were terminated: one professor passed away, one associate professor retired, one associate professor won a tender and left to work in Brussels, one associate professor moved to another city.

Student-to-staff ratio in the study programme *Sports Psychology* indicates that the ratio is below the ratio prescribed in the normative documents for biomedicine study programmes. Student-to-staff ratio in different modules of the study programme varies because some modules for the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* are also delivered to students of other second-cycle study programmes (e.g. the module Methodology and statistics of biomedical research is delivered to post-graduate students of 4 study programmes; the module Psychology of Sport and Elite Sports Performance is delivered to post-graduate students of 2 study programmes; the module Psychology of Health is delivered to post-graduate students of 2 study programmes; the module Modern integrated motor learning technologies is delivered to post-graduate students of 3 study programmes). Student-to-staff ratio ensures high-quality tutoring of students, supervision of theses, profound analysis and discussion of research papers in order to build adequate competences of post graduate students in *Sports Psychology*. Teaching staff state that psychological understanding and self-management in stress, motivation and aggression behaviour are among their strengths. Students interviewed greatly valued the teaching provision.

Between 2 to 5 programme teachers per year participated in academic teacher exchanges in the last five years. During the reference period *Sports Psychology* programme teachers visited the following higher education institutions under Erasmus/Socrates programmes and projects (teaching visits, workshops, project meetings): Salzburg University (Austria), Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro University (Portugal), Barcelona University (Spain), Latvian Sports Education Academy, V. Levskij National Sports Academy (Bulgaria), Tartu University (Estonia), Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic), Sports University of Germany, Rezekne higher



education school (Latvia), University of the Aegean (Turkey), Graz University (Austria), Paderborn University (Germany), Instituto Politécnico de Santarém (Portugal), Haarlem University (the Netherlands).

2 to 5 teachers per year came to lecture in *Sports Psychology* study programme from the following universities: University of the Aegean (Turkey), Latvian Sports Education Academy, Worcester University (United Kingdom), Zagreb University (Croatia), Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia), Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), UTAD University (Portugal), Masaryko University (Czech Republic), V. Levskij National Sports Academy (Bulgaria), Barcelona University (Spain), Maribor University (Slovenia). (SER, p.14, 2.3)

Study programme teachers belong to three strategic research fields of the LSU: “Coaching Science, Sports Physiology and Genetics”, “Skeletal Muscles, Motor Control and Rehabilitation”, “Health, Physical and Social Education in Modern Society” (<http://www.lkka.lt/en/research>). The number of publications of the programme teachers in peer-reviewed ISI Web of Science database with and without citation index as well as other international databases is presented in Table 6. These show considerable reductions for the year 2013. However, there is a perceived strengthening, and as teachers stated, in terms of ‘step-by-step’ in overall competences among teachers, a drive to reverse this publication trend.

The teachers have teaching and practical work experience (Annex 2). The numbers of study programme teachers involved in national and international projects are presented in Table 7. International involvements show a steady increase over a six year period, with some small fall-back in 2013, whilst national involvements show continuous decline over the same period. However, in relation to both statements on publications and involvement in national and international projects, the Evaluation Team noted should that data for the second-cycle SPS programme description were collected in the autumn of 2013, thus the numbers for the year of 2013 are incomplete because they represent only the first half of the year (i.e. 2012-2013 study year) (Table 6 and Table 7).

Programme teachers (8 teachers (61 %)) are doctoral thesis supervisors and/or members of dissertation defence committees, dissertation opponents. Teachers are members of national and international journals’ editorial boards and/or reviewers.

Teaching and preparation may not make more than 80 % of the teacher’s workload. Research and development, and preparation may not make more than 80 % of the teacher’s workload. The second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* teacher workload analysis shows that teachers spend 62 % (21396.47 hours) of the total workload (34508.39 hours) on research and development.

The Evaluation Team has observed that the teaching staff are getting younger, most of lecturers being in their 40s. It has also been pointed out that some of young lecturers have few hours. Teaching is dominated by associated professors, and professors have little teaching hours also.

The Evaluation Team, in camera, discussing the interview findings, worried a little about programme team spirit, internal cooperation and the overall state of current contentment and happiness, one to another. This may of course be an impression only and not correlate with actuality. Notwithstanding this possibility, the Evaluation Team believes that the field develops systematically and has some distinctive features.

#### **4. Facilities and learning resources**

Students of the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* can use facilities and learning resources of all laboratories and departments for self-study, projects, examinations, research work and final thesis writing. The number of rooms (the rooms are also used by students of other study fields): 3 lecture theatres with 117, 115 and 102 seats; 2 rooms with 80 seats; 12 rooms with less than 80 seats; 13 rooms with up to 30 seats. Study programme students use the facilities of the Institute of sports science and innovations. Other premises include: two computer rooms with 23 workplaces (46 in total), one swimming pool, one indoor light athletics track, one gym, two sports game halls. Students conduct their research in the facilities of departments. Over the last five years most of the rooms have been refurbished and equipped with multimedia sets. LSU facilities and learning resources (altogether understood as material resources) are being carefully maintained and renewed on the regular basis.

By 2012, new Information Technology (IT) equipment had been installed in 17 rooms. LTL 209 thousand was spent in 2012 for development and maintenance of IT infrastructure. MS Windows 7, specialized MS Office 2010 and SPSS 16 software is installed in 350 PCs of the University. In academic year 2013/2014 the IT department was reorganized into IT and Distance Education Centre.

The students of second-level studies are provided with an opportunity to collaborate with social partners (The report SER p. 22 refers to the close collaboration by the means of an annual applied *Sports Psychology* event at children foster home “Ažuolynas”). Social partners from other universities are well represented. However, interview evidence did not clarify how the programme could be improved to fulfil national sports’ needs to a greater extent. This is a difficult issue concerning professional placements in particular, which at the moment, tends towards extended periods of study, though not exclusively so. This matter needs to be addressed in this area of the programme.

The LSU library is refurbished and in 2011 has 121 thousand publications. There are periodical, internet, general reading rooms and group work room with 86 workplaces, including 18 computer workstations. Publications of teachers are listed in the electronic catalogue. Students can visit the library or communicate by e-mail. All students are informed about the newest publications and subscribed databases and can remotely order the publications or extend the return deadline. The University subscribes to the following databases: EBSCO publishing (subscription valid till 31-07-2015); Emerald Management eJournals Collection (subscription valid till 22-07-2015); SPORTDiscus (subscription valid till 31-07-2015); Springer LINK (subscription valid till 20-09-2015); Taylor & Francis (subscription valid till 20-09-2015). There also are freely accessible Lithuanian databases.

Internet connection is available in lecture rooms and faculty and department reading rooms and electronic databases can be reached from there too. The Evaluation Team toured available facilities and found them to be well within the quality parameters for Level 7 studies. The field develops systematically and has distinctive features.

#### **5. Study process and student assessment**

In 2009–2011 graduates from the first-cycle university studies holding the Bachelor of Sports, Education or Psychology degrees were admitted to the first year of the second-cycle *Sports Psychology* study programme. Graduates from the first-cycle university studies holding the Bachelor of Education or Psychology degrees are able to enrol in the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology* only after the bridging course “The Theory of Sports and Physical Education”. Since 2012, graduates from university study programmes holding the Bachelor’s

degree have been admitted to the first year of *Sports Psychology* study programme (Senate meeting Minutes No 8 of 31 May 2012).

In 2009–2013 the competition score of applicants to the second-cycle *Sports Psychology* study programme was made up of the weighted average grade of all subjects listed in the first-cycle university studies diploma supplement (including the grades for the final examination or final thesis) plus additional points. Additional points were given for research, sport or other kind activities.

The ratio of enrolled and graduated students during the reference period changed from 66.67% to 93.75%.

The ratio of contact hours (lectures, practical sessions, laboratory work) and self-study hours per credit (26 hours) for different models of study in university study programmes approved on 1 June 2012 is 20 % of contact hours for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year full-time students of second-cycle study programmes; in exceptional cases the amount of contact hours may be increased.

Student learning outcomes are evaluated in the course of semester regularly and systematically. Teachers prepare the learning outcome assessment procedure following the principles of reasonableness, reliability, transparency, efficacy and impartiality. Descriptions of the study modules (module aim, learning outcomes, themes and topics, self-study tasks, obligatory and optional course materials, teachers and assessment criteria) are available to students in the University's Information System. In terms of diagnostics, one-to-one arrangements are in place and there is peer simulation.

Students disseminate their research results in scientific conferences and also in articles in different scientific journals. Students are engaged in *Sports Psychology* dissemination: the best research papers of *Sports Psychology* students are published with students' permission in the social website of the study programme.

Students make presentations in University's scientific events (Application of *Sports Psychology* digital survey methods in the learning process).

During the reference period, the *Sports Psychology* study programme students did not readily engage in exchange programmes. The main reason is work-related responsibilities that make it impossible for the students to go abroad for a certain period of time.

The strongest students receive university scholarships that are allocated in accordance with the results of the last examination session. Other types of support to the second-cycle programme LSU students are: personal scholarships (awarded for outstanding achievements in studies, research activities); one-time scholarships; targeted funding; social grants (awarded to students in difficult financial situations, including orphan students); loans for studies and subsistence; vouchers (LSU participates in the State Science and Studies Foundation's project 'Ensuring Access of Students with Special Needs to Education'); support to Lithuanians from foreign countries.

The assessment of student achievement of learning outcomes consists of evaluation of knowledge and understanding and evaluation of skills. Students are acquainted with the study module description in the first lecture. A cumulative grade-point average system with 0-10 grading scale is used.

Persons can be admitted to a higher-level course in accordance with the Procedure for the recognition of competences acquired in non-formal and informal ways of education (Lithuanian Sports University Regulation of Studies; Senate meeting Minutes No 10 of 26 June 2012). Grades of final theses are quite high (9-10 points). High grades can be explained by relatively high competition scores in admission to *Sports Psychology* study programme (Master students admitted to the programme in 2010-2012 were selected from 33 applicants, and in 2011-2013 from 28 applicants), high standards set by the study process to the quality of Master thesis and a diligent approach of master students and thesis supervisors to surveys and thesis writing.

39 Masters of *Sports Psychology* successfully graduated from the study programme in 2008 – 2013. The majority of programme entrants and graduates were Bachelors of Coaching Systems or Bachelors of Physical Education. They have sports specialist posts and apply *Sports Psychology* competences in their professional practice. The number of study programme graduates is not large compared to the ‘unofficial’ demand for such specialists in Lithuania.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the above, the Evaluation Team notes that in 2012 an average competition score of applicants for places financed by government was 10.56, and for self-financed places only 7.6 (Table 19). The Evaluation Team has drawn attention to the fact that the level of applicants is not very high among the fee-paying cohort and not at the highest levels for state-funded places, though as a measure of ability, the Evaluation Team had the pleasure of interviewing some of the most articulate, persuasive and well-informed students it had encountered during its recent work in Lithuania.

A noticeable decrease in student numbers is observed (Table 20). These are the indications of the programme losing its attractiveness to students, especially considering that no government-financed places were offered to students in 2013 (Table 23). With fewer students, the programme becomes economically unsustainable. The programme will however attract 6 state-funded places for the next academic year. During interviews, 2 outstanding students communicated the intrinsic properties of psychology and the general respect shown towards the Master programme.

Only those students who possess Bachelor and Master degrees in Psychology are entitled for the *Sports Psychology* Master qualification. The Evaluation Team agrees that in this manner, for example, while coaches and other areas of specialism, can improve the level of their *Sports Psychology* competences, it does not increase the number of *Sports Psychology* specialists. This issue has been acknowledged by Alumni, social partners and lecturers. It has also been emphasised in this report. Graduates (Master level in *Sports Psychology*), who at Bachelor level are sport specialists of different areas (coaches, teachers, social pedagogues, physical education (PE) teachers, etc.), become observable in Lithuania and have broad possibilities to realize their knowledge, abilities and competences, acquired in the field of *Sports Psychology*. That other graduates of the second-cycle *Sports Psychology* study programme may seek a sports psychologist’s qualification in undergraduate psychology study programmes in Lithuanian Universities: Vytautas Magnus University, Vilnius University or Klaipėda University, is on the one hand, a plausible and workable route, while on the other hand, it is an extended and costly procedure for a Master graduate.

Successful graduates can continue third-cycle studies, can undertake research work in various universities as well as non-university educational institutions, to carry out educational activities

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<sup>1</sup> During the interview with Social Partners, it was claimed that psychologists are currently needed in the military and nationally, the estimated national need was for 200 in sport, which includes the need for various sports clubs and wellness centres.

and to perform expert-advisory work in the field of *Sports Psychology*. Graduates who study for a specialised psychologist's qualification (Specification of psychologist's qualification and education, Minister for Education and Science Order No ĮSAK-1522 of 21 July 2005) can work as psychologists, and are thus qualified to work as psychologists in the field of sports. Otherwise, graduates with Master of *Sports Psychology* degree and qualification can work in public, private and public sports organizations as sports professionals with competences in the field of *Sports Psychology*.

Prospective jobs for *Sports Psychology* specialists are: teamwork with doctors, physical therapists and other professionals in the clinical environment with athletes, people with special needs involved and adapted physical activity programmes. The programme team presented a post-evaluation document containing the most recent employment data. From the respondent returns in 2013 (the second half-year of 2013 and the first quarter of 2014), employment levels appear quite buoyant. Graduates are successful as Sports Psychologists, that is as sport specialists with competences in sport psychology nationally, and overseas, and several hold important coaching positions in countries which include England, Scotland and New Zealand, including one who holds an important position in England. The journal *Coach* (2013, 3-4, p. 12-14) contains accounts of the career paths of several graduates, who are also social partners.

During the reference period collaboration with the psychologists of Lithuanian Olympic Committee was initiated. Social partners have disseminated their experience to the study programme students in the annual workshop; the LSU Sports Psychologists Social Networking Site was opened for the alumni to share their practical experience and application of *Sports Psychology* knowledge in professional practice in the form of open letters.

The Evaluation Team believes that until the specialist qualification issues receive due attention and support within the programme (*inter-alia* through collaboration with other university programmes and to the satisfaction of the university and the programme team) it may not achieve its fullest potential in respect of the student provision. However, the field currently does develop systematically and has distinctive features.

## **6. Programme management**

The Study Programme Committee, the faculty's study quality assurance committee headed by the Dean, the Centre for Academic Quality Supervision and the Senate have important roles in *Sports Psychology*, study programme management and decision making system. The *Sports Psychology* study programme committee is responsible for programme quality assurance and organizational activity.

The Study programme committee participates in the programme management in accordance with the regulations for the study programme committee: it analyses information about the study programme and progress of delivery and makes proposals for programme improvement and revision; at least once in three years, during the spring semester, present the self-evaluation of the study programme; contract the design of programme module/subject programmes and organise the evaluation and certification in accordance with the established procedures.

The faculty's study quality-assurance committee is a collegiate body that helps the Faculty Dean and the Centre for Academic Quality Supervision to implement LSU internal quality assurance system. The Committee is governed by the Regulations for the faculty's study quality-assurance committee. The Centre for Academic Quality Supervision has the following functions: study quality supervision, coordination of education process, accounting, development and revision of regulatory documents. The Senate approves the internal quality-assurance system and controls the implementation of the system.

The Dean of the Faculty of Biomedicine (Description of faculty dean's activities, Rector's Order No 58-K of 27 February 2012) and units reporting to the Dean and study programme committee are responsible for the delivery of the second-cycle study programme *Sports Psychology*. Committee members directly report to the programme director. (SER, p.26)

The University's internal quality-assurance system (key principles of quality assurance, quality supervision, information delivery to University community and the general public) is governed by Regulations for LSU study quality assurance.

The University develops and implements the internal quality assurance system in line with the basic principles set forth in the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area, among them making performance indicators and external evaluation outcomes public and ensuring that competences of HEI graduates meet the expectations of stakeholders. The University, through the website and other communication tools, provides information about the study programmes, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications the University awards, the research activities, the self-evaluation results, the opinion of students, graduates and other stakeholders about the quality of studies, the external evaluation results, the employment destinations of past students, and other information of interest to the general public.

Programme self-evaluation processes and outcomes are made public in accordance with the established procedures. According to the Procedure for analysing students' satisfaction with their programmes (Senate meeting Minutes No 8 of 31 May 2012) the student survey results must be presented to the relevant bodies and university community on an annual basis.

Before 1st February of each academic year, the Study Programme Committee analyses and evaluates study programme performance, which includes: compliance of programme teacher research subjects with the study programme field, graduates' employment results and employer feedback, competition of admission to the study programme and competition scores, qualification of study programme teachers, student-to-staff ratio, course materials, facilities and resources, student excellence and learning outcomes, student dropout rates and students' satisfaction with their programmes. The Study programme committee submits the programme delivery evaluation and recommendations for improvement to the Faculty's study quality supervision committee.

At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2013, the Centre for Academic Quality Supervision made a survey of Master students studying in the revised study programme. Students gave good and excellent rates to two modules and average rates to one module. A discussion took place with the teachers of the module with average evaluation rates to seek out means of improving the delivery of the module. (SER, p.28, 2.6)

The University develops and implements the internal quality-assurance system in line with the basic principles set forth in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, among them making performance indicators and external evaluation outcomes public and ensuring that competences of HEI graduates meet the expectations of stakeholders.

Quality assessment is the basis for quality improvement. Information about the quality of studies, obtained from various sources, allows the making of a comprehensive analysis of programme delivery and identifying ways for quality improvement.

During the visit, the University employees provided the Evaluation Team with the document *LSU Regulations for Study Quality Assurance*. As it is declared in the document, the regulations were prepared in line with the Republican law of Higher Education and Science, University Statute and The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG). The document states that the University seeks to promote and develop academic integrity, quality culture and appropriate conditions for students' self-development and the pursued qualification. Furthermore, in line with Standard 7 of the ESG, the University guarantees that information about study quality and measures to improve it will be always publicly available, as a responsibility to Lithuanian society and employers. Bold steps have been taken towards programme improvement.

In a wider educational context, the Lithuanian Sports University is well-developed in Third-age education. The University invites all 50 year olds and older persons to be students who want to contribute to this development and do so by acquiring new knowledge and skills in wellness and sports. In 2013-14, the intention was to admit 30 students, but the number of volunteers who entered studentship has been significantly higher than planned. There are now 144 students.

Beyond the above standard systems in operation, the Evaluation Team wondered about the future of the programme and what proactive measures are in place towards sustainability and strengthening of the programme. They also worried a little about the internal contentment within the programme team, though this might have been a feeling among the Evaluation Team as a product of the interviews, and may be unwarranted. While having no doubt about the preparation of the students, at least in relation to two in particular, who during interview were outstanding, the Evaluation Team did not feel wholly confident about the *status quo* believing that the full qualification for psychologists needs to be considered more systematically, in relation to the future objectives of the university and also the programme team and of these authorities in relation to the future labour market, which, subject to political influence and economic development, could possibly change. The Evaluation Team believes that with further strengthening through the possible support of other universities in Lithuania, the *Sports Psychology* programme could have a very bright future indeed as a unique and strengthened leader in the field. Taking the above into consideration, and with a view to change and external enhancement, the field of management currently meets the established minimum requirements.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Whilst acknowledging that the programme team duly state that the areas of Sports science, as well as the 'practical application of sports science is a multifaceted area', it nevertheless is recommended that the programme aim in relation to its application to the programme is revisited (See 2, 1, para.6) and to consider further enhancing the credit allocation to the applied psychology elements.
2. Intensify mobility and international activity where feasible.
3. Develop a stronger profile and presence for Behaviourism as a motive and culture across the whole programme.
4. In the current endeavour to diversify the research profile of teachers, attempt a more evenly balanced quantitative/qualitative approach. This also applies to the scope of students' theses topics.
5. Improve recruitment – through increased and robust marketing and refer to State Sports Departments, overseas universities, the Ministry and University administration for support towards development and change, and also the professional recruitment of psychologists.

6. Develop Entrepreneurship to a high degree and seek assistance from the business community in terms of input, strategy and output.
7. Further programme enhancement should be sought in terms of developing and granting a *Sports Psychology* qualification (practice).

#### IV. SUMMARY

The Evaluation Team were familiarized with the programme, its content, delivery methods and notes. The comprehensive analysis of *Sports Psychology* programme is in accordance with the requirements of The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. During interviews, the Evaluation Team obtained a positive opinion about staff involved in the preparation of analysis – that they are competent employees, who are well aware of their tasks. It is clear that the programme team had worked hard on development and Evaluation Team appreciated the work completed. Bold steps have been taken towards improving and updating the programme.

The aims of the programme and learning outcomes are provided in light of Lithuania's unique situation, its market needs, and in accordance with requirements of international organisations. Topics of mental health are of a very high relevance in Lithuanian context.

The needs for *Sports Psychology* were strongly indicated by Alumni and social partners in terms of requirement and estimated numbers needed.

The documents provided in support of the programme are sufficient, based on proper legislation of the Republic of Lithuania, orders of the Ministry of Education and Science, and other normative regulations. The competences of *Sports Psychology* Master are very wide, but they all can be applied in relevant contexts.

The design of the programme is broad, oriented for the education of full-scale specialists', who are able to think, analyse and create independently. They obtain necessary competences and are acquainted with research methods. Studies are concluded by the presentation of a Master thesis, the quality of which is in correspondence with requirements, and has a clear description of the work process, research methods and research process. The Evaluation Team found the theses to be well written in standard Lithuanian language, as well as includes an abstract in English.

The staff of the programme are well qualified and getting younger in terms of recruitment. Their competences related to research and subject matters are unquestionable. Lecturers actively take part in international exchange programmes, publish research, participate in projects as well as research programmes.

University facilities and learning resources are visibly improving. Sports' facilities are constantly renewed. A good library has been assembled and international databases are available. Facilities and equipment of scientific laboratories are being changed to accommodate university participation in scientific programmes, for which it receives substantial donations. It can be expected that the new direction of university activities – higher emphasis on science and research will improve study quality in the future.

The study process and its evaluation are described in detail and in a clear manner. Student motivational systems, available support and assistance to socially vulnerable students are clearly stated. It is obvious however that the number of students is decreasing and students' mobility is insufficient. Their resulting qualification is undetermined and needs the help a new focus group



to develop this important career arena. These circumstances limit the development of the programme.

Perhaps it is worth considering the expansion of the programme by possibly adding partners. That is, the programme could be improved in collaboration with other universities or by addressing governmental institutions with petitions for increased numbers of work places available to sports psychologists, because current vacancies are scant. Along with such initiatives, however, some thinking needs to take place about the future of the programme, its targeted recruitment and the strengthening of the programme in relation to the possible inclusion of other universities.

It is worth also looking into the possibility to increase the credits of *Sports Psychology* subjects in other programmes taught at the university, those involving education of physical education teachers and coaches. Preferably, the Evaluation Team would like to see the involvement of other universities and more psychologists.

The Evaluation Team concludes that the *Sports Psychology* study programme (state code - 621C67001) meets accreditation requirements though it has considerable potential for development intrinsically, nationally and internationally in terms of strength, standing and professional recognition.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Sports Psychology* (state code – 621C67001) at Lithuanian Sports University is given **positive** evaluation.

*Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment.*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Staff	3
4.	Material resources	3
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	2
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>16</b>

\*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

Grupės vadovas:  
Team Leader:

Prof. Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos

Grupės nariai:  
Team members:

Dr. Ando Pehme

Prof. Dr. Arnd Krüger

Prof. Dr. Gertrud Ursula Pfister

Prof. Dr. Algirdas Raslanas

Meda Keleckaitė

**LIETUVOS SPORTO UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ  
PROGRAMOS *SPORTO PSICHOLOGIJA* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621C67001) 2014-  
06-30 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-386 IŠRAŠAS**

&lt;...&gt;

**V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS**

Lietuvos sporto universiteto studijų programa *Sporto psichologija* (valstybinis kodas – 621C67001) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	2
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	<b>Iš viso:</b>	<b>16</b>

\* 1 - Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

3 - Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

&lt;...&gt;

**IV. SANTRAUKA**

Vertinimo grupė susipažino su programa, jos turiniu, programos dėstymo metodais, pateiktomis pastabomis. Išsami *Sporto psichologijos* programos analizė atitinka Studijų kokybės vertinimo centro reikalavimus. Per susitikimus vertinimo grupės nariai išgirdo teigiamų atsiliepimų apie savianalizės suvestinės rengimo grupės narius – jie yra kompetentingi darbuotojai, gerai suprantantys jiems pavestas užduotis. Akivaizdu, kad programą vykdytys darbuotojai labai stengiasi programą plėtoti ir tobulinti, tad ekspertų grupė teigiamai vertina jų atliktą darbą. Programos vykdytojai ėmėsi drąsių žingsnių tobulinti programą ir ją atnaujinti.

Programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai suformuluoti atsižvelgiant į unikalą Lietuvos situaciją, jos rinkos situaciją ir tarptautinių organizacijų reikalavimus. Su psichikos sveikata susijusios temos Lietuvoje yra ypač aktualios.

Būtinumą įgyvendinti *Sporto psichologijos* studijų programą ypač pabrėžė programos absolventai ir socialiniai partneriai, kurie nurodė programai keliamus reikalavimus ir apytikslį reikalingą programos studentų skaičių.

Parengti tinkami programą pagrindžiantys dokumentai; jie sudaryti vadovaujantis atitinkamais Lietuvos Respublikos teisės aktais, Švietimo ir mokslo ministerijos įsakymais ir kitais norminiais dokumentais. *Sporto psichologijos* magistro laipsnį įgijusio specialisto kompetencijos yra labai plačios, tačiau jos visos gali būti pritaikomos atitinkamose srityse.

Programa yra plataus profilio, skirta rengti įvairiapusių specialistus, gebančius savarankiškai mąstyti, analizuoti ir kurti. Programos absolventai įgyja reikalingas kompetencijas ir susipažįsta su taikomais mokslo tyrimo metodais. Studijos baigiamos studentui parengus magistro laipsnio baigiamąjį darbą, kurio kokybė atitinka taikomus reikalavimus; baigiamajame darbe pateikiamas aiškus viso darbo proceso aprašymas, taikyti tyrimų metodai ir atlikto mokslo tiriamojo darbo eiga. Vertinimo grupė turėjo progos įsitikinti, kad studentų baigiamieji darbai parengti kokybiškai, taisyklinga lietuvių kalba, pridėta santrauka anglų kalba.

Programoje dirbantys pedagogai yra aukštos kvalifikacijos, pastaruoju metu naujai priimamų dėstytojų amžiaus vidurkis mažėja. Jų su dalyku ir mokslo tiriamuoju darbu susijusi kompetencija jokių abejonių nekelia.

Dėstytojai aktyviai dalyvauja tarptautinėse mainų programose, skelbia savo mokslinius darbus, dalyvauja įgyvendinant projektus ir mokslinių tyrimų programose.

University facilities and learning resources are visibly improving Universiteto materialieji ir realieji ištekliai akivaizdžiai gerėja. Sporto bazė yra nuolat atnaujinama. Universiteto bibliotekoje sukaupta pakankamai reikalingos literatūros, yra prieiga prie tarptautinių duomenų bazių. Mokslo laboratorijų įranga ir įrenginiai yra keičiami naujais ir reikalingais mokslo programoms, kuriose dalyvaujantis universitetas gauna nemažas subsidijas, Galima tikėtis, kad universitetui pasirinkus naują veiklos kryptį – daugiau dėmesio skiriant mokslo ir tiriamajai veiklai – ateityje pagerės ir studijų kokybė.

Studijų procesas ir jo vertinimas aprašyti detalai ir aiškiai. Aiškiai aprašytos studentų skatinimo sistemos, socialiai pažeidžiamiems studentams teikiama pagalba ir parama. Vis dėlto, akivaizdu, kad studentų skaičius mažėja, o jų judumas – nepakankamas. Todėl suteikiama kvalifikacija nėra visiškai aiškiai apibrėžta; programoje daugiau dėmesio reikėtų skirti naujam tikslinei grupei ir toliau plėtoti šią svarbią karjeros sritį. Šios aplinkybės riboja tolesnę programos plėtrą.

Tikriausiai verta būtų apsvarstyti galimybę programą plėsti pritraukiant naujus partnerius. Ekspertų grupės nuomone, programa galėtų būti patobulinta bendradarbiaujant su kitais universitetais, arba kreipiantis į vyriausybės institucijas su prašymu padidinti sporto psichologams skirtų darbo vietų skaičių, kadangi kol kas jų nėra pakankamai. Reikėtų pagalvoti ne tik apie šias iniciatyvas, bet ir apie programos ateitį, ypač apie tikslingą darbuotojų priėmimo tvarką, ir galimybes sustiprinti programą glaudžiau bendradarbiaujant su kitais universitetais.

Taip pat reikėtų pagalvoti galimybę padidinti *Sporto psichologijos* dalyko kreditų skaičių kitose universitete dėstomose programose, pagal kurias rengiami kūno kultūros mokytojai ir treneriai. Vertinimo grupės nuomone, priimtinesnis sprendimas būtų labiau į veiklą įtraukti kitus universitetus ir padidinti psichologų skaičių.

Vertinimo grupės išvada – *Sporto psichologijos* studijų programa (valstybinis kodas – 621C67001) akreditavimo reikalavimus atitinka, tačiau dar turi didžiulį vidinio tobulėjimo potencialą, galimybes pristatyti savo stipriąsias puses, didinti žinomumą ir profesinį pripažinimą šalies ir tarptautiniu mastu.

### III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Pripažindama, kad programą įgyvendinantys dėstytojai yra teisūs teigdami, kad ir sporto mokslo sritys, ir „praktinis sporto mokslo taikymas yra įvairialypė sritis“, ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja persvarstyti programos tikslą jo praktinio taikymo požiūriu (žr. 2 skyriaus 1 dalies 6 punktą), ir apsvarstyti galimybę daugiau kreditų skirti taikomosios psichologijos dalykams.
2. Kur įmanoma, būtina skatinti judumą ir veiklą tarptautiniu mastu.
3. Daugiau dėmesio ir laiko skirti biheiviorizmo dalykams, kurie turėtų tapti visos programos motyvacijos elementu ir kultūra.
4. Šiuo metu siekdamas diversifikuoti pedagoginio personalo mokslo tiriamosios veiklos pobūdį, universitetas turėtų geriau subalansuoti taikomas kiekybines ir kokybines strategijas. Tas pats pasakytina apie studentų baigiamųjų darbų temas.
5. Tobulinti darbuotojų priėmimo į darbą tvarką; tam būtina platesniu mastu ir veiksmingiau vykdyti rinkodaros veiklą, universitetas galėtų kreiptis į valstybinius sporto departamentus, užsienio universitetus, Ministeriją ir savo administracijos darbuotojus dėl pagalbos užtikrinant institucijos plėtrą ir įgyvendinant pokyčius; taip pat būtų naudinga priimti profesionalių psichologų.
6. Platesniu mastu ugdyti verslumo įgūdžius, kreiptis pagalbos į verslo bendruomenę, kuri galėtų prisidėti studijoms reikalingais ištekliais, formuojant strategiją ir siekiant rezultatų.
7. Programa turėtų būti toliau plėtojama, studentams suteikiant *sporto psichologo* (praktiko) kvalifikaciją.

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Paslaugos teikėja patvirtina, jog yra susipažinusi su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso<sup>2</sup> 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)

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<sup>2</sup> Žin., 2002, Nr.37-1341.