VILNIAUS KOLEGIJOS

PRADINIO UGDYMO PEDAGOGIKOS PROGRAMOS (653X12003, 65307S107)

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EVALUATION REPORT

OF *SOCIAL PEDAGOGY* (653X12003, 65307S107)

STUDY PROGRAMME

at VILNIUS COLLEGE

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Vilnius
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Basic Data of Study Programme

Title of Study Programme	Pedagogy of Primary Education
State Code	65307S107
Type of Study Programme	College studies
Study Cycle	The first
Mode of Study, (duration in years)	Permanent (4), extended (4)
Volume of Study Programme in Credits	160
Final Degree and/or Professional Qualification to be awarded	Professional Bachelor of Education Studies, teacher
Programme Registration Date, Order No.	2002-08-26

Additional data on the study programme

Beginning of implementation	01/09/2005
Language of implementation	English
Peculiarities of conducting the study programme	Joint study programme
Institutions (countries) implementing the study programme	Avelino University (Italy), Balaton University (Hungary), Nemunas Region University (Lithuania)

*Special features of conducting the study programme are indicated

A. Introduction

The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area sets out the following standard:

> **Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities. (ESG: Part 1: 1.6 Information systems)**

In accordance with the Lithuanian law on Higher Education and Research, dated 30 April 2009 (No XI-242), and in compliance with Order No. 1-94 of 30 October 2009, an External Evaluation Team (EET) appointed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education has conducted an Evaluation of the study programme in the Pedagogy of Primary Education (state code 65307S107) which is offered by Vilnius College.

In conducting their evaluation of the Study Programme, the EET have applied the methodological guidelines developed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education to implement the provisions of Order No. ISAK-1652 of 24 July 2009 of the Minister of Education and Science "On the approval of the description of the procedure for the external assessment and accreditation of study programmes" (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 96-4083), following the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 54-2140).

The programme in the Pedagogy of Primary Education (state code 65307S107) is a College-level programme which is offered by the Pedagogical Faculty of Vilnius College**.** This is one of six related study programmes including studies in Pre-school Education, Primary Education Pedagogy, Social Pedagogy, the Pedagogy of Arts and Technology, the Pedagogy of the Lithuanian Language and Literature, and Sign Language. Collectively, these various programmes produce "educators, teachers, social pedagogues and sign language interpreters". Similar Primary Education Pedagogy study programmes are offered by Marijampole, Panevezys, and Klaipeda colleges. In all cases, the study length and formats of these programmes are the same as those of the study programme at Vilnius College.

According to its website (http://www.viko.lt/en), Vilnius College of Higher Education is the largest college in Lithuania with over 10,000 students, who study at the College under 42 study programmes in eight faculties: Electronics and Informatics, Economics, Business Management, Health Care, Pedagogics, Design and Technology, Art and Agrotechnologies. There are now three departments (a reduction of one from 2008) in the Faculty of Pedagogics, these being the Department of Psychology and Education (8), the Department of Philology (0) and the Department of Education Technologies (4). (The numbers in brackets relates to the number of members of each of these Departments who attended the briefing meeting with EET in the course of the field visit).

The External Assessment was conducted in the period September 2010 through to April 2011 with in country evaluation taking place during the period 20 November to 1 November 2010. The Evaluation included a two-day field visit to Vilnius College on 25/26 November 2010.

The SAR presented by VIKO is dated 2010 and the Introduction to the document seems to indicate that the SAG was established under an order of January 4, 2010. While the SAR states that the SAG was composed of administrative staff, lecturers from the faculty, social partners and students of the faculty, there is no statement as to how often the SAG met nor is there any indication of how it went about its work. It quickly became clear to EET that the SAR had been written in accordance with the older guidelines of 2008 and not in accordance with the official 2009 guidelines of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (Lithuania) which EET was expected to apply. Initially, it was difficult for EET to understand why the prescribed model was not followed.

From the EET's discussions, it became clear that a delay in processing the SAR had created significant difficulties for the evaluation process. The failure to present information in accordance with the 2009 guidelines made the task of the EET extremely difficult. In particular, the fact that the structure of the SAR did not follow the structure proposed in the new guidelines made it difficult for the EET to find relevant information and, in many instances, the information sought was not presented at all or else was not presented in the manner required. As a consequence, the EET expressed its concerns to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education about the legitimacy of applying 2009 standards to a 2008 SAR.

When the EET convened in Vilnius in November 2010, it was clear that it would be impossible to evaluate the programme at VIKO using the 2009 guidelines, due to the absence of necessary information in the SAR. If the EET were forced to make a judgement at the time, this judgement would, of necessity, have had to be negative, due to the absence of specific responses to issues raised in the official guidelines being followed by EET. As a compromise, the EET agreed with the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education that it should proceed with the field visits and that the Centre should invite the various institutions to rewrite their SARs in accordance with the official 2009 guidelines. EET then assisted the Centre in devising a template for the institutions, so that they could supply the additional information which EET required in a well-structured manner. This template was completed by VIKO by the end of January 2011. The EET appreciates that this has generated additional work for the College and expresses its appreciation to the staff of the College on this account. The EET then reviewed and analysed this material and has incorporated its key points in this report. On the basis of the totality of information supplied, the EET has made its recommendations in relation to the study programme to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

This report does not paraphrase or re-present the range of information presented in the Self-Assessment Report (hereafter SAR). Instead, it focuses on issues raised in the Self-Assessment Report and in the Addendum to the SAR (hereafter ASAR) which was received in February 2011, as well as raising some issues not addressed in the SAR but which came to the attention of the EET during the course of the Team's time in Lithuania, and, specifically, during the course of the field visit.

In addition to its examination of the SAR, the EET collected information, data and evidence on which to base its conclusions in the course of the field visit through meetings and other means:

> Meeting with administrative staff of VIKO and the Pedagogical Faculty
> Meeting with the staff responsible for the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report

Meeting with teaching staff
Meeting with students
Meeting with graduates
Meeting with employers of those who have graduated from the programme
Visiting and observing various support services (classrooms, library,computer services, staff developments, laboratories, etc.)
Examination and familiarization with students' final works, examination material.

After an introductory meeting with the senior administrative staff, there was a meeting with the group responsible for the preparation of the SAR and afterwards with the teaching staff and the students. EET notes that the group responsible for writing up the SAR included neither a Dean nor an Assistant Dean. While EET was assured that support had indeed been given by the Vice Dean, and while EET notes that the SAG included two Heads of Department, it feels that leadership on programme reviews should include senior academic members of faculty. EET also had some concern at the fact that only a single internal member of the SAG (excluding the social partner who is Director of a primary school) is qualified as a primary teacher.

In the afternoon the experts visited the various support centres – classrooms, the library, computer services, and the resource centre. They got acquainted with the students' final works and examination material. The EET notes that in its meeting with the students, there were no students present from either the first or third years of the programme, while there were five students from both the second and fourth years (as well as two incoming Erasmus students from Latvia).

EET was also provided with the opportunity to talk with the employers. At the end of the field visit, the initial impressions of the team were conveyed to the teaching staff of the programme.

We would like to express our appreciation to the authorities of VIKO for the manner in which we were made welcome and for the manner in which our queries and our exploration of various key issues were addressed in a professional and positive way by those with whom we came in contact at the College, as well as subsequently in the ASAR.

The EET would like to pay tribute to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education in Lithuania and, most especially to the Director of the Centre and to the Deputy Head of the Quality Assessment Division, for the support given to EET before and throughout the visit to Lithuania.

B. Programme Analysis

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

As noted above "The SAR does not follow the structure set down in the approved guidelines as promulgated in 2009". **Table 1** (below) clearly sets out the sub-areas, the criteria and the indicators that need to be covered as part of the assessment. It seemed reasonable for the EET to assume that these were the areas which should be addressed in the SAR. In turn, the Assessment Form used by the evaluators clearly shows the grades that are to be awarded to the various criteria under the heading of "Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes".

For clarity in relation to the comments which follow, that portion of the evaluative tool which is to be used by the EET in regard to "Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes" is reproduced here.

Table 1: Element of Evaluation Toll abstracted from Official Guidelines

Sub-areas	Criteria	Indicators
1. Programme aims and learning outcomes		
1.1. Programme demand, purpose and aims	1.1.1. Uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme	o Demand for the specialists in the labour market o Demand for the programme among applicants o The position of the programme among other study programmes
	1.1.2. Conformity of the programme purpose with the institutional, state and international directives	o Correlation of programme purpose with the mission and the development strategy of a higher education institution o Purpose of the programmes intended for acquiring regulated professions
	1.1.3. Relevance of the programme aims	o Correlation of the aims with the purpose of the programme o Compliance of the aims with the type and the cycle of the studies
1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme	1.2.1. The comprehensibility and attainability of the learning outcomes	o Content of learning outcomes o Level of complexity of the learning outcomes
	1.2.2. Consistency of the learning outcomes	o Learning outcomes at the programme level o Correlation of learning outcomes of the programme with those of the subject level.
	1.2.3. Transformation of the learning outcomes	o Continuous assessment of learning outcomes o Reasonable renewal of learning outcomes

Although there are some discrepancies between the Table of Contents of the SAR initially provided by Vilnius College and what is actually contained in the SAR, the text of the SAR provided by Vilnius College is structured under the following headings:

1. Introduction
3. Programme Analysis
2.2 Programme Structure
        2.2.1. Study plan
        2.2.2 Study content
2.3 Academic Staff
        2.3.1 Staff composition and turnover

This form of presentation posed a serious problem of evaluation for the EET, as the areas, which ought to be addressed ("Aims" and "Learning Outcomes"), were not explicitly set out and had to be sought out in the text. (In fact, the word "aim" is to be found only once in the entire SAR text, where there is a reference to the extent to which the Primary Education Teacher Training Programme "seeks the aim and general objectives of the Vilnius College". The phrase "learning outcomes" is used just twice in the text, (firstly on Page 23 and again on Page 25).

It subsequently (in the course of the field visit) was established that the SAR submitted through the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education was an earlier draft and an updated SAR was then provided.

While limited reference is made to **aims** and outcomes, other synonyms, such as goals and purposes are used at some points in the SAR. For example, the **purpose** of the programme is very clearly set out in Section 3 of the SAR (Programme Analysis) which contains the statement that

> The purpose of the Primary Education Pedagogy study programme is to train a primary school teacher, capable of skilled work to organize the work in the classroom and informal education, to assess learners' progress, to communicate and collaborate with the child, family, other educators and various institutions; to improve and change.

Curiously, in November 2010, on the College website, a somewhat different purpose was set out in terms of the competencies of a graduate which are listed there as

> Cognize the child, its needs and be able to satisfy them;
> Cognize specific child's developmental peculiarities in the process of education;
> Create favourable conditions for the child to intercept general human values;
> Convey educational content of primary school, model it creatively;
> Use principles of pedagogical interaction in educational process;
> Cognize the family of the child and render pedagogical-psychological support to the family;
> Develop oneself creatively reacting to the changes of the modern world

The ASAR (Section 1.1.2.2) gives the purpose as follows:

> The purpose for the Pedagogy of Primary Education Programme is to educate graduates to be competent primary education teachers intended in professional and personal development. Our programme's educational goals are to develop competencies in the following areas of professional activities: understanding pupil's individuality, education content and process management, communication and cooperation, and professional development.

A later and somewhat different purpose is given in ASAR at Section 1.1.3.1.

As clarity of purpose is essential, the EET recommends that the Faculty revisit the overall purpose of this programme.

Elsewhere, in Section 3 of the SAR, there is a statement that

> the goals of the programme subjects are formulated in accordance with the study programme goals. Striving for the implementation of the study goals there have been selected the particular study methods assisting students in their search of general and special knowledge and skills.

However, as pointed out already, there is no elaboration on these goals within the SAR and no further attempt to illustrate any the match between programme goals and those of the study subjects has been attained.

Under the Guidelines provided to the EET, the assessment tool in regard to the relevance of programme aims specifies that this aspect "shall be assessed by determining the extent to which self-evaluation report specifies the purpose" and that "the aims disclosed in the self-analysis report shall be analysed for their compliance with the requirements for college or university studies" (Source: Guidelines, Section 172.1).

1.1. Programme demand, purpose and aims

In relation to **programme demand**, Section 3 of the SAR (Programme Analysis) states that: "the demand for the Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy study programme in Lithuania is based on the European Union and national priorities". Whereas the programme may be in line with the needs of the European Union and the Lithuanian state, it seems strange to suggest that they have demanded this programme. This section goes on to involve other international actors:

> The Primary Education Teacher Training Programme responds to the wishes of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (1986), the United Nations Copenhagen Declaration for Social Development (1995), Bologna Declaration (1999), the basic regulations of the Memorandum for life-long learning, the State Education Strategy in 2003 – 2012 guidelines and social development challenges.

These statements may have been inserted due to a misunderstanding of what the word "demand" means and seeks to establish – in the first instance, what demand exists locally, regionally and nationally, for such a programme. No data is presented here on this matter. (Cf. Also Section 2.1.1.1.2 below).

A small insight into demand may be obtained from data in relation to demand for the programme branches. Section 3 (Programme Analysis) contains the statement that whereas,

in 2007, the Foreign (English) language branch of study was chosen by 34% of students with 66% opting for pre-school pedagogy, just one year later (2008) all students opted for the latter.

On the occasion of the visit of the EET to Vilnius College, the question of why so many students abandoned the study of the Foreign (English) language branch of study in 2008 was raised. Staff explained that the pre-school pedagogy option gave greater opportunities for employment (while a staff member in the language branch had also suffered from health problems). This issue will be further addressed below in the section (5.5.1.2) relating to graduate employment which makes it clear that very many Primary Pedagogy study programme graduates are employed as pre-primary education pedagogues in Vilnius kindergartens.

The Programme Analysis section of the SAR states that "Graduates who have completed these courses and have acquired professional bachelor's degree and teacher qualification can work in state, municipal and non-state general education schools, in the main, primary schools and kindergarten schools, as primary school and pre-school teachers".

However, the website of Vilnius College (http://www.viko.lt/uploads/files/Programs-EN/PU_prog.pdf, accessed on 21 November 2010 and again on 22 April 2011) gives the "placement possibilities" for graduates of this study programme as

> In all types of primary schools teacher.
> In addition work according to
> > the chosen specialization:
> > in pre-primary group or class;
> > as English or German teacher in primary schools;
> as speech therapist in a primary school.

There are some significant differences here which have relevance both in relation to the standing of the qualification and to the issues of programme demand, purpose and aims. (The issues which arise will be discussed later in Section 2.1.1.2.2 below). The EET also had particular concerns at the possibility that primary teachers could be considered to be qualified to function as speech therapists.

During the course of the evaluation visit, the EET had the opportunity to raise this matter with personnel in the College. Staff explained that the website was misleading on this matter and that primary teachers could not be considered to have qualified as speech therapists. Staff also noted that the three branches which had been available to the current third years and fourth years were no longer available and there were now only two branches of the study available. (See also Section 1.1.2.2 below). A commitment was given that the website would be corrected on these various items.

EET notes that the website had not been updated on this matter by 22 April 2011.

1.1.1 Uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme

In relation to the uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme, this issue has not been specifically addressed in the SAR. The SAR does contain statements such as:

The Primary Education Teacher Training Programme is tailored to the dynamic development of society and the new challenging trends: in the knowledge society, the human resources change, the nation demographic structure changes. (Section 3: Programme Analysis).

The ASAR did not specifically include any text under the headings of 1.1 (Programme demand, purpose and aims) or under the heading of 1.1.1 (Uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme).

1.1.1.1. Demand for specialists in the labour market

The SAR states that the study programme in question "responds to the major market, regional and student demands". However, the SAR offers no specific evidence, data or references to substantiate this claim. It addresses the demand for specialists in the labour market by reference to two 2001 surveys on which the introduction of the programme was based and on the claim that VIKO is best placed to meet the needs of Vilnius and the south-eastern region in respect of primary teachers. While there are references to periodically-conducted studies and surveys to help analyze the competitive environment, including changes in the labour market, no more up-to-date material is provided in relation to the needs of the market. (A 2009 survey of school administrators and teachers in regard to the relative demand for VIKO graduates of this programme is referenced).

ASAF goes on to summarise a 2006 survey which predicts that "beginning in 2014, it is foreseen that there will be a growth and demand for specialist in primary education". As a consequence of this survey, the ASAF reports that

> Under development is a competitive, three year study programme in Pedagogy of Primary Education which is developed from recommendations by social partners and the regulations of Bologna Process.

1.1.1.2 Demand for the programme among applicants

In relation to the demand for the programme among applicants, Section 3 of the SAR (Programme Analysis) acknowledges that over the past five years there has been decreasing demand for places on the programme when overall course preferences are taken into account. There is a statement in regard to first preferences which needs further clarification:

> Comparing the competitive score on the first request of 2005 and 2009 (respectively 0.84, 0.32, 0.35, 0.53, 0.70) there is seen a slightly changing factor. Over the past five years, according to all the wishes there is a general decline in contest; fewer students are admitted.

Table 1 of the ASAR shows that, in the period 2006-2010, the level of demand for VIKO's programme in the Pedagogy of Primary Teaching has been dropping significantly (as has the number of applicants being accepted) whereas the demand for places on the programme in social pedagogy is considerably stronger. ASAF acknowledges that

> In 2006, 2007, and 2010, there was nearly double the number of applicants in the Social Pedagogy Programme than the Pedagogy of Primary Education Programme, and almost three times more in 2008.

1.1.1.3. Position of the programme among other study programmes

In this regard, the SAR notes that similar programmes, of similar duration, are offered by Marijampole, Panevezys, and Klaipeda colleges but, while minor differences are noted, there is no analysis of the comparative strengths of this programme.

The ASAF does identify one strength of this study programme, in respect of the availability of an option in pre-primary education (but the text goes on to praise an option available within the Social Peadagogy Programme). A second strength relates to the position of Vilnius as the most highly ranked of the State colleges (and second overall among State and private colleges).

1.1.2 Conformity of the programme purpose with the institutional, state and international directives

On this issue, the SAR gives a list of legal documents which it states that the programme is based upon. These various legal instruments both regulate the field of study and define the qualifications that may be awarded. The list given in the SAR includes:

> The General Regulations of General education schools;
> The Common pre-school and educational programme, SAC, 2003;
> Republic of Lithuania Law on Higher Education, Official Gazette., 2000, No. 27-715;
> Lithuanian concept of Education, Official Gazette. 2000, No.VIII-1586;
> The Ministry of Education and Science Minister's Order No. ISAK-1551 of 2005 on "The general requirements for training programs;
> Teacher's professional competence description, 2007;
> Regulations of major specialized professional and integrated curriculum, 2005;
> Regulations of teacher training and qualification requirements, Official Gazette., 1995, No.28;
> Primary school teacher training standard, 2001;
> Standard of primary school education pedagogue training, 2008;
> Teacher Training Regulation, 2006;
> The general programmes of primary and basic education, 2008;
> Regulations of the sequential curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education and Science; Official Gazette., 2000, No-1326;
> Regulations Project on Ethnic Minority Education Development, 2001;
> Convention on the Rights of the Child, Ministry of Law, 1995, No. I-983rd

There is no reference to compliance with the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 54-2140) or to compliance with the provisions of Order No. ISAK-1652 of 24 July 2009 of the Minister of Education and Science "On the approval of the description of the procedure for the external assessment and accreditation of study programmes" (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 96-4083).

There is no description of how the study programme in question met the various requirements, particularly those which have been modified or introduced since the programme was first launched. This would seem to be important in the light of the concluding statement in the SAR's Introduction which says that "the Primary School Pedagogy study programme has not been assessed yet". The ASAF contains a similar list, but again does not add any indication of the specific requirements which are met.

1.1.2.1 Correlation of programme purpose with the mission and the development strategy of a higher education institution

The SAR contains a number of statements such as that "The Primary Education Teacher Training Programme is topical for Vilnius College" and that "the programme is needed as a natural continuation of the Pedagogical Faculty development", but the correlation of programme purpose with the mission and the development strategy of the institution is not otherwise developed.

ASAR gives a considerably longer response on this issue, but while it does indeed identify both the mission of the institution and set out the goals of its Strategic Plan, very little of the response actually addresses the question of the correlation of programme purpose with the mission and the development strategy of a higher education institution. Indeed the key sentence refers to "our programmes of Pedagogy of Primary Education and Social Pedagogy" rather than specifically to the programme currently being evaluated.

1.1.2.2 Purpose of the programmes intended for acquiring regulated professions

Section 3 of the SAR states that "the Permanent training programme plan offers two degree programme branches: Pre-school pedagogy and foreign (English) language pedagogy." This statement is repeated elsewhere where we are told that "there are added for teaching the study programme branches subjects: students can choose either *Preschool Education Pedagogy* or *Foreign Language (English) Pedagogy*." (Section 3: Programme Analysis). It is also noted here that the extended curriculum does not include these programme branches. (Note also comments made at Section 1.1 above).

However, the College Website clearly indicates that there are now (November 2010 and April 2011) **three** specialisations available within this programme, listing them as

> pre-primary education pedagogy (for 5-6 year-old children);
> pedagogy of educating children with special needs;
> foreign language (English, German) pedagogy;

Furthermore, the website states that graduates of this programme may work according to the chosen specialization in any of these settings:

> in pre-primary group or class;
> as English or German teacher in primary schools;
> as speech therapist in a primary school

This is reinforced by the listing of the content of each specialisation on the website.

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Specialization subjects:		
Pre-primary education pedagogy	*Education of children with special needs:*	*Foreign language (English or German) pedagogy*
Knowledge and education of a 5 year old child; Integrated education; Theory of play and its application; Principles of multicultural education; Principles of pedagogical–psychological and social support to the family and the child	Principles of speech therapy; Differentiation and individualization of education; Pedagogy of disturbed intellect; Interaction of school and family; Principles of kinetic therapeutics	Foreign language practicing; Foreign language grammar; Foreign language vocabulary; Knowledge of the country

The inconsistencies between the website and the SAR were drawn to the attention of staff in the course of the field visit. They noted that the choices which had been available to the current third and fourth year students were no longer on offer and that now only two branches remained in place. A commitment was given that the website would be updated. As noted above, this has yet to happen (22 April 2011).

The introduction of programme branches which are then purported to grant professional accreditation is a matter of deep concern. Firstly, locating the pedagogy of educating children with special needs as a specialist branch raises the issue of whether all primary teachers should not have this specialisation as all will have children with special needs in their classrooms. It is for the Lithuanian authorities to legislate on the qualification which is required for one to become a dedicated Special Needs Teacher. The concern from a European perspective is that someone who has studied this field as a minor specialisation may subsequently seek recognition as a Special Needs Teacher in another country of the European Union.

Equally, if not more worrying, is the inclusion as a branch on the primary teaching programme of Speech Therapy. Again, there is a clear assumption that adequate preparation can be made for this field as an add-on to qualification as a primary teacher. In other European countries, the specialist nature of this field requires a separate professional qualification, not one that can be gained as an aside on a primary teaching programme. European mobility requires that similar standards should apply in Lithuania as apply elsewhere in the Union.

In discussion with staff during the field visit, staff acknowledged that whereas teachers in small schools may need to help children who have speech problems and, consequently, should be aware of speech difficulties, it should not be suggested that teachers were qualified in this area.

If the inclusion of additional branches such as have been identified here represent a desire on the part of the authorities in the Faculty of Pedagogy to extend the range of their professional programmes, EET suggests that this be done in a fully professional manner by seeking full programme approval for any such programmes.

1.1.3 Relevance of the programme aims

The ASAR does not specifically address this heading.

1.1.3.1 Correlation of the aims with the purpose of the programme

In regard to the relevance of the programme aims and, specifically, in regard to the correlation of the aims with the purpose of the programme, the earlier comments in regard to the lack of clarity in relation to the purpose of this programme become very relevant here. The purpose set out in this section of ASAR is worded differently to the statements of purpose set out in Section 1 above. Here ASAR gives the purpose as

> Study programme of Pedagogy of Primary Education is aimed to educate students to become competent, aspiring primary school teachers. This purpose is implemented in the Pedagogy of Primary Education programme by developing students' competences necessary for these areas of professional activities: knowledge and acceptance of a pupil's individuality, management of educational process and content, communication and cooperation, professional development.

ASAR states that the aim of the study programmes is formulated in accordance with the appropriate 2008 Regulations. It then presents the following table.

Table 2: Correlation between Pedagogy of Primary Education Study Programmes' Aims and Purpose

Aspect of the Study Programme Purpose	Competence	Study Programme Aim	Course Name	Learning Outcomes within Course
The Knowledge and Acceptance of Pupil's Individuality	To Create Favourable Conditions For a Child to Fully Develop and to Reveal Her/His own Individuality	To Create Favourable Learning Environment for a Child to Better Know, Investigate, and Discover the World	Didactics	The Problems of Educational Environment are Recognized, Various Aspects of These Problems are Analysed, Possible Ways to Problem Solve are Determined The Project of Creation of Favourable Learning Environment in Primary Classroom Setting is Created, Substantiated, and Presented.
			Art, Technologies and their Teaching	The Means for Positive Emotional Environment for a Child is Created A Student Participation in Educational Projects; An Organized Excursion to Ethno-Cultural or Folk Art Museum, or to Art Studio
			World Cognition and its Teaching	Changes in People's Way of Life Through History Are Described Projects are Created About the Adaptation of Singular Flora/Fauna From Different Ecological Systems in Their Living Environment and Their Protection; Non-Organic Nature Observed and Changes Compared

Regardless of the confusion with regard to the precise language in which the purpose of this programme is stated, it seems extraordinary that the complexity and diversity of the learning of a primary teacher should be presented in a table which records only a single "Aspect", a single "Competence" and a single "Study Programme Aim" in response to the question of identifying the correlation between Pedagogy of Primary Education Study Programmes' Aims and Purpose.

EET fails to see how the Table presented in this section addresses this correlation.

1.1.3.2 Compliance of the aims with the type and the cycle of the studies

There was no reference to compliance of this type in the SAR. Consequently, it was impossible to draw any conclusions on this matter based on the evidence of the SAR.

The SAR (Section 2.1.2) states that the Primary Education Pedagogy study programme presented for self-assessment is prepared and approved in 2002; improved in accordance with the MES Order No ISAK-1551of July 22, 2005 "On the general requirements for study programmes". It meets the regulation of the study area, identifying which knowledge, abilities and skills must be acquired while studying, and the description of teacher's professional competence. This study programme focuses on professional competencies formulated by the primary school teacher training standard.

The ASAR similarly asserts that the programme meets the regulatory requirements in respect of the purpose and aims of the programme.

> The purpose and the aims of the study programmes are regulated by Social Pedagogue Training Standard and the Training Standard for A Primary Education Teacher (confirmed by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania and Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania Order No. ISAK-1872/A1-209, 06/26/2008). These documents define the overall training requirements for college studies, which offer professional bachelor's degree.

Neither SAR nor ASAR offer any more detailed analysis of how the aims comply with the type or cycle of study.

1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme

The phrase "learning outcome(s)" occurs only twice in the SAR. Section 2.6.2 of the SAR notes that

> The definition of learning outcomes (emphasizing what students should be able to fulfil at the end of the studies module or after the qualification acquisition) ensures the consistency of teaching, the curriculum adjustment and the ability for the course developers to determine the exact course objectives, the course programme elements necessity and the ways how to use the learning process and highlight the important link between teaching, learning and assessment (criteria and evaluation) to help students acquire the necessary expertise, to promote the evaluation analysis and more effective, broader assessment development.

Neither in this Section nor elsewhere does the SAR give any detail on the learning outcomes of this study programme.

The ASAR, in a later section (Section 1.2.3.1) that in the autumn of 2009, new methodological requirements for the creation and improvement of study programmes were issued (approved by order No. 1-94 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 30 October 2009 "On Approving the Description of a Executing Study Program Assessment Process and Methodological Guidance"). ASAR also notes that since the beginning of 2010, the new methodological requirements were adopted into the study programmes at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Vilnius College.

1.2.1 The comprehensibility and attainability of the learning outcomes

Neither the SAR nor the ASAR specifically address this particular heading.

1.2.1.1 Content of learning outcomes

With the exception of the above statement on the definition and importance of learning outcomes, the SAR does not make any comment on the content of the learning outcomes of this programme.

The ASAR presents a listing of learning outcomes (in Annex 1). Under the heading of the "Content of learning outcomes", ASAR includes this general statement:

> The learning outcomes of the analysed curricula have been identified in accordance with training standards that denote the main areas of activity, competences to be achieved, and goals of studies. The learning outcomes include the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for forming professional competencies applicable in various fields.

ASAR goes on to state that "the direct connections between the aims of the programmes and learning outcomes are demonstrated in 1.1.3.1 Section tables". Please note comments made in Section 1.1.3.1 above in this regard.

1.2.1.2 Level of complexity of the learning outcomes

The SAR makes no comment on this matter. The comment contained at this section in the ASAR is extremely generic and does not offer any evidence in regard to the level of complexity of the learning outcomes on this particular programme. The statement says:

> The learning outcomes are designed in order for the students to perform effectively in their future professions. Learning outcomes are oriented towards professional bachelor level of studies in the field of educology. During three years of studies of social pedagogy and four years of studies of Pedagogy of Primary Education, students acquire the competencies required for future professional activities (in accordance with the Bologna process documents, the studies of Pedagogy of Primary Education can be intensified and shortened up to 3 years).

1.2.2 Consistency of the learning outcomes

This particular heading is not addressed either in the SAR or in the ASAR.

1.2.2.1 Learning outcomes at the programme level

The SAR does not seem to address this item. ASAR, in Section 1.2.2.1, details the learning outcomes (A full list is presented in Appendix 2) of the Pedagogy of Primary Education programme, identifying them as:

- knowledge and acknowledgement of pupil's personality,
- ability to recognize and fulfil basic and special needs of a child,
- awareness of a child's socialization; its positive results and possible problems;
- knowledge of what constitute a safe environment for a child and the ability to create it;
- knowledge of pre-school children's needs and the ability to fulfil them;
- knowledge of teaching content in primary school and the ability to model it;
- ability to plan and organize the teaching process;
- ability to evaluate the achievements and progress of a child as the result of the education; the
- knowledge of specificity of primary school activities and the ability to foresee possibilities for improvement;
- knowledge of children's rights and ability to preserve them;
- knowledge of pedagogical interaction, and its organization and evaluation;
- ability to constructively communicate and cooperate with a pupil's family;
- ability to participate in teamwork and organize it;
- ability to organize and evaluate one's professional activity, and to foresee potentials and future professional development;
- ability to utilize modern informational and communicational technologies in educational processes;
- ability to correctly use verbal and non-verbal communication.

1.2.2.2 Correlation of learning outcomes of the programme level with those of the subject level

The SAR does not seem to address the correlation of the learning outcomes at the programme level with those at the subject level.

The ASAR indicates that the learning outcomes of each subject are directly linked to the learning outcomes of the programme and are derived from the subject content. ASAR gives, as an example, the learning outcome 'knowledge and acknowledgement of pupil's personality' which is split between different subjects.

> For instance, in the subject of Personality and Social Psychology, students have to develop their ability to understand individual features of the pupil, and also to learn methods of recognition of pupil's general state and status in the classroom community. And in developmental psychology the students learn how to apply different developmental theories in understanding pupil's personality.

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1.2.3 Transformation of the learning outcomes

The SAR does not address this item and the ASAR does not make any specific comment under this heading.

1.2.3.1 Continuous assessment of learning outcomes

The SAR is silent in regard to the continuous assessment of learning outcomes. ASAR gives a lengthy response under this heading but little, if any, of it has to do with the issue of the continuous assessment of learning outcomes, although there is one reference to the "continuous monitoring of study results"

1.2.3.2 Reasonable renewal of learning outcomes.

The SAR does not comment on this matter. As learning outcomes have been a recent introduction at Vilnius College, the response on this matter has much to do with what is likely to happen in the future, stating that "Annually, it is planned to renew learning outcomes of the study programmes with regard to new tendencies of social sciences, changes of needs in labor market, and the ongoing social changes in society". The ASAR indicates that it is intended, at the end of each academic year, to revise the learning outcomes.

> On an ongoing basis, Vilnius College and social stakeholders collaborate during external evaluation of study programs, and discuss the pedagogical practices, and analysis students' final papers, organize workshops, conferences, etc. All the activities create conditions for the renewal of learning outcomes in response to changes within the labour market (See: 2.2.2.2.). Therefore, learning outcomes are continuously assessed not only by the faculty, but by the representatives of the labour markets as well.

1.3 Overview in relation to Aims and Learning Outcomes of Pedagogics of Primary Education and Social Pedagogy Programmes

The overall strengths and weaknesses identified in the ASAR are reproduced here.

1.3.1 Strengths

- Aims and learning outcomes correspond to Lithuanian and international formal requirements for the studies at the colleges
- Learning outcomes are continuously assessed and renewed
- Learning outcomes are developed with regard to the specific needs and features of Vilnius region and with the special focus on development of multi-linguistic and intercultural competences of students.

- Learning aims and outcomes are logical, complementary, and fit the needs of social stakeholders and the labour market demands

1.3.2 Weaknesses

- The programme of pedagogy is not competitive because of the time-line for completion of studies
- Incomplete practical experience of academic community in assessment of study results according to learning outcomes

1.3.3 Action for improvement

- To renew the study programme of the Pedagogy of Primary Education by shortening it to three years of study.
- To organize consultations and other events for information sharing regarding the improvement of study programme with representatives from other schools of higher education such as Vilnius Pedagogical University and Mykolas Romeris University, since they have successful experience in assessment of study results according to learning outcomes and by taking into account experts' suggestions.

2 Curriculum design

As pointed out previously, the structure of this SAR creates a very considerable difficulty for the EET as, here again, the major headings of the assessment tool are not specifically addressed highlighting the extent to which the SAR has been prepared using an entirely different template.

Table 3 Extract from Evaluation Tool in relation to Curriculum Design

2. Curriculum design		
2.1. Programme structure	2.1.1. Sufficiency of the study volume	o Compliance of the study volume with the requirements of legal acts o Compliance of the study volume with learning outcomes
	2.1.2. Consistency of the study subjects	o Relations and sequence of the study subjects o Compulsory, elective or free-choice subjects
2.2. Programme content	2.2.1. Compliance of the contents of the studies with legal acts	o Compliance of the programme content with regulations for study field o Compliance of the programme content with general requirements for the study programmes
	2.2.2. Comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content	o Themes delivered in the subjects o Forms and methods used in classes

As noted earlier, the EET has no option but to employ the evaluation tool with which it has been provided.

In the SAR, there is no overall presentation of the curriculum design.

2.1 Programme structure

The SAR, under the heading "Study Plan" gives an overview of the programme structure, noting that the Primary School Pedagogy study programme is composed of the following parts:

> General education subjects -10 credits;
> Study basis subjects – 38credits;
> Specific professional subjects – 58 credits;
> Free selective subjects - 8 credits
> Practice - 27 credits
> Study programme branch – 11 credits
> Final Thesis preparation – 8credits.

The ASAR does not give a specific response under this heading.

2.1.1 Sufficiency of the study volume

The ASAR does not give a specific response under this heading.

2.1.1.1 Compliance of the study volume with the requirements of legal acts

As previously noted in Section 1.1.2 above, Section 3 of the SAR states that "the programme is based on legal documents" and proceeds to give a lengthy list of such documents and the ASAF contains a similar list, but again does not add any indication of the specific requirements which are met. Section 2.1.1.1 of ASAR takes up the issue of compliance.

It notes that the Programmes of Primary Education Pedagogy requires 160 credits with each course consisting of no less than 2 credits. ASAR states that during the State registration in August 26, 2002, study programmes received no critical remarks from the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education and that it had been designed according to the law as stated by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (Order No. ISAK-1551, July 22, 2005). This law denotes that both, basics of studies and special professional studies should form no less than 40 credits. Furthermore, 20 credits must be achieved during practices and 6 credits for the final paper. Furthermore, the ASAR notes that the Programme of Primary Education Pedagogy is corrected annually with regards to laws, regulations, and other documents from the Ministry of Education and Science in 2008 and, most recently, in May 2010 in accordance with the Description of the General Requirements for the First-Cycle Level Consecutive Study Programmes, that regulates the amount of credits within the study programmes' parts (Refer to: Order No. V-501 of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, April 9, 2010). The Table which is given in ASAR is reproduced here to highlight the number of credits involved in each part of the study programme.

Table 4: Structure of Primary Education Pedagogy Programme and Its Changes:

2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
General Education **10** credits	General Education **10** credits	General Education **10** credits	General Education **15** credits (with **8** credits going to **alternative** choice)
Basic studies **40** credits	Basic studies **40** credits	Basic studies **38** credits	Basic studies **93** credits (with **9** credits going to **alternative** choice)
Special (Professional) **47** credits	Special (Professional) **47** credits	Special (Professional) **58** credits	
Final Paper **6** credits	Final Paper **6** credits	Final Paper **6** credits	Final Paper / Project **8** credits
Specialization (choice between 4) **18** credits	Specialization (choice between 4) **18** credits	Specialization (choice between 2) **11** credits	Specialization (choice between 2) **11** credits
Professional Practice **27** credits	Professional Practice **27** credits	Practices **27** credits	Practices **27** credits
Free Choice Courses **12** credits	Free Choice Courses **12** credits	Free Choice Courses **8** credits	Free Choice Courses **6** credits
160 credits	**160 credits**	**160 credits**	**160 credits**

ASAR also details the balance between practical work and professional practice and other academic activities.

2.1.1.2 Compliance of the study volume with the learning outcomes

In regard to the compliance of the study volume with the learning outcomes, this issue does not seem to have been addressed in the SAR. The ASAR notes that subsequent to 2010, learning outcomes have been incorporated into the study programme beginning with the first year of the programme. ASAR acknowledges that the transition across all years of the programme into a learning outcomes model will take some time, noting that prior to the changeover, there had been full compliance when the study programme had been assessed against study goals and competences and it offers the evidence of a number of surveys, conducted in 2009 and 2010, which support this view as well as the evidence that comes from satisfactory rates of graduate employment.

ASAR concludes this discussion by indicating that it is intended to check the compliance between the study volume and learning outcomes annually (see also ASAR 1.2.3.1).

2.1.2 Consistency of the study subjects

In regard to the consistency of the study subjects SAR, in Section 2.2.1, notes that "the subjects in the study programme are arranged in a certain consistency, i.e. taking into account

the subjects which determine the success of further studies; the internal relations of specialty subjects; terminal practice goals and objectives". The SAR goes on to relate that "in the programme the specialty subjects are arranged from the less demanding knowledge and skills ones to those requiring the analysis, summary of expertise and complex practical skills"

ASAR does not specifically address this heading.

2.1.2.1 Relations and sequence of the study subjects

ASAR gives a detailed account of the manner in which the four-year programme in Primary Pedagogy is organised and of the internal relationship between aspects of the programme as well as of the sequence of the study elements. It is clear from the commentary that there is considerable internal debate in relation to the relative course weightings of various components, arising especially from the reduction of the length of the programme from four years to three. The extent to which this is a programme in transition makes the task of evaluation difficult, as there are many references to the intention to reducing the number of credits allotted to various courses within the programme.

In Section 2.1.2.1, ASAR notes that "the Pedagogy of Primary Education programme (approved in 2009 by the Ministry of Education) is currently being implemented for the second year students".

The EET is concerned that it is involved in the evaluation of an existing programme, which is 4 years in duration and that it is being asked to grant approval to this programme for up to six years. Yet a shorter version of the programme is already being implemented. It is the view of EET that each new programme should be subjected to assessment prior to being launched or that, at the very least, it ought to be subjected to evaluation within the first cycle (three years) of delivery.

2.1.2.2 Compulsory, elective or free-choice subjects

Section 2.2.1 of the SAR gives an overview of the programme listing those elements which are compulsory, optional branches or freely-chosen subjects.

The ASAR notes that, in accordance with Ministerial requirements of 22 July 2005 and 9 April 2010, all study programmes are divided into compulsory and alternative courses. The compulsory courses cover theoretical and professional subjects.

According to ASAR

> "Elective courses are compulsory courses, but students can select one or another compulsory course from the list of these courses. Students have the possibility to choose according to their interests and aptitudes and to study historical or philosophical context of education.

Finally there are courses for free-choice courses which are oriented towards the additional development of students' competences. The free-choice courses on offer change from time to time, dependent on the students' needs and capacity of the faculty to deliver options.

This model appears to offer students a reasonable degree of choice.

2.2. Programme content

Programme content is commented upon briefly in Section 2.2.2 of the SAR. This heading is not specifically addressed in the ASAR.

2.2.1 Compliance of the contents of the studies with legal acts

2.2.1 As noted earlier, the SAR, in its introduction, notes that the programme is based on the various legal requirements applying to such programmes. However, SAR does not specifically address the question of the level of compliance of the contents of the studies with legal acts

This matter is dealt with in the ASAR under the heading which follows below rather than under this heading.

2.2.1.1 Compliance of the programme content with regulations for study field

While the SAR notes, in the introduction, that the programme meets the necessary regulations, there is no detailed examination in the SAR of the manner in which this programme is compliant with these regulations. ASAR also deals with this issue simply by noting that the structure and content of the study programme correspond to the current legislation (see 2.1.2.2) and suggestions by employers (surveys conducted by Faculty of Pedagogy of Vilnius College) and to learning outcomes that are stated in the appropriate Teacher Training Regulations.

2.2.1.2 Compliance of the programme content with general requirements for the study programmes

Again, this is dealt with in the SAR in quite a general way in the Introduction and in Section 2.1.2 (Study Programme deliverables) where it is noted that the content of the study programme was improved in accordance with the order of the Minister of Education and Science "On General Requirements for Study Programmes" of 22 July 2005 (No. ISAK-1551).

ASAR, in Section 2.2.1.2, notes that the content of the study programme corresponds to the formal requirements for first-circle level study programmes indicated in Dublin descriptors (2004), Law on Higher Education and Research (2009) and the Description of the General Requirements for the First-Cycle Level Consecutive Study Programmes (Order No. V-501 of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, Part 3, April 9, 2010).

2.2.2 Comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content

The manner in which the SAR addresses this topic is through its subthemes. There is no overarching discussion of the comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content. The ASAR does not specifically address this heading.

2.2.2.1 Themes delivered in the subjects

In relation to themes delivered in the subjects, SAR, in Paragraph 2.2.2, notes that "methods of study are selected according to the themes; teachers annually audit the curricula, adjust the applied study methods, clarify the themes, and update lists of recommended literature". However, the SAR does not go into any analysis of the particular themes delivered in the subject, beyond its overall presentation of programme and subject content.

ASAR addresses the issue of themes within the subjects in a little more detail, noting that:

> Themes within the subjects are sufficiently released; theoretical knowledge is adjusted to skills developed during their practicum; themes do not duplicate in theoretical and practical classes, but relevantly supplement each other. Contemporaneity of subject themes is guaranteed by the possibility to renew up to 20% of course content (themes and literature sources) as it is anticipated in the General Requirements for the First-Cycle Level Consecutive Study Programmes (Order No. V-501 of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, April 9, 2010).

2.2.2.2 Forms and methods used in classes

The updated SAR (February 2011), in Section 2.2.1, states that

> There are applied 3 basic student study forms- contact works: lectures, workshops, seminars, consultations, during which, there are mastered the theoretical basics of a subject and their application methods; modelled separate professional activity elements; trained an ability to practically apply theoretical knowledge. Knowledge is conveyed and professional abilities are trained by applying various teaching methods: lectures, seminars, practical works, discussions, disputes, projects, competence portfolio arrangement and accumulation; professional activity practices in real working conditions. These are practices during which students are not only acquainted with working place particulars and work organisation but also acquire the concrete working activity skills. During the pedagogical practice at school (from the cognition practice till the final one) students observe and analyse teaching/learning pedagogical, psychological, and subject aspects, learn the art of communication and cooperation, model lessons and conduct them, organise and coordinate informal learners teaching; student self-studies are a very important component of studies enabling a student to search for and choose the information sources, evaluate; train problematic, critical thinking as well as research activity abilities. .... Besides, there are also available distant and equivalency studies

This is set out a little more clearly in the ASAR (Section 2.2.2.2) which states that

> The choice of study forms and methods is very essential in the realization of learning outcomes in study programmes. The variety of methods used raises students' interests, motivates them, and insures quality of learning process. Depending on the teaching form used in the classes, teachers use various methods:
> - In theoretical lectures teachers use PowerPoint presentations, discussions, analyse sources, demonstrate films or other video material, and discuss with students, etc.
> - In practicum teachers use case study analysis, working groups, methods of conversation, mini projects, debates, socio-dramas, forum theatre methods, etc.
> - During professional practices supervisors use methods of conversation, discussion, focus group interview, creating data files, etc.
>
> It can be noted, that the project method started to take an important place among other study methods. In the renewed study programme, it is planned to introduce a project as a new, alternative form of students' final paper. Taken into account surveyed students' opinions, study methods teachers use are relevant (survey taken in 2009 and 2010). The collection and compatibility of relevant study methods allows to encourage active and responsible participation of students in the study process and to reach study goals and learning outcomes.

A later Section of ASAR gives a valuable insight into the success of the teaching methods being employed. Section 3.2.1.1 notes that data from students' questionnaires on study quality in the Faculty of Pedagogy at Vilnius College in 2010 shows that teachers use active methods of teaching, offer students interesting and related to professional activity tasks, encourage creativity, analytical thinking, skills of ability to solve the problems, assess students' knowledge and competences objectively, maintain friendly and good atmosphere for cooperation".

In the course of the field visit and from a range of its meetings with those involved, most especially the students, the EET formed the view that the programme was delivered with a good deal of pedagogical diversity. It is also clear, from the meetings which EET held with students, former students and employers, that the emphasis on the practical and the extent to which other stakeholders' views were accommodated helped to build the reputation of VIKO's programmes in general. The graduates of the programme (ranging from 2001 to 2010) were appreciative of the work and preparation done by staff of the College, although they might only have that appreciation in hindsight. In the words of one graduate:

> "When we were in College, we thought a lot of what we did was only fooling around and nonsense, but now we appreciate how very valuable it is".

The students were also appreciative of the fact that the College is now offering a professional Bachelor's Degree in this area and of the ongoing professional support that individual lecturers continue to offer to alumni of the College. Graduates would like to see VIKO being in a position to offer Masters' Degrees rather than being forced to continue their studies in other institutions as they feel that there is a repository of professional skills at VIKO that does not seem to be so readily available elsewhere. They say that there are also some specialised courses that might be recast as graduate diplomas leading to Masters' qualifications.

2.3 Overview in relation to Curriculum Design

The following strengths, weaknesses and points for action are presented in the ASAR.

2.3.1 Strengths

1. The content of study programmes is constructed in such a way that learning outcomes are oriented towards study results.

2. Practices, practical and theoretical teaching are well balanced in study process.

3. Teachers use interactive teaching methods that allow students to feel fulfilled and to participate actively in the study process.

4. As students' independent work becomes increasingly more important, students' responsibility for the study results also increases.

5. Programmes offer a sufficient variety of alternative courses.

6. Non-Lithuanian speaking students have the possibility to improve their Lithuanian language skills by taking a Lithuanian language course from one of the Free Choice Course group.

2.3.2 Weaknesses

1. Study programme requirements (including the requirements for the structure of the study programmes) and study programmes often change. This causes difficulties in the administration of study programmes, as well as disrupts studies for students who are returning after a temporary break.

2. Free-Choice Courses are taught in the same faculty as compulsory courses and this limits students' possibilities to enlarge their outlook of the world according to their interests and needs.

2.3.3 Action for improvement

1. To anticipate more simplistic mechanisms for returning students after a temporary break.

2. To anticipate opportunities and order to study Free Choice Courses in other faculties of Vilnius College (for example: management, health care, arts, etc.).

The EET is concerned that the programme of Primary Pedagogy seems very subject oriented and fragmented. There is not enough competence based assessment and the learning outcomes are at the subject level not connected to the themes. It notes as valid the concerns of the teaching staff about the frequency of change to this programme. None-the-less, EET considers that a fundamental rethinking of the curriculum of this programme is now needed.

Furthermore, as clarity of purpose is essential, the EET recommends that the Faculty revisit the specific purpose of this programme to give it a sharp focus on the profession of primary teaching. Careful consideration should be given to pruning the programme rather than having it continue as a programme burdened with weighty branches, some of which might deserve their own professional degree programmes.

3. Staff

Issues relating to academic staff are dealt with in the revised SAR under two headings:

> Staff Composition and Turnover
> Staff Competency

The ASAR does not separately address this heading.

3.1 Staff composition and turnover

The revised SAR, in Section 2.3.1, states that the teaching composition of staff is reviewed annually by way of an analysis of "the teachers' qualifications, professional development, participation in science (art) and other applied activities". As an outcome of this survey and depending on the resources available to the Faculty, plans are put in place for staff development and for the filling of vacancies.

In Section 2.3.2, the SAR notes that

> Faculty Administration encourages lecturers to develop their qualification and provides them with necessary conditions. Part of the training courses is financed by VIKO. After the return from their training, lecturers share their experience. During the evaluation period, almost all teachers, employed in the programme, improved their speciality, pedagogical and general qualification. The acquired skills are applied in planning and realising the subject taught, preparing methodological, educational material, carrying out the applied research, and tutoring final works.......Teachers who wish to develop their qualification are given the necessary conditions. Persons wishing to study in the second postgraduate, or doctoral studies, are partly financed (Vilnius College faculty professional, educational, and scientific qualification improvement programme. Approved by the Vilnius College Director on October 24, 2003).

The SAR records that the number of technical staff is sufficient for the programme delivery.

The ASAR does not separately comment under this heading.

3.1.1 Rationality of the staff composition

There is no specific commentary on this issue in the SAR nor does the ASAR address this separately.

3.1.1.1. Qualification of the teachers

The SAR, in Section 2.3.1, notes that "all teachers working in the study programme completed Master or a higher education degree, equivalent to a Master's degree". This statement is backed up in the ASAR which states that "all teachers involved ... have either master degree or equivalent degree in higher education in a subject of the course of studies (according requirements – not less as 80 %), as it is regulated by the Law on Higher Education and Research (2009) and Regulation of Teacher Training (2010)".

The ASAR includes a very helpful table (Table 6 of ASAR) clearly illustrating the levels of qualification.

Table 5: Qualification of PF teachers

Programme	Permanent teachers			Employed on fixed-term contracts		
	Totally	**Masters**	**Ph.D.**	**Totally**	**Masters**	**Ph.D.**
Pedagogy of Primary Education	31	26	5	3	2	1

3.1.1.2 Ratio of teachers and students

In regard to the ratio of teachers and students, Section 2.3.1 of the SAR notes that the number of teachers working in the study programme does not contradict the College regulations on the number of students per teacher, per serving employee and the study area rate (December 24, 2003 ISAK-1881). It also notes that

> For the Practice in schools there are formed groups of 5 to 7 students in a group, led by the practice guides, and teachers-practitioners (mentors). For the Final Theses consultancy there are appointed guides according to the student selected research fields. The list of Final Theses guides is approved by the Dean. The teacher is usually guiding not more than eight final works.

The ASAR notes that this regulation (ISAK-1881, 2003) recommends a Standard ratio of 14 students for a teacher but it notes that a recent survey had found that this recommendation was being exceeded in 2010/2011, reaching 14.86 in the case of regular studies and 16.08 in the case of extended studies. ASAR notes that the number of students per teacher varies with the type of activity being engaged in. With regard to final year theses, it notes that no teacher is expected to supervise more than eight theses in any school year.

The EET was concerned about the numbers in each year of the programme, ranging from 23 in Year 1 to 17 or 18 in Years 3 and 4. EET also had some concerns about the discrepancies between the number of students registered in the SAR and the numbers in the various classes as reported by the students in the meeting which EET held. One reason for the decreased numbers seems to arise from students switching to the part-time programme. EET had the impression that there was a lack of certainty about how many students were actually registered each semester with both staff and students being unclear as to whether students were continuing or whether they were fully disengaged from the programme (effectively drop outs).

It is the view of EET that, based on international experience, it is very difficult to maintain an economically viable programme with such low numbers.

3.1.1.3 Ratio of full time and visiting teachers

The SAR, in Table 9, highlights the fact that there is a small (and diminishing) inflow of lecturers from outside of Lithuania (Belgium and Latvia) coming to teach. Since 2009, one Belgian Professor has come each year to teach a course on Reflective Pedagogy on this programme. ASAR gives essentially the same information in Section 5.2.3.1.

In ASAR, Section 3.1.1.3, we are informed that on the Pedagogy of Primary Education study programme, 80 % of the teachers are full-time while the other 20 % are practitioners.

3.1.1.4. Distribution of teachers' workload

While the SAR, in Section 2.3.1, notes that the teachers' workload is drawn up according to the requirements of the study plan, it gives no factual detail on the workloads of individual staff members. Ideally, staff might be asked to give an account of their input to this programme through the use of a table such as the following.

Table 6: Sample University Teacher's Workload

	Activity	Hours
(a)	Academic activity (lectures, seminars, classes, lab works, practices, and exams)	xx hours
(b)	Methodological activity (preparation for contact hours, organization and monitoring of students' independent work):;	xx hours
(c)	Research and / or artistic activity	xx hours

ASAR addresses the issue of workloads in Section 3.1.1.4 by pointing out that

> Teachers' workload is formed according to requirements of the study plan. Individual teacher's workload involves not only contact hours but also hours for scientific activities, methodical work, creative and other activities. The annual workload of the college teacher is 1500 hours i.e. 36 hours per week (LR Labor Code, Procedure for Teachers' educational work planning and accounting, approved by the order of director of Vilnius college 2007, No.V – 24). 600 to 780 hours are delivered for contact work with students and the others are for teacher's professional development, organization of his/her activities in science, applied sciences, methodical work. Teachers assign the non-contact hours for academic work, seminars in the college as well as in other institutions, make researches, develop their qualifications. (see 3.2). For the teachers who are very active in scientific and applied sciences (art) fields contact hours are reduced to minimal limit (e.g.., Associate professor dr. V. Gražienė, heads of departments).

ASAR does not indicate what constitutes the minimal limit to which it refers.

3.1.1.5 Number of technical staff

As noted previously, the SAR in Section 2.3.1 notes that the number of technical staff is sufficient for programme delivery. ASAR simply notes that teachers and students have access to the services of technical and other support staff, including manager, heads of divisions and supervisors of practical training. ASAR also notes that the annual surveys of teachers and students give evidence that number of technical staff is satisfactory.

3.1.2 Turnover of Teachers

SAR, in Section 2.3.1, notes that the level of teacher turnover in the faculty and on this programme is limited. ASAR, in Section 3.1.2.1 also notes that change of full-time teachers in the faculty is minimal:

3.1.2.1 Reasons for staff turnover

The SAR, in Section 2.3.1 notes that one of the reasons for the turnover is teachers' retirement. SAR also notes that the introduction of new subjects (modules) requires the invitation of new professionals, but it does not mention what happens to staff whose input to the programme has been significantly reduced.

ASAR, in Section 3.1.2.1 states that teachers are fired when their term expires or they retire or due to an unexpected reasons (e.g. death). It notes that during the last five years six teachers retired and one teacher died while five new teachers were admitted to the faculty of whom two have part-time positions. It does not say how many people have had their contracts expire. ASAR also states that the number of full-time teachers has been reduced because of the decrease in the number admitted to the study programme but it gives no data on this.

ASAR also notes that the introduction of new course modules or course components can lead to the employment of new part-time staff (examples are given).

3.1.2.2 Impact of staff turnover on the study programme

SAR, in Section 2.3.1, notes that the introduction of new subjects or modules requires the invitation of new professionals. ASAR in its response to this section noted that a number of new teachers (whom it names) from academic and practical institutions have been employed since 2006: ASAR sees this as one strategy for allowing the renewal of the subject programmes and its adaptation to the needs of today's labour market.

3.2 Staff competence

Section 2.3.2 of the SAR addresses the issue of staff competence, noting the systems of support and encouragement which are in place to help ensure that there is some ongoing staff upgrading as well as acquiring "the proper level of competence aspects defined in the

description of teachers' professional competence (RL MES Order No. ISAK-54 of January 15, 2007)".

ASAR makes no comment under this particular heading.

3.2.1 Compliance of staff experience with the study programme

Section 2.3 of SAR addresses staff experience from a number of different perspectives, but it does not really address the issue of the compliance of staff experience with the study programme. There is no overarching statement in the ASAR under this heading.

3.2.1.1 Teaching experience of teachers

SAR, in Section 2.3.1, notes that this training programme is served by the highly experienced staff (teachers with three year or more teaching experience form 99% of the teaching staff). Elsewhere, in SAR, it is noted that the majority of the programme subjects (modules) are taught by the teachers who have had longer experience with most teachers having between seven and fifteen years of teaching experience. This is illustrated through the table which is reproduced below. There is an interesting question arising here as to whether this is field experience as primary teachers or a reference to the length of time during which they have been teaching at VIKO or a combination of both forms of experience.

Table 7: Teaching experience (in years)

Up to 5 years	5-10 years	10-20 years	20-30 years	30-40 years
1	1	16	9	9

It might also be noted that ASAR in Section 3.2.1.3 (below) acknowledges that "not all teachers have practical work experience" going on to admit that, on account of this, it is necessary to involve more stakeholders and competent specialists who have practical work experience.

3.2.1.2 Scope of teachers' research (art) activities and correlations with the study programme

The SAR, in Section 2.3.2, highlights the fact that members of the Faculty, teaching on this programme conduct applied research, "the results of which are used for improving the study programmes, adjusting subject modules, and preparing materials for publications, and reports (the reports read by programme lecturers during the Republic and International conferences, and articles)".

ASAR states that the research and artistic activity carried by teachers corresponds with their scientific/art areas of interest and thereby contributes to the excellence of the subjects on which they lecture. ASAR presents a helpful table which details the engagement of faculty members in publishing or presenting at conferences or other academic events.

3.2.1.3 Experience of teachers' practical work

The SAR does not seem to explicitly examine the compliance of staff experience with the study programme from the perspective of the experience of teachers' practical work, while the ASAR notes that

> Having in mind that not all teachers have practical work experience it is aimed to involve more stakeholders and competent specialists with practical work experience. At the moment we try to solve the problem during the students' practical trainings combining supervision of practical training between mentor with practical work experience (specialist with not less as 3 years of specialty experience in the institution) and tutor (teacher of the college, practice supervisor).

Elsewhere, in the SAR, Section 2.3.2, it is noted that the tutors of the Primary Education Pedagogy study programme have more than fifteen years of leadership experience in professional practices.

3.2.1.4 Scope of teachers' other activities (expert, organizational, etc.) and correlations with the study programme

SAR does not appear to explicitly address this theme. The ASAR identifies the areas of activity in which the teachers working in the Pedagogy of Primary Education study programme participate in expert activities. Three main areas of endeavour are detailed:

- developing legal documents
- other expert activity
- organizational experience of the teachers

Teachers' involvement in international educational activity is detailed in Section 5.2.3.1.

3.2.1.5 Compliance of practice and practical training supervisors' professional activities with the nature of practice

Although the diversity of practice is noted in SAR, Section 2.2.1, (Cognitive Practice, Probationary Pedagogy Practice, Teaching Pedagogical Practice, Leisure Organisation Practice, Teaching Practice of the Programme Branch, Final Pedagogy Practice), there is no discussion of the level of compliance of practice and practical training supervisors' professional activities with the nature of practice in the SAR.

The ASAR, in Section 3.2.1.5, repeats the emphasis placed on practical experience of teachers at VIKO and repeats the statements previously made in ASAR Section 3.2.1.1 to the effect that teachers with three year or more teaching experience form 99% of the teaching staff while a majority of the programme subjects (modules) are taught by the teachers who have had longer experience with most teachers having between seven and fifteen years of teaching experience. ASAR goes on to note that all educational and training practical trainings are

supervised by teachers with teaching experience (it does not explicitly say that this experience was always in the **primary** sector).

EET has some concerns about the form of the school placement as it appears that, in Year One, students spend up to one month in a practice setting but that this is primarily observational. It is recognised that there is a possibility that students may choose to teach, by agreement with the teacher, but that this is not mandatory. EET considers that students ought to experience teaching right through their programme, including during their first year of professional preparation.

ASAR also draws attention to the fact that, as part of a Quality improvement in teacher training seminar, all practice supervisors gained a competence of a tutor in 2007. ASAR also stresses that the selection of appropriate tutors and mentors for students' practical activity is carefully done so as to ensure close cooperation between tutor and mentor, thereby guaranteeing accomplishment of the practice program and achievement of study' learning outcomes.

3.2.1.6 Experience of coordinator of the study programs

The SAR does not seem to address the issue of the compliance of staff experience with the study programme from the perspective of the experience of coordinator of the study programme. ASAR notes that the Primary Education Pedagogy programme is coordinated by the Head of the Educational Technologies Department, Master of Educology R. Bačiulytė who has been the leader of the programme committee and coordinator of the study program for eight years. ASAR notes the extensive experience of this individual.

3.2.2 Consistency of teachers' professional development.

SAR does not seem to specifically address this matter. Neither does the ASAR have anything to say specifically under this heading.

3.2.2.1 Regulation and promotion of teachers' professional development

In examining the consistency of teachers' professional development from the perspective of the regulation and promotion of teachers' professional development, as previously noted above in Section 3.1.1.1, "all teachers working in the study programme completed Master or a higher education degree, equivalent to a Master's degree".

However, the SAR gives little further information on the regulation and promotion of teachers' professional development.

ASAR gives an overview of the supports available to faculty members who wish to upskill, noting that at the beginning of every school year teachers complete booking sheets for qualification improvement courses, indicating the topic with which they wish to engage and their need to improve.

According to the regulations of the Academic Board of Vilnius College, teachers of the faculty have a right to improve their qualifications during the time allocated for methodical

work and also have the right to ask administration to cover their expenses for such courses. Details of the amounts of money involved along with examples of some of the faculty members' activities in such programmes are set out in the ASAR.

3.2.2.2 Scope of the professional development and its impact on the study programme

Whereas the SAR (Section 2.3.2 and elsewhere) notes that the "Faculty Administration encourages lecturers to develop their qualification" and are constantly trying to improve both their knowledge of content and their capacity to employ interesting forms and modes of deliver, SAR does not specifically address the above topic. ASAR notes that the members of the "Pedagogy Faculty of Vilnius College seek not only at possibilities for improvement of qualification but also at real improvement of qualification". A direct link between the professional development of staff and the quality and content of the programme, as delivered to the student body, is not addressed.

3.3 Overview of Strengths, Weaknesses and Points for Action in relation to Staff

3.3.1 Strengths

1. Good educational preparation of the teachers, their sufficient educational experience and excellence.
2. *Representatives from institutions of science and practical area from Lithuania and EU countries are involved into study process.*
3. Active participation of the teachers in scientific development and expert work.

3.3.2 Weaknesses

1. Number of students for a teacher is higher than it is regulated.
2. Less possibilities for teachers' qualification development due to reduced funds (economic crisis).

3.3.3 Tools to improve this area

1. Search and implementation of new innovative study methods which empower to work with bigger groups of students.
2. Look for possibilities of sources of alternative funding (projects, funds, etc.) more actively.

4. Facilities and learning resources

While there is no overarching statement in the SAR under this heading, the SAR deals with the issue of facilities in considerable detail under the following headings.

4.1. Facilities

Within the SAR, the issue of the adequacy or otherwise of facilities is addressed in Sections 2.4.1 (Material Base) where we are told that

> For the PDF study programmes (including Primary Education Pedagogy study programme) implementation and achievement of the objectives set in the studies there are used 20 classrooms and offices, one of them with 70 places for the streaming lectures, 4 IT classrooms with 15 workstations in each; there are specialised psychology , pedagogy, social sciences, natural sciences, and music classrooms.

4.1.1. Sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies

Like the SAR, the ASAR does not offer any specific comment under this heading.

4.1.1.1. Number and occupancy of premises for studies

According to VIKO's website (http://www.viko.lt/en), "there are established good laboratories and study centres of Vilnius College of Higher Education. Computer centre has 30 computer classrooms with >1000 computers. The funds of the college's library contain about 280,000 copies."

With regard to the issue of the sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies, the SAR (Section 2.4.1) addresses this issue. It notes that for all of the programmes (including the Primary Education Pedagogy study programme), the Faculty has at its disposal, 20 classrooms and offices, one classroom with 70 places for the streaming lectures, 4 IT classrooms with 15 workstations in each as well as specialised psychology , pedagogy, social sciences, natural sciences, and music classrooms.

ASAR adds that the classrooms are "exploited rationally", that the number of seats is sufficient and that 9 of the classrooms have stationary multimedia projectors.

Section 2.4.1 of the SAR states that "due to the increasing number of streaming lectures, there is still a shortage of one large auditorium". This is not mentioned in the ASAR.

4.1.1.2 Technical and hygienic conditions of the premises for studies

The SAR (Section 2.4.1) addresses the theme of technical and hygienic condition of the premises for studies, noting that "the facilities used for studies comply with safety and

hygiene requirements (the hygiene passport No.12-6)12.12-81, issued by the Vilnius Public Health Centre on January 28, 2010). This statement is repeated in ASAR.

4.1.1.3 Working conditions in libraries, reading-rooms

The SAR (Section 2.4.1) notes that the Faculty Library has two reading rooms (speciality and information), with 40 working seats but it makes no further comment in relation to the sufficiency and suitability of premises from the perspective of working conditions in libraries and reading rooms,

ASAR indicates that the adequacy of the facilities for successful study implementation is both "assessed" and "analysed", but no particular output data is presented on the matter.

Both SAR and ASAR give some detail on the opening hours of the Library, on the adequacy of library funding and on the linking of the library to the network of higher education libraries.

4.1.2 Suitability and sufficiency of equipment for studies

The SAR does not make any general comment in relation to the suitability and sufficiency of equipment for studies. In fact, the word "equipment" does not appear at all in the SAR. ASAR does not separately address this topic.

4.1.2.1. Laboratory (art) equipment and appliances

The SAR (in Section 2.3.1) notes that the "laboratories are equipped with modern technics". This is elaborated somewhat in Section 2.4.1 which notes that "in training classrooms and laboratories there are available the audio-visual and multimedia means, thus, lectures and workshops might be conducted smoothly, picturesquely, efficiently, and creatively".

The ASAR gives a little more detail stating that

> Two labs are available for implementation of Primary Education Pedagogy study program: Food processing technologies Household culture laboratory, Fine textile and sewing technologies laboratory, art and music classrooms. Laboratories are equipped properly, materials are sufficient. .... Students use the big auditorium of the faculty which is adapted for streaming lectures and specialized studies: psychology, social science, pedagogy, science and music.

In the course of the field visit, EET had the opportunity to visit most of these facilities and considered that they were adequate.

4.1.2.2 Computer hardware and software

On the issue of computer hardware and software, the SAR (Section 2.3.1) notes that, if necessary, both students and teachers have access to computer professionals and other

technical staff support. Section 2.4.1 of the SAR notes that the computers are plugged in to the local computer network as part of a single faculty and college network and that all of the computers are connected to the Internet, using an optical connection port. SAR gives the following statistics in regard to the numbers of computers which are available to students.

Table 8: Number of computers per 100 students:

Number of students	Number of computers	Number of computers per 100 students
458	66	14.6

ASAR repeats much of this information and adds that

> The software is modern and legal. In 2010 Microsoft Windows 7 and Ubuntu Linux 10.10 operational systems, Microsoft Office 2010 and OpedOffice.org 3.2 programs were installed. It is installed by Vilnius College computer center.

4.1.3. Suitability and accessibility of the resources for practical training

The SAR did not address this area and ASAR does not separately address this heading.

4.1.3.1 Compliance of activities of the institutions for practical training with the aims of the studies

The SAR did not address the level of compliance of activities with the aims of the studies. ASAR states that the level of compliance on this matter is assessed, noting that students have opportunities for practical professional training in schools of great diversity (general education, informal educational institutions, special education, etc. ASAR also notes the extent to which Students' practical skills are developed, including experience in project planning, and managing practical activities. It notes that the practice schools are chosen with great care to maximise such practical learning opportunities.

4.1.3.2 Ratio of suitable practical training places with the number of students

The ratio of suitable practical training places to the number of students on the programme of Primary Pedagogy does not seem to have been addressed in the SAR.

The ASAR gives some information on the timing of practical placements and on the organisation of students into groups of 4 to 6 persons for practical training in the institution. It does not give any further detail on the ratio of placement or on the issue of whether students are individually placed in classrooms.

4.1.3.3 Role of the higher education institution in selecting the sites for practical training

The SAR notes, in Section 2.2.1 that considerable thought it given to the importance of teaching practice at VIKO. It says

An exclusive focus in Primary Education Studies programme is on professional practices (general duration of practices is 27 credits). Students are systematically targeted by shifting from observation to direct responsible contact with learners. Each year, the practice becomes more complex, requiring more student effort, independence and responsibility

The SAR does not seem to specifically comment on the role of the higher education institution in selecting the sites for practical training.

ASAR notes that the Faculty offers sites for practical training but students themselves may choose the institution in which he/she wishes to make the final educational practical training (either in Lithuania or abroad in Europe). It also notes that the Faculty has long-term Co-operation agreements with different institutions where future social pedagogues may have practical trainings: schools of general education, centres of in-formal education, Day centre of youth and children, special education institutions, etc.). When students leave for practical training a tripartite agreement is signed (faculty – institution – student), in which the obligations are set down.

4.2 Learning Resources

The SAR notes that in the library there are enough dictionaries, monographs, encyclopaedias, and educational, scientific and literary works and also notes that the Faculty library has two reading rooms (speciality and information), as well as a range of other resources and materials.

4.2.1 Suitability and accessibility of books, textbooks and periodical publications

The suitability and accessibility of books, textbooks and periodical publications is examined from the perspectives of the "provision with printed publications required for the study programme" and of "access to electronic databases".

ASAR does not make a specific comment under this heading.

4.2.1.1 Provision with printed publications required for the study programme

The SAR notes that the Faculty Reading Rooms are equipped with 40 working seats where documents are arranged in accordance with the study programme so that students can access and use the documents, intended specifically for this study area.

ASAR notes that The Faculty Library has a collection of 27,395 publications. 32 periodicals corresponding to study programs are subscribed as well as electronic data basis. Single copy can be used in the reading-room. If more copies are available they can be issued for a day, week, month or semester. The SAR lists national and foreign periodicals. As far as foreign periodicals are concerned the SAR refers to the following: Cambridge Journal of Education; Education theory; European Journal of Social Education; International Journal of Education Research; Child Education. The library subscribes to the newest publications published in Lithuania corresponding to the study programme.

In the course of the field visit, EET had the opportunity to see the library facilities and resources and understood that there was adequate provision.

4.2.1.2 Access to electronic databases

The SAR notes that students have access to electronic databases and to an electronic catalogue. ASAR notes that the college gives the users remote access to international information resources: EBSCO Publishing – package of databases of full text academic articles (11 databases). Databases are constantly tested. Access to databases of all higher education institutions of Lithuania is available too. The software in the college gives access to databases for everyone. Study classrooms and laboratories are provided with audio and video multimedia.

4.2.2 Suitability and accessibility of learning materials

There is no specific comment in the SAR on the suitability of learning materials and ASAR does not specifically address this area.

4.2.2.1 Provision with methodological publications

In relation to provision with methodological publications, the SAR points out the lecturers' methodological publications are kept in the library in various media, so that they can easily be accessed by lecturers and students. The ASAR details examples of material developed by faculty members, such as those related to "Family pedagogy", "Psychology", "Personality and Social Psychology", "Exercises of social work", "Developmental and abnormal developmental psychology", "Management of projects", "Health of child", "Ethnoculture", etc .

4.2.2.2 Access to methodological publications

The SAR acknowledges that access may be limited due to the small numbers of some items stocked in the library:

> Due to the finance shortage it is possible to acquire only several copies of all the publications related to the study field and published in Lithuania. Unitary publications are used only in the reading room. If there are more copies they are provided for a day, week, month or even a semester.

ASAR, however, notes that students have access to all methodological publications developed by the teachers. Some are published as lecture notes and some are available on the internet.

4.2.2.3 Provision with learning aids

In regard to **provision with learning aids**, the SAR in Paragraph 00000

According to the SAR, methodological materials used for the study programme are modern and meet study program aims, subject goals and planned learning outcomes of the study programs. ASAR also notes that there is an increasing number of electronic publications.

4.3 Overview of in relation to Facilities and learning resources

The strengths, weaknesses and points for action, as identified in the ASAR are noted here.

4.3.1 Strengths

1. Big choice of innovative institutions where students have practical training.
2. Sufficient material base for implementation of study program' purpose and achievement of study aims and learning outcomes.

4.3.2 Weaknesses

1. Insufficient methodical preparation for organization of distance studies.
2. Insufficient use of virtual educational activities in the study process.

4.3.3 Measures for improvement of the area

1. Organization of trainings to work in Moodle virtual environment for the teachers of the faculty.
2. A wireless internet zone in the faculty.

5 Study process and student assessment

In what may be a less than ideal translation, the SAR states that "the content of the taught study programme subjects is related to the acquired professional competencies and flourished general skills in accordance with the foreseen principles of study results assessment". Section 2.5.2 of the SAR addresses the "Study Process". Here we are told that "Students are encouraged to analyse, assess, and acquire research skills, individually work with information resources as well as to think critically". SAR goes on to point out that the

> Student achievements are measured on a cumulative score. This assessment system encourages students to work in a systematic way, enabling them to perform all the tasks, participate in workshops, regularly work all semester, and to improve the general and professional abilities.

ASAR does not make a specific comment under this heading.

5.1. Student admission

The SAR notes that for the course of Primary Education Pedagogy individuals are enrolled who have had a secondary education with one academic group (one for each study mode) being admitted annually. ASAR notes that secondary school graduates (in Lithuania) must have 3 successfully passed maturity exams (Lithuanian language-rate 0.4; history-0.2; foreign language-0.2) which form competitive score. The competitive score also includes annual grade of math-rate 0.2. SAR also indicates that there are no special requirements for study admission but that, in the future, it is expected that a motivation test may be introduced.

SAR also notes that Vilnius College together with the universities is taking part in the general admission to Lithuanian higher schools. (LAMA BPO). Each year, the competitive score on the first request is analysed according to preference. "Comparing the competitive score on the first request of 2005 and 2009 (respectively 0.84, 0.32, 0.35, 0.53, 0.70) there is seen a slightly changing factor. Over the past five years, according to all the wishes there is a general decline in contest; fewer students are admitted". SAR ascribes this change to the demographic situation in Lithuania, and the overall national socio-economic situation.

SAR also details the extensive promotional work which is undertaken to promote the programme.

5.1.1 Rationality of requirements for admission to the studies

Neither the SAR nor ASAR seem to address this matter from the perspective of the rationality of the requirements for admission.

5.1.1.1 Competition and minimum requirements for applicants

While this heading is not explicitly addressed in ASAR, it does note, under Section 5.1.1, the established minimal requirements for the applicants pointing out that, until 2010, general requirements for admission to educational studies were in force (General Provisions of the Rules for General Admission to Major and Integrated Studies of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions in 2007 but that, since 2010, graduates who were seeking state funding have had to pass oral and written motivation tests.

ASAR also notes that, following the Law on Higher Education and Research of Republic of Lithuania (2009), state funded study places now go for persons who are among the best graduates on the general admission line but that persons who want to study with their own funds are admitted following the same prnciples and procedure. ASAR presents a table showing the changes in competitive scores among entrants during the period 2006 to 2010. It notes that that students with the lowest competitive score enter the part-time (not state-funded) programmes and that, given their low scores, that some students may face academic difficulties in the future.

5.1.1.2 Special Requirements

This heading is not explicitly addressed in the ASAR.

5.1.2 Efficiency of enhancing the motivation of applicants and new students

SAR notes that a number of factors contribute to improving motivation, not least the possibility of acquiring a Professional Bachelor's degree (as of 2007).

ASAR does not directly address this heading.

5.1.2.1 Actions of a higher education institution in attracting students capable to study

The SAR notes that advertisements for the programme are placed on the website, that flyers and leaflets are disseminated in the majority of Lithuanian schools. Twice per year, "Open door" days are organised during which school-leavers are provided with the required information, and the possibility to communicate with faculty students. This study programme together with other faculty programmes is displayed at the international exhibition "Learning, studies, career". In order to attract new students, lecturers and students arrange meetings in Vilnius region schools, where they introduce the study programmes and comment on their structure. ASAR adds that the same dissemination of the study programs involving part-time students is carried out in the schools of the other counties.

ASAR also notes that annual data analyses of the entrants shows that 6 – 10 % of students in the Primary Education study programme are from educational institutions in which presentations were made.

5.1.2.2 Student motivation enhancement

SAR notes that, for the first year students, a summer adaptation camp "FUX" is organised where the second and third year students share their studies experience, provide information about the study organisation and faculty life in general. SAR also notes that the Department of Educational Technologies is interested in student study motivation and therefore constantly organises student surveys, the results of which are analysed and presented at the department and faculty meetings and used for the further study programme improvement

ASAR adds that all new students, during the first semester, have a subject called "Introduction to Studies" where they are introduced to the study program, the internal rules of the College and Faculty, assessment procedures, students' rights and obligations and career opportunities. ASAR also points out that there is close cooperation between students and teachers taking part together in the conferences and seminars and that professional motivation is stronger in senior students.

5.2. Study process

A lengthy and wide-ranging section (Section 2.5.2) of the SAR relates to the study process. It says that, through the study process, students are encouraged to analyse, assess, and acquire research skills, individually work with information resources as well as to think critically.

5.2.1. Rationality of the programme schedule

The question of the rationality of the programme schedule does not seem to be addressed in SAR. For example, the typical student contact hours are not given and consequently, it is not possible to form a view as to the appropriateness or other of student workloads.

There is no overarching comment in relation to the rationality of the programme schedule in ASAR.

5.2.1.1 Schedule of the study classes

This theme does not seem to have been addressed in the SAR. In ASAR, we are informed that students have not more than 28 academic hours of classes per week organized by teachers: lecturers, practical work. Classes may take up to 8 academic hours a day. The schedule of the work in the classes is developed by the manager of the Faculty. Students' requests are taken into account and every effort is made to distribute classes evenly, if possible. When students have practical training they have no lectures

EET concludes that students are overtimetabled, that there are too many academic contact hours and that there should be more time for independent work.

5.2.1.2 Schedule of the examination session

This matter is addressed in the ASAR which states that time for students' examination session is planned in the study timetable and may take from 2 up to 4 weeks. Not more than five exams are allowed during a session. Three days are allowed for preparation for examinations. ASAR notes that the schedules are announced not later than a week before beginning of examination session with the schedules of examinations being announced on the web page and bulletin board of the faculty.

5.2.2. Student academic performance

It should be noted that there are, at times, significant differences between the headings under which SAR is asked to write its valuation as compared to those under which the SAR/ASAR gives its commentary. For much of the time, this should not cause a major difference, but there are occasions when the heading in SAR/ASAR might lead to quite a different discussion to the one expected by EET. In the current case, the heading (as above) for evaluation relates to "Student academic performance" whereas the heading in the ASAR gives this as "Results of academic achievements by students". Similarly, the sub-heading (5.2.2.1) is given in ASAR as "Student pass-rates" while on the evaluation check-list, it appears as "Monitoring of student progress and drop-out rate"

These differences are most likely attributable to a gap in translation but it would be best if a consistent standard were applied.

ASAR does not add a commentary under this explicit heading.

5.2.2.1 Monitoring of student progress and drop-out rate

ASAR notes that the monitoring of student progress and drop-out is conducted on an annual basis. Progressing students are awarded scholarships (see 5.3.2.2), whereas underachieving students are given a possibility to settle their affairs after the session. Table 13 of ASAR gives details on the turnover of students in primary education during their studies. The data relates to all students, including drop-outs, students arriving from other institutions, students returning from academic leave, students renewing their studies and students who changed their format of studies. An analysis of the data presented indicates that the highest drop-out rate takes place in the first years. Of all primary education students enrolled in 2006 for continual studies, there was the following drop-out: 1st year – 32.2%, 2nd year – 33.3%, 3rd year – 0%; the numbers for extended studies are respectively 25.8%, 4.3%, 0%.

The major reasons for eliminating students of continual studies of primary education are underachievement (75%) and voluntary termination of studies (25%); whereas for students of extended studies it is mostly inability to fulfil financial liabilities.

ASAR notes that, in 2009, when the education financing system based on education vouchers was introduced and in 2010, when a motivational test for entrants was introduced, the percent of drop-outs reduced significantly.

EET is pleased to note the care taken in collecting and analysing this data and commends the faculty for its work to minimise drop-out.

5.2.2.2 Student participation in research

The SAR comments on students' participation in research, emphasising that student self-studies are a very important component of this programme, enabling a student to search for and choose the information sources, evaluate; train problematic, critical thinking as well as research activity abilities

ASAR highlights the fact that student research is an important part of their professional competences, emphasising that such skills are being acquired throughout the entire period of studies. ASAR notes that subjects or modules like "Project Management" and "Introduction to Academic Writing" enable students to acquire the basics for academic writing. Students are trained to carry out interviews, opinion polls, participate in observations, etc. The preparation of a final thesis and the analysis of its results ensure the achievement of learning outcomes related to professional research activities. Students present their research at conferences of students from the Faculty and other colleges.

5.2.3 Mobility of teachers and students

SAR considers this topic from the perspective of i) the scope of teacher mobility and impact on the study programme and ii) the scope of student mobility and impact on studies.

SAR presents considerable detail on the issue, indicating that there is a selection process through which faculty apply and are considered for such mobility opportunities.

5.2.3.1 Scope of teacher mobility and impact on study programme

According to Table 9 provided by the SAR (these data are provided in the ASAR in Tables 15 and 16), there is a reasonable number of teachers who travel abroad for academic work. 2006/07 was the academic year with the greatest number of teachers abroad (20 distributed among Latvia, The Netherlands, Norway and Germany). More recently, in 2009/10, 7 teachers had foreign experience in The Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark and Latvia. From close neighbours, the programmes of mobility were expanded to other Western European countries. The arrival of foreign colleagues (7 in 2008/09; 4 in 2009/10) brought new inputs into the study programme. A Belgian lecturer from Leuven University had a course on Reflexive Pedagogy, conducted in English.

It is clear that such exchanges have considerable impact, especially as the ASAR tells us that

> After their visits, lecturers present experience of their visits that has been summarised at the departments, share innovations of foreign education and latest methodical literature.

5.2.3.2 Scope of student mobility and impact on studies

SAR notes that VIKO participates in international students exchange programmes. The International Relations Office of the College, in cooperation with foreign schools (partners), coordinates the time of accepting students and their programmes. The subjects/modules studies abroad are credited upon return following the procedure as established by the College (The procedure of crediting study results, 2010). However, whereas 2 students went to Belgium in 2006 and a further 3 in 2007, no students of this programme had gone on mobility in 2008 or 2009 (SAR, Table 10). In 2010, two students had again gone to Belgium. SAR notes that one of the barriers to participation in an exchange programme for students is inadequate foreign language skills and not sufficiently aligned curriculum.

Table 18 of ASAR shows the levels of mobility of incoming students for each year since 2006/2007 (4), 2007/2008 (0), 2008/2009 (1), 2009/2010 (5) and 2010/2011 (5). Virtually all of these students have come from Latvia. The work for incoming students is organized in Russian or English. The ASAR notes that incoming foreign students have their individual plans that are followed in the College. These plans include intended subjects/modules, lecturers, time for work as well as terms and forms of accounting. After the completion of a programme, students are provided with documents for academic accounting.

5.3 Student support

Section 2.5.3 of SAR addresses the area of student support in some detail, identifying a great many diverse ways in which students are supported as they make their way through VIKO. The support may range from the clarity with which the programme is introduced to the

support offered to students facing various challenges, whether personal, financial of academic.

The ASAR does not specifically comment under this general heading.

5.3.1. Usefulness of academic support

There is no overarching comment in relation to student support or in relation to the usefulness of student support in ASAR.

5.3.1.1 Informing about the programme and its changes

Both SAR (Section 2.5.3) and ASAR (Section 5.3.1.1) address this area, noting that there are special publications and advertisements in college and faculty internet pages (www.viko.lt; www.pdf.viko.lt) so that students find out the aims and objectives, career possibilities of the study programme before general admission. Brochures containing information about the study programmes are distributed in education institutions.

The SAR says that a special college publication "Studijų knyga" introduces the study programmes, their aims, subjects and short descriptions. Twice a year the faculty organizes "Open Door" days, when school graduates are provided with all necessary information about the study programmes. This means that students are informed about the programme from the very beginning. Part of the "Introduction on Studies" is devoted to the discussion of its structure, goals and learning outcomes, assessment and possibilities of being financed. Important information is published on the Faculty's website and on Faculty's announcement boards. The Heads of Continual and Extended Studies carry out individual consultations to students on the subjects of interest (e.g., possibilities of receiving financial support). Each subject-matter informs about its specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the first lessons.

5.3.1.2 Student counselling on study issues

According to ASAR, consulting students is a very significant part of the study process at the Faculty of Pedagogy. Lecturers prepare methodological material so that students may use it for the preparation for lectures, seminars, projects and other tasks. Students can count upon individual or group appointments with lecturers. This is especially important in preparations for teaching practice. ASAR states that, while preparing for their professional practice, students are consulted by the teachers, discuss lesson plans and organized events. Consultations take place in accordance with the consultation timetable drawn up by teachers.

Lecturers consult students during the time that is specially allocated to this. They are consulted face-to-face or remotely and they may agree with the teacher to have consultations at some other time. According to the survey implemented, 69.92% of the students stated that lecturers cooperate and provide them with personal consultations by e-mail and other forms.

5.3.1.3 Student counselling on career possibilities

According to the SAR, students learn about career opportunities in the first year course and make their subject choices with this in mind. On an ongoing basis, the Faculty informs students about professional career possibilities in descriptions of study programmes (Aikos system, the Faculty's website, etc.). Future career possibilities are discussed in detail during pedagogical practical training. College graduates may also find information about employment possibilities at Vilnius College Career Centre.

ASAR notes that

> The administration of the Faculty, Department Heads, the Head of the Practical Training Department, and lecturers mentoring professional practical training discuss the possibilities of students' employment with employers. The Faculty organises meetings with social stakeholders, "round tables", employers' surveys on topical issues related to studies and preparation for a future career are organised. The Head of the Practical Training Department collects information and data and shares information related to employers' request for specialists. Information about employment opportunities reaches students fast. This is evidenced by successful employment stories.

In the course of the field visit to VIKO, EET had the opportunity to meet with graduates of the programme, ranging from 2001 to 2010. The graduates have been very impressed by the extent to which the Dean and Heads of Department actively search to secure employment opportunities for graduates of this College.

5.3.1.4 Possibilities to study according to individual programme

This topic does not seem to have been addressed in the SAR. According to ASAR, individual studies are intended for students, who graduated from VIKO before it became a College (up to the year 2002). The individual study programme is followed in the Faculty by primary education students and students who came on international exchange programme (see 5.2.3.2). Based on the submitted academic documents, the committee formed at the Education Technology Department compiles an individual study plan, which is coordinated with the student. If a future student is satisfied with provisions of the proposed individual studies, both parties sign an agreement. This form of studies was applied in 2010 for 2 students, in 2009 – for 2, in 2008 – for 6, in 2007 – for 3, and in 2006 – for 1 student. The figures do not include organisation of individual studies for foreign students (the respective numbers are presented in 5.2.3.2).

5.3.1.5 Possibilities of students to repeat subjects and to retake examinations

The issue of "liquidating academic debts" is addressed in SAR. Repetition of subjects and retaking exams are issues regulated by Orders by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania and the Study Procedure of Vilnius College. Students of continual and extended studies are given a possibility to repeat an exam within one month of a new semester. Each academic failure can be given two tries: one time is free of charge; the second time is after paying a certain established amount. Students, who fail to eliminate their

academic failures on time, may receive the Dean's permission to repeat the studies of subjects/modules. This right is not granted to first year students after the first examination session. The majority of students successfully eliminate their failures within the established terms.

Table 19 of ASAR gives data in relation to student failures in the period 2006-2010, inclusive. During this period, failure rates fluctuate considerably from a low of 4% to a high of 18%.

5.3.2. Efficiency of social support

The SAR does not seem to offer any comments on this item. Neither does the ASAR comment on this topic separately.

5.3.2.1 Psychological, sports, health and cultural support

The SAR notes that, each year, each group elects a student in the first year of study, which represents the interests of the group dealing with students' academic, social or other problems. Both SAR (Section 2.5.3) and ASAR (Section 5.3.2.1) note that students are invited to take part in artistic and sports groups and are informed about cultural events, possibilities of informal activities within the Faculty and College, the city and the region. Faculty students are provided with a possibility to actively engage in sports: the most popular sports are table tennis, basketball and track and field athletics. Students may receive one-time benefits for their achievements in cultural or sports activities.

ASAR also notes that students take part in amateur art groups, win prizes in regional festival of arts and crafts Vieveršėlis, organise thematic celebrations for visitors of children and youth day centres. It further notes that student achievements in informal activities are encouraged by publicly expressed thankfulness of the administration, also, if possible, by financial rewards for achievements in cultural or sports activities.

5.3.2.2 Grants and benefits

SAR (Section 2.5.3) notes the various types of scholarship and financial support that may be availed of by students.   Scholarships are awarded following the Regulations on Scholarships by Vilnius College (Order Nr.V-82 of January 20, 2010).   There are different types of scholarships: minimum, basic, faculty, college and social scholarships, distributed in conformity with students' achievements. Students participating in EU exchange programmes and studying abroad get scholarships from the faculty scholarship fund during the whole period of their studies/ internship. Students also have possibilities to get loans for their studies.

Students with the best study results (up to 50%) may receive incentive scholarships. In 2010, the basic incentive scholarship was LTL 130 and the amount available for an increased incentive scholarship was LTL 390. In 2009, 28.4% of continual students on the Primary Education programme received such scholarships. In 2010, the corresponding figure was 13.9%.

Students with financial needs may ask for study loans for living expenses, cost of studies and studying abroad; disabled students receive support on a monthly basis (support of 180 litas monthly), and those who pay for their studies also receive a fixed compensation of 412 litas for one semester.

There is a recent measure (2010) addressed to students newly enrolled in continual and extended pedagogy studies and who are funded by the state: they may receive a target scholarships of 400 litas per month if they have no academic failures.

5.3.2.3 Provision with dormitories

The SAR does not address this issue. ASAR notes that the Pedagogy Faculty allows the services of a dormitory to any student who wishes to live there. No data is provided as to how many students avail themselves of such a service.

5.4. Student achievement assessment

There is no overarching statement in relation to this topic in ASAR.

Section 2.5.4 of the SAR addresses the topic of the "assessment of achievements", noting that "the assessment system is oriented to the study objectives implementation and future primary school teacher's professional competences formation". It is surprising that this comment makes no mention of the assessment of learning outcomes.

ASAR does not address this theme separately.

5.4.1. Suitability of assessment criteria and their publicity

The question of the suitability of assessment criteria and their publicity is addressed under the following headings in ASAR:

- Correlations of criteria with the intended learning outcomes
- Composition of the assessment grade
- Publicity of assessment criteria

5.4.1.1 Correlations of criteria with the intended learning outcomes

SAR (in Section2.5.4) notes that the students' assessment is regulated by the Regulations of Study Result Assessment, approved by Vilnius College Director's Order No. V-160 of April 11, 2005 and that the primary teacher's qualification and professional bachelor's degree are granted only afters/he has successfully defended the final thesis (having previously had all subjects of the programme positively assessed and all study programme practices accomplished successfully). With the agreement of the thesis supervisor, it is presented to the Department to be approved and finally the result is submitted to a jury consisting of social partners and college or university representatives. Students may choose to be assessed by

accumulative assessment, through intermediate tests (2 per semester, at least) using coefficients the sum of which equals. The criteria are presented in advance.

The SAR says that the assessment criteria has to do with the level of theoretical knowledge, practical professional activities and general pedagogic abilities, the level of demonstrating behaviour on a plan of learning and that they are correlated to the intended learning outcomes. The ASAR offers a similar summation but neither the SAR nor the ASAR closely address the extent to which the criteria of assessment applied are matched to the specific learning outcomes of the programme.

5.4.1.2 Composition of the assessment grade

ASAR notes that the learning outcomes are assessed by a cumulative score. The cumulative score includes at least two compulsory intermediary accounting sessions within one semester, and each accounting (either an intermediary or a final one) provides leverage coefficients, the total sum of which equals one. They use the following methods: examinations, written credits or projects; written or oral checking of knowledge, tests, seminars, written papers, presentations, practical tasks during training and tasks for independent work. The final evaluation includes half of the tasks for demonstrating practical skills and abilities acquired during subject study (case analysis, problem solving, action strategy, etc.). The formula of accounting is discussed with students at the beginning of a semester and is provided in subject programmes.

5.4.1.3 Publicity of assessment criteria

SAR, in Section 2.5.4, notes that the formula, which gives rise to the cumulative grade, is discussed with students at the beginning of the semester, put down in the registers and presented in subject (module) programmes. While discussing the formula, clear assessment criteria are discussed.

ASAR adds that evaluation criteria are presented at the beginning of lecturing on any subject and are repeated during the study period before any specific task is conducted. Lecturers compile a list of specific criteria for each task to be done by their students. Since 2011, lecturers of the Faculty of Pedagogy have been mastering Moodle, where task descriptions and their evaluation criteria are given. This ensures timely and continuous availability of criteria to any student.

5.4.2 Feedback efficiency

There is no substantive response to this item from the perspective of efficiency in either the SAR or in the ASAR.

5.4.2.1 Methods of feedback

The methods of feedback are summarised in ASAR which states that students get feedback on their works through correction, lecturer's notes and comments, answers given to additional

questions by students regarding the evaluation of a task, etc. In the course of the field visit, and arising in particular from its meetings with students and former students, the EET came to the view that, while students confirmed the support given by the teachers through feedback, this was mostly oral rather than written feedback and it was clear that feedback was not entirely consistent across all subjects or from all teachers.

5.4.2.2 Effect of feedback on student achievements

This matter does not appear to have been addressed in the SAR. The ASAR notes that students improve their performance after getting feedback and when they have taken it into consideration. Explanations on mistakes and errors are told in writing or during a personal discussion. But there are also discussions on students' works in groups. ASAR also notes that students provide their lecturers with feedback about lecturing the subject and achievement evaluation after the course has ended and evaluation has been received.

5.4.3 Efficiency of final thesis assessment

SAR, in Section 2.5.4, notes that the Final Thesis assessment criteria are provided in regulations and placed on the Faculty website. Furthermore, they are orally commented upon for students during the analysis of the final thesis defence procedure. The requirements for final thesis are regularly analysed and updated in accordance with the remarks of students, lecturers and the qualification committee, etc. The final thesis requirements are approved by the faculty Dean.

ASAR, which gives this heading as "Efficiency of evaluating final theses" does not make any specific comment on the issue of efficiency at this point.

5.4.3.1 Requirements for final thesis

As noted above, SAR in Section 2.5.4, addresses this issue. The ASAR notes that the requirements for final theses include extensive guidelines on: the form of a thesis, compulsory parts and contents of final theses (introduction, analytical part, research, summary, conclusion and recommendations, list of literature). Additionally, requirements for the analytical part and the research, as well as the volume of literature and the form of submitting this list are given. Students are advised to carry out applied research by combining several research methods (e. g., observation, survey, interview, experiment, document analysis, etc.).

According to the data from a survey carried out in the Faculty, most students state that they have absolutely clear understanding of the procedure of defending their final theses (survey by the Faculty of Pedagogy, 2010, p. 6). Recommendations and methodological guidelines for final theses are analysed and updated regularly every 2-3 years (latest updates from 2006 and 2009), taking into consideration comments by students and their tutors as well as the qualification committee, updated record-keeping rules, etc. Recommendations and methodological guidelines for final theses are approved by the Dean's order.

In the course of the field visit to the College, the EET reviewed some final theses and considers there should be a greater balance between the three parts: revision of literature

(theory), the empirical study and its methodology, and finally the conclusions. EET is also of the view that more foreign literature should be used.

5.4.3.2 Procedure of final thesis assessment

As required under the terms of Order No.35 "Regulations on final evaluation of results of non-university studies" by the Minister of Education of the Republic of Lithuania as of January 15, 2002, the SAR draws attention to the fact that the Final Thesis State Qualification Committee is composed of external evaluators including employers, universities' and education departments' representatives, faculty administration and lecturers involved in programme delivery. SAR notes (Section 2.5.4) that Final Thesis external assessors form two-thirds of the Committee, which promotes an objective assessment of the quality of the work. The committee assesses the final thesis using a ten-point scale based on the criteria which have been previously published by the National Qualifications Committee, which takes into account the content of the work, variety and relevance of the research methods applied, professional and general competences demonstrated in the final thesis and in the course of its defence. Most attention during the evaluation procedure is given to the research (practical) part of the work as well as the analysis and discussion of results.

5.4.3.3 Results of final thesis assessment

In relation to the results of final thesis assessment, the SAR analyses the average marks of Final Theses in Table 13 of the SAR (but does not specify what areas of study these grades relate to). ASAR, in Table 20, gives detail in relation to the programme in Primary Pedagogy noting that the topics of final theses of primary education, which are related to the didactics of individual subjects and their aspects, account for 54% of all topics. Pedagogical and psychological aspects of educating primary schoolchildren are reflected in 45.2% of all final theses' topics.

5.4.4 Functionality of the system for assessment and recognition of achievements acquired in non-formal and self-education

The SAR, in Section 2.5.4, notes that Vilnius College is developing a system for evaluating and recognising achievements acquired in an informal way. This has arisen as a consequence of the College's involvement in the international project "Family Competences Portfolio" which created a "FamCompass" measure that can be used in formally assessing family-acquired competencies. Learning outcomes assessment and recognition procedures can be prepared in accordance with the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania Article 17. Paragraph 4, which states that "non-formally gained education throughout personal excellence can be recognized as a formal programme of education or qualification part of the Government or its authorized institution or higher education institution procedure set " (No IX-1630 of June 17, 2003.

5.4.4.1 Assessment demand

As noted above at 5.4.4, the SAR notes the extent to which Vilnius College is developing a system of achievements acquired in an informal way. In the words of the SAR "Achievements assessment and competences recognition procedure could be applied to persons with secondary education, willing to evaluate non-formally and in an informal way completed developments".

This approach is repeated in the ASAR which goes onto note that the "evaluation of achievements acquired by way of non-formal education in the Faculty is done by mutual agreement between the student and the lecturer within the limits of the subject taught". ASAR notes that "such achievements are accounted as part of a cumulative grade, when a student submits justification and proof for non-formal activities that correspond to the task (work) of the subject and its intended results".

EET encourages VIKO in this approach to the assessment of non-formal activity.

5.4.2.2 Assessment procedures and results

It is clear from the SAR that the procedures relating to the assessment of non-formal activity are being developed at VIKO. ASAR lists the various steps that have been taken to date, which include the pilot testing of its FamCompass evaluation tool and the development of action plan for validating the mechanism of recognising competences acquired by way of non-formal education in accordance with Order No.V-2319 "Guidelines for higher schools on evaluating and recognising competences acquired in non-formal adult education system" of the Minister of Education and Science, dated December 15, 2010

ASAR notes that the "achievements acquired by way of non-formal education are currently recognised within the limits of a subject lectured as part of the cumulative mark" and that "no extensive information has been collected on this issue".

ASAR notes that it is intended to carry out research for evaluation of achievements acquired by way of non-formal education and self-education and to develop the methodology and procedures for evaluating such achievements so that they would promote student pro-activeness and be convenient to use.

In light of the emerging state of such assessment, it would not be appropriate for EET to do other than encourage the development and to commend the intention to conduct research on this topic.

5.5 Graduate placement

The data presented in SAR (Table 14) indicates a very successful rate of employment (95-100%) for graduates of the primary teacher pedagogy study programme.

ASAR does not make a comment directly under this heading.

5.5.1 Expediency of graduate placement

Neither SAR nor ASAR seem to address this heading separately.

5.5.1.1 Number of employed graduates and reasons for failure to get a placement

The data presented in SAR (Table 14) indicates a very successful rate of employment (95-100%) for graduates of the primary teacher pedagogy study programme.

ASAR, in a somewhat different table, setting out the data for a somewhat different range of years (and with some inconsistencies in the data presented by year), indicates that in 2010, the rate of employment dipped to 87.9%.

The SAR also has a paragraph relating to the reasons for the non-employment of graduates which seems to indicate that a far smaller number are actually engaged in teaching than the data above would suggest as it indicates, for example that a sizeable proportion of students are involved in continuing studies at university etc. (It is not clear from the text whether this paragraph (the final paragraph in Section 5) relates to primary pedagogy or to social pedagogy or to both).

EET suggests that the tables be revisited so that consistent records can be maintained.

5.5.1.2 Correlations of graduate professional activity with the study programme

ASAR discusses the links between professional activities of graduates and study programme and highlights the fact that many graduates the Primary Pedagogy study programme are successfully employed as pre-primary education pedagogues in Vilnius kindergartens etc. This suggests that there may be scope for a separate degree programme in Early Childhood Education and Care, rather than giving such professional training as an option within primary pedagogy.

ASAR also noted that the heads of institutions are satisfied with graduates' preparation for practical work and that 95% of the polled employers were positive about these graduates and their professional skills and abilities (research by Vilnius College Faculty of Pedagogy on the need for offered programmes and on improvable aspects, 2009).

ASAR also notes that the data of a survey by the Faculty on carer possibilities for graduates show that about 10% of all graduates continue their studies at universities (for a master's degree). Approximately 6% find a job abroad. 16% of our graduates have a job unrelated to their field of studies (this is related to several factors: salary is not satisfying, issues with family situation, etc.).

5.6 Summary of the process of studies and their evaluation

The strengths and weaknesses of the programme along with the action points as set out in ASAR are presented here.

5.6.1 Strengths

1. Student support is properly organised.
2. Lecturers take active part in international exchange programmes.
3. Employers express positive opinions about graduates' preparation for professional activities.
4. High employment figures for graduates of both study programmes.

5.6.2 Weaknesses

1. Low number of primary education students taking part in exchange programmes.
2. Provision of the latest information on the website is lagging behind time.
3. Formulating some thesis for final works does not correspond to requirements for a professional baccalaureate.
4. Procedure for evaluating and recognising achievements acquired by way of non-formal education and self-education has not been provided.

5.6.3 Actions for improvement

1. To individualise motivation for primary education students to take part in Erasmus exchange programme.
2. To optimise information dissemination system within the Faculty by redistributing personnel functions and responsibilities.
2. To audit thesis and subjects for final works, to organise consultations to final year students about the preparation of research instruments for their final theses.
3. To analyse the need within the Faculty to recognise achievements acquired by non-formal education and self-education and to schedule the procedure for recognition of the achievements (skills and abilities).

6. Programme management

Section 2.6 of the SAR relates to aspects of Programme Management although neither it nor ASAR give a general comment under this heading.

6.1. Programme administration

Programme administration is discussed in the SAR in Section 2.6.1 which details the membership of a new Primary Education Pedagogy Study Programme Committee, established by the Director of VIKO in March 2009. SAR notes that "the Pedagogy of Primary Education Study Programme Committee acts as a collegial body composed for the continuous

improvement and adjustment of the study programme in accordance with the normative documents, the social partners and employer evaluation as well as the labor market needs assessment" and that the various regulations allow this Committee to implement proposals for the improvement or reformation of the existing programme.

ASAR does not make a separate comment under this heading.

6.1.1 The efficiency of the programme management activities

SAR does not seem to address this issue separately nor does the ASAR.

6.1.1.1 Composition and functions of the programme management

As noted above, SAR, in Section 2.6.1, details the membership of the Primary Education Pedagogy Study Programme Committee. ASAR explains that

> the Committee of a faculty study programme is a permanent organizational arrangement to develop, improve and guarantee the quality of faculty study programmes. The committees are chaired (headed) by the department heads, supervising study programmes. A committee is composed of the main teachers of a study programme, administration, employers' and students' representatives.

ASAR also notes that "the representatives of social stakeholders are actively involved into the preparation and improvement procedures of study programme" and that "Stakeholders' active participation in the preparation and improvement procedures of study programmes ensures the compatibility and common interest of those concerned and able to affect the assurance of the quality of study programmes".

6.1.1.2 Coordination of collegiality with personal responsibility in decision making

SAR does not seem to specifically address this issue. However, ASAR goes into considerable detail on this matter, detailing the manner in which the Dean of the Faculty forms the policy of the faculty, coordinates and organizes academic activities and is responsible for the distribution of staff responsibilities in internal quality management system. ASAR also explains that the vice-dean of the faculty coordinates the preparations for intended study programmes and their implementation, the improvement of ongoing study programmes and self-assessment and that the head of the department monitors study programmes, maintains their quality and coordinates the implementation of study programmes assigned for the department. Student and teacher surveys are conducted to assess the quality of study programme and subjects. In order to ensure feedback, survey results are discussed in different management levels.

6.1.1.3 Information about programme monitoring

SAR does not appear to address this issue directly. The ASAR gives a comprehensive overview of

The SAR and ASAR mention various surveys implemented on the quality of the programme. In 2009, the survey "On the demand of proposed study programmes and aspects for the improvement in the Faculty of Pedagogy of Vilnius College"; in 2010, the survey "Study quality evaluation in the Faculty of Pedagogy of Vilnius College"; in 2008-09, "The application of optional subjects in practice and personal development"; in 2008-09, "The relationship between study results and school performance. The heads of departments present annual and standardised quarterly reports to the Ministry of Education and Department of Statistics about student and teacher change, mobility and other statistical indicators.

It seems clear to EET that a comprehensive system is in place for programme monitoring.

6.2 Internal quality assurance

Section 2.6.2 of the SAR relates to quality enhancement. It notes that the internal quality enhancement system of the Pedagogical Faculty is an integral part of the Vilnius College quality assurance system, including self- assessment and development) and that this activity is carried out within the institution at all levels

6.2.1 Suitability of the programme quality evaluation

SAR and ASAR make it clear that there is a Quality Monitoring Guide and Quality Book of Vilnius College in Higher Education, regulating quality assurance procedures which were adopted by the Faculty. It is also noted that there is a Study Quality Board which was created to coordinate the internal study quality assurance system. Quality is assessed following these steps:

1. A Strategic Planning is designed for 3-5 years;
2. The annual activity planning with the corresponding annual reports for each faculty and each subdivision;
3. Overall faculty monitoring (every 2 years);
4. Analysis of financial estimates (annually), survey on study programme demand and specialist training efficiency (annually); meetings with students to assess quality (annually), analysis of social partners' opinions on specialist training efficiency (annually), analysis of graduate employment rate (annually), etc.

Taking into account the assessment results of previous years (surveys, etc.), every member carries out self-assessment activities. Analysis of self-assessment includes evaluation of achieved results, review of strengths and weaknesses, assign of improvement priorities and samples of good practice, and provision of recommendation for activity enhancement.

6.2.1.1 Evaluation as a regular process

SAR notes that an Annual Primary Education Study programme quality evaluation allows for correction of the whole study programme as well as individual study subjects (modules) programmes, taking into account the teachers and students and other stakeholders' needs. ASAR adds more detail emphasising that quality assessment is an integral and structured part of the work of all at VIKO.

6.2.1.2 Preparation of evaluation parameters, methods and aids

ASAR notes that before starting the process of self-assessment, the process of self- evaluation is planned; the data is collected and systematized. Self-assessment is a systematic process carried out in particular cycles: all subdivisions, services and teachers evaluate their activities of the previous year under the developed forms of self-assessment. Each activity is defined according to certain criteria and indicators. ASAR also notes that self-evaluation is carried out at every level: the teacher, department, faculty, service and college. The internal quality assurance system is linked to the external quality assessment. It also notes that competitiveness, accountability, responsibility and the need for continuous performance improvement are the main factors in driving the College to improve its performance and develop its quality culture.

6.2.1.3 Publicity of evaluation process and results

Section 2.5.4 addresses assessment issues but has little to say on the publicity of evaluation processes and results.

ASAR notes that there is a "Quality Handbook" (2008) where all relevant information about the internal study quality assurance system is given: areas of assessment, criteria, indicators and its implementation results. The information about the planned performance indicators is publicly available in the Strategic Plan of Vilnius College, 2009-2013.

6.2.2 Efficiency of the programme quality improvement

Section 2.6.2 of the SAR addresses the efficiency of the programme quality improvement, emphasising in particular the manner in which internal self-assessment procedures help identify the priorities for improvement and lead to recommendations for quality improvement.

6.2.2.1 Application of evaluation results

SAR, in Section 2.6.2, notes that following the preparation of a self-assessment report which helps to highlight improvement activities and operational priorities, faculty departments and local authorities compile annual action plans. ASAR adds the caution that "not all stakeholders'(especially those of students') feedback and suggestions are rational and reasoned". It goes on to note that "study programme committees, evaluating study programme quality improvement trends, take into account real possibilities of the faculty and rationality of the proposals, appropriateness for the philosophy and purpose of the study programme".

6.2.2.2 Benefit of the actions for quality improvement

While the particular benefits of acting for quality improvement do not appear to be listed in SAR, the ASAR recognises that "the influence on the changes in study programmes is very important and valuable" but it does not detail explicit benefits.

6.2.2.3 Dissemination of quality improvement results

SAR, in Section 2.6.1, notes that programme changes are publicized, clarifying the programme and qualification descriptions in AIKOS system, on Vilnius College and on Faculty Websites.

6.2.3. Efficiency of stakeholders' participation

This issue is touched upon at various points in the SAR which makes it clear that the College values such participation. In meetings with stakeholders, it was also clear that stakeholders value their involvement. However, the comment, noted earlier, from ASAR which points out that "the influence on the changes in study programmes is very important and valuable" makes it clear that such inputs may not always be helpful.

6.2.3.1 Participation of students in quality evaluation and improvement

The SAR emphasises the importance of students being represented on all bodies which manage and assess programmes. In the words of ASAR "the students of the Pedagogy Faculty of Vilnius College actively participate in the administration and study programmes quality assurance procedures". ASAR also notes that "Students' proposals (requests) are discussed and coordinated with the proposals of other stakeholders".

6.2.3.2 Participation of teachers in quality evaluation and improvement

Both SAR and ASAR say that every teacher, working on the programme has the opportunity to present his/her individual ideas to improve the study programme. All teachers, after completing the course and assessing students' achievements, have to get the feedback of their work.

6.2.3.3 Influence of external stakeholders on the study quality

SAR, while noting the involvement of external stakeholders (employers, local authority and former students) in the various quality processes, does not make any evaluative comment on the influence of these stakeholders.

ASAR notes that external stakeholders actively participate in the work of study programme committees, carry out the expert analysis of realizable and improvable study programmes and provide concrete suggestions for their improvement. ASAR also notes that mentors'

reflections on the trainees' readiness for independent professional activities are especially useful. ASAR concludes that productive collaboration with external stakeholders helps to ensure the quality and marketability of the graduates in the labour market.

6.3 Summary in relation to Programme Management

The strengths, weaknesses and points for action identified in the ASAR are reproduced below.

6.3.1 Strengths

1. Constant monitoring of ongoing study programmes.
2. Active participation of the community of Faculty of Pedagogy in the processes and procedures of study programme quality assurance and improvement.
3. Efficient communication and collaboration with social stakeholders.

6.3.2 Weaknesses

1. The constant change of formal requirements and preparation methodology for study programmes complicate their management and monitoring.
2. The lack of effective feedback from former graduates.

6.3.3. Action for improvement

1. To make the information about the changes in study programmes more effective
2. The activation of work with graduates (The origination of Alumni club activities etc).

C. Recommendations to the institution

At the end of each chapter, strengths and weaknesses were carefully and seriously pointed out in the ASAR, revealing good self-criticism capacities. Measures for improvement were also realistically drawn.

The EET recommends:
- That Vilnius College executes the actions of improvement that they have formulated at the end of every chapter. We find them adequate and much needed. We suggest that Vilnius College puts them in an improvement plan with concrete results, deadlines, responsible persons.
- That Vilnius College checks the weaknesses they have stated at the end of every chapter and that they confirm if they are covered by the actions for improvement in every chapter. If they are not covered by these actions, then Vilnius College should add them to the just above mentioned improvement plan.

- The improvement plan can then be the core of the PDCA cycle of quality assurance. So a path needs to be described for the improvement plan (P), the concrete actions (D), the checking of the concrete results (C) and finally the after the check needed new actions or plans (A).

- We stress the fact that the management, faculty administration (in this case, the Dean) is in the end responsible for the actions of improvement and should therefore take the lead in setting the PDCA cycle in motion and keep a constant watch at the system of quality assurance and its results that will improve education at Vilnius College.

- The EET wishes to register its concern that it is involved in the evaluation of an existing programme, which is currently 4 years in duration but which is being reduced to three years in duration and that it is being asked to grant approval for up to six years. It is the view of EET that each new programmes should be subjected to assessment prior to being launched or that, at the very least, it ought to be subjected to such evaluation within the first cycle (three years) of delivery.

- It would be helpful to EET if each theme in the framework provided were addressed in future SAR submissions. Whereas, at present, all of the sub-themes are addressed, there are many occasions when an overarching comment in relation to the general theme being addressed would be useful.

- The programme of Primary Pedagogy seems very subject oriented and fragmented. There is no competence based assessment and the learning outcomes are at the subject level not connected to the themes. A comprehensive rethinking of the curriculum is needed.

- As clarity of purpose is essential, the EET recommends that the Faculty revisit the specific purpose of this programme to give it a sharp focus on the profession of primary teaching rather being a programme burdened with weighty branches, some of which might deserve their own professional degree programmes.

- Furthermore the development of this programme should be based upon the trends in the work field and in international contexts. Topics and research questions should be taken from close cooperation with the work field.

- The quality of the staff to deliver the programme is satisfactory in order to deliver the programme as it is now, with an emphasis on knowledge. The staff is motivated and dedicated to the students. However in a changing society, this is not enough, as programmes will get more general themes and competences. To enter into this future, staff development should be geared much more towards modern day teaching methods, the use of ICT/e-learning platforms, connecting to international developments and literature.

- EET considers that students on this programme are over-timetabled, that there are too many academic contact hours and that there should be more time for independent work.

- The quality of the final theses needs to be improved. The theses lack balance between the various sections, most often lacking triangulation. They are too often quantitative and often make little use of international resources. The main problem appears to be the lack of a comprehensive discussion of the findings of the research presented against the theoretical sources presented in the initial section. There also needs to be a far greater awareness nurtured in the students of the need for observing high ethical standards, especially when working with children as vulnerable subjects of research, as well as having a system for clearing ethical considerations through a duly structured ethical committee.

D. Generalising assessment

The study programme *Pedagogy of Primary Education* (state code 65307S107) is given **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation area	Assessment in points
1	Programme aims and learning outcomes	**2**
2	Curriculum design	**2**
3	Staff	**2**
4	Facilities and learning resources	**2**
5	Study process and student assessment (student admission, student support, student achievement assessment)	**3**
6	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	**2**
	Total:	**13**