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QUALITY OF AN ACADEMIC STUDY PROGRAMME - EVALUATION MODEL

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Abstract

Quality of an academic study programme is evaluated by many: employees (internal evaluation) and by external evaluators: experts, agencies and organisations. Internal and external evaluation of an academic programme follow written structure that resembles on one of the quality models. We believe the quality models (mostly derived from EFQM² excellence model) don't fit very well into non-profit activities, policies and programmes, because they are much more complex than environment, from which quality models derive from (for example assembly line). Quality of an academic study programme is very complex and understood differently by various stakeholders, so we present dimensional evaluation in the article. Dimensional evaluation, as opposed to component and holistic evaluation, is a form of analytical evaluation in which the quality of value of the evaluand is determined by looking at its performance on multiple dimensions of merit or evaluation criteria. First stakeholders of a study programme and their views, expectations and interests are presented, followed by evaluation criteria. They are both joined into the evaluation model revealing which evaluation criteria can and should be evaluated by which stakeholder. Main research questions are posed and research method for each dimension listed.

Key words: evaluation model, dimensional evaluation, quality of a study programme

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Introduction

This article presents an evaluation model of an academic study programme, different from quality models or established evaluation models. Quality models follow structure where different components are evaluated separately. Our article presents dimensional evaluation, a form of “analytical evaluation in which the quality of value of the evaluand is determined by looking at its performance on multiple dimensions of merit (also called criteria of merit) that pertain to the evaluand as a whole rather than separately to its parts.” (Scriven in Davidson, 2005:102).

We are aware that in educational sector there are many evaluations of different nature that are important. Mostly we divide them into internal and external evaluations. Internal evaluation is in the form of self-evaluation reports, which include study programmes, research activity of the faculty, their employees and cooperation of the faculty with the environment. Important part of internal evaluation are students' assessments of the teaching staff. Professors and assistants are given students' grades at the end of the year and are therefore encouraged to improve their interaction with students as well as quality of the teaching.

External evaluations of the faculties in Slovenia are conducted by Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA). They visit several faculties every year and make detailed review of the faculty's teaching, research activity, cooperation of professors and students as well as collaboration of the faculty with the environment. Besides careful review of faculty's legal acts, evaluators make interview with faculty staff: professors, assistants, other employees, students and clients. Results of this external evaluation are important for re-accreditation of the faculty and the study programme as well. Accreditation and external evaluation “are the fundamental activity of SQAA on which quality assessment of a higher education institution as a whole, an individual study programme or a higher vocational college is based. Initial accreditation or re-accreditation is granted for the maximum period of seven years. The accreditation procedure includes self-evaluation, an assessment and a report prepared by the expert group, and the decision of SQAA Council on granting the accreditation.” (QA procedures, NAKVIS¹).

Both types of evaluation are structured into various dimensions and stakeholders' assessments, because “it is no longer acceptable to gather large quantities of data in the belief that these will eventually

¹ <http://test.nakvis.si/en-GB/Content/Details/7>

provide answers to all evaluation questions. Data dredging is nearly always inefficient" (Guide, 2003). Self-evaluation reports of each faculty are published on their internet sites. SQAA report on external evaluations of universities and faculties is published on their internet site¹. What new can this article bring to the field of evaluation in higher education?

Quality of study programmes is complex, defined and understood differently by different stakeholders. In this article, we do not start with EFQM or any other quality model, but with simple question: "Who's quality?" Although this question sounds provocative, it is correct, since different stakeholders understand quality differently. Therefore we present dimensional evaluation, as opposed to component evaluation offered by quality models.

We will first explain who the stakeholders in this evaluation are, what their needs, views and expectations are in relation to the study programme. Then evaluation criteria and evaluation questions are presented, followed by explanation, what certain evaluation criteria means to a certain stakeholder (see table 1). We conclude the article with evaluation model, explaining who evaluates which evaluation criteria, what is the main research question for that criteria and what research method is necessary to gather the data.

Evaluations are complex studies, dealing with qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Proposed evaluation model is no exception. The remaining question is, do we need to conduct all proposed studies? Which study and which stakeholder can be excluded in which cannot be? These questions are addressed in the discussion.

Stakeholders of an academic study programme

Stakeholders in the evaluation are individuals, groups, or organisations that can affect or are affected by an evaluation process and/or its findings. "Stakeholder analyses are now arguably more important than ever because of the increasingly interconnected nature of the world. Choose any public problem – economic development, poor educational performance, natural resources management, crime, AIDS, global warming, terrorism – and it is clear that 'the problem' encompasses or affects numerous people, groups, and organisations. In this shared-power world, no one is fully in charge; no organisation 'contains' the problem. Instead many individuals, groups, and organisations are

¹ <http://test.nakvis.si/en-GB/Content/Details/189>

involved or affected or have some partial responsibility to act.” (Patton, 2008:63). Most public policies and programmes involves different parties, evaluation experience suggests that this is far from being an obstacle to a good evaluation. On the contrary, it offers opportunities that should be exploited in order to pose the most appropriate questions and give the most useful answers. “The emphasis on the identification of stakeholders has so far been couched in terms of its practical benefits – to understand the programme better, to ask better questions and to obtain good quality information. However, there is an additional rationale for identification and involvement of stakeholders. Evaluators along with programme managers have an interest in ensuring that there is ownership of evaluation findings. Only in this way is it likely that those involved will take evaluations seriously and act on recommendations – or define their own action priorities on the basis of findings (The Guide, 2003).

Since there are many different stakeholders, that have a stake in a study programme, it is important to review their expectations about the programme and their experience with the program:

- Students – the ones that actively study at the time of the evaluation. There are students at three levels of the study in Slovenia: graduate, postgraduate and doctoral study. In the evaluation only students who study that particular study programme should be involved;
- Dropouts from the study programme – temporary or permanent;
- Students with special status (active in sport or students with various disabilities);
- Potential students (for example high school students, who might be interested in the study programme);
- Graduates;
- Teaching staff (professors and assistants);
- Teachers and assistants of the same profession;
- Other employees at the faculty;
- Similar study programmes, who compete for the same students;
- Employers for graduates (existent and potential, public and private);
- Local community.

Active students are the ones, who regularly attend exams. Presence at lectures is not always obligatory; it depends on the study programme and the course itself. Professor at the beginning of the year presents students’ obligations regarding the course. We are interested to gather expectations of active students regarding the content, implementation of

the course and time schedule (important for those, who work and study, representing majority of the students in Slovenia¹).

Dropouts are the ones, who don't study anymore. The term dropout has negative notion but it is not always negative. There are many different reasons for a student to drop out of the study programme: he gets an employment, where he doesn't need university degree and therefore doesn't need and want to study anymore; he moves to another city which prevents him to continue the study he started; he gets married and temporarily doesn't study any more. The same applies to student girls but most often they get a break from the study while having children, and usually come back later (or not). Dropouts become also the ones who find study program harder than first anticipated; some believe their background knowledge won't enable them to finish the study programme. Some students have many obligations, including daily work and taking care of the family so their study seems impossible at the time; some find other competences and trainings to be more important for their lives and decide not to attend lectures anymore. Evaluation should reveal the prevailing reasons for dropout and pay attention to the reasons that can be dealt with by the faculty: the organisation of the study and by the teaching staff.

Special status is granted to students, who meet certain criteria, defined by faculty's regulations. Most often active sportsmen get such status, also students very active and successful in other spheres, like culture or in the bodies of the faculty; students with special needs. Those students have certain rights that other students don't have; for example being absent from the courses (active sportsmen), writing the exam outside scheduled examination period (active sportsmen), being able to have an oral exam instead of the written one (those having difficulty writing) or written exam instead of oral (those having difficulty speaking and listening). Evaluation therefor examines whether faculty's regulations regarding such status are implemented and if such status helps these particular students to achieve their study goals.

Potential students are high school students, who intend to enroll into this particular study programme or one of the related programmes. In Slovenia many university programmes are available; public, private with or without concession. Decisions of high school students depend on their interests and abilities (average grades, being able to move to another city to study, being able to pay the scholarship if needed). Each faculty wishes to present its study programmes as relevant and

¹ This refers to social studies students, whereas medicine students and students of other natural and technical sciences work less at the same time they study.

interesting to potential students, it also wishes to fulfill their expectations later on. In Slovenia an important group of potential students are those who are already employed, but want or need university degree. They are usually highly motivated but have less time to attend all the lectures. They are more and more present in the undergraduate study, however they prevail in postgraduate study and doctoral study. They are very heterogeneous group of students according to their age, previous type of education and experience. Evaluation should measure their expectations as well, since they have different individual goals and reasons to enroll the study programme.

Graduates are very valuable stakeholder in this evaluation. They experienced the whole study programme and its implementation; they finished all the exams and have a holistic view on the study programme. They know more about the programme than the teaching staff and founders of the programme themselves. They know if competences of the study programme are achieved, if they are the right ones and adequate according to the needs of the environment and according to employers' requirements. Do students of the study programme achieve those competences? Graduates bring internal and external view (from the perspective of their current employment) on the study programme so they are indispensable for the evaluation.

Teaching staff (professors and assistants) have their own experience regarding the study programme and expectations of the students. They have their own view on quality of the programme and improvements that are necessary and feasible; also rationalisations of the study programme that don't undermine its quality. Assistants are particularly important for the evaluation because they work closely with students and know their needs and expectations, also their disappointments.

Teachers and assistants of the same profession can be external evaluators of the level of the expertise provided by the study programme. So-called peer review can only be done by members of the same profession.

Other employees see study programme from their perspective and work load. Most contacts with students have employees in student's office, they recognise their expectations, interests, problems, misunderstandings, priorities, time limits, and like. Also other employees can share their experience and views on the study program that can be relevant.

Those, responsible for financing and implementation of similar study programmes are also interested in study programme's implementation, achievements, reputation. They compete for the same students and therefore want to be better, more visible, more popular study programme from the one we talk about, to be able to attract more students and better students.

Employers are the ones, who can reflect practical use of the knowledge, offered by the study programme. They find graduates working with them useful; but they can also ignore their knowledge and competences or find them not relevant enough. Their feedback is important to the faculty, since competences study programme offer may not be as relevant as expected. Most faculties strive to offer their students knowledge that is important, relevant, of high practical use and appreciated. Graduates are supposed to obtain competences, relevant for the employers' and the needs of the society (local and regional). Employers as stakeholder in evaluation process reveal whether competences assigned to the study programme mater, whether they are enough and whether graduates successfully achieve them. Also potential employers are important since they have certain expectations from the study programme.

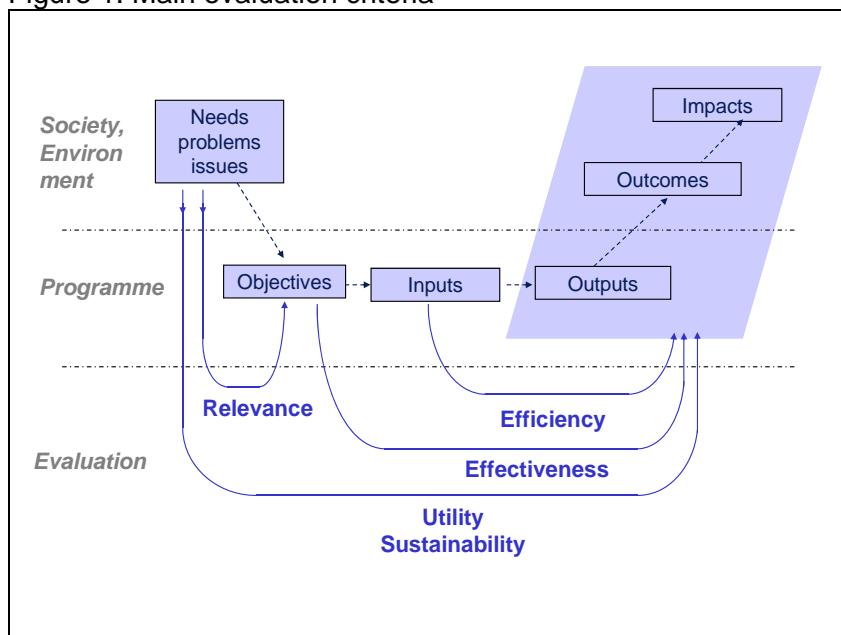
Study programme is a part of a faculty and local community, they both have has certain vision of development. Faculty is interested in academic development, local community is more interested in youth employment, but they can join interests and vision of development. For some study programmes involvement into local community is crucial for its success. Nevertheless local community's support – especially financial - is welcome; therefore evaluation should reveal its development strategy, prevailing interests and initiatives as well as existing conflicts of interests in local community.

Different stakeholders (providers, users, policymakers, professionals, managers and citizens) have different expectations from evaluation. If a major stakeholder's interest is ignored, this is likely to weaken an evaluation, either because it will be poorly designed and/or because its results will lack credibility. Involving policy makers and those responsible for programmes will ensure they take results seriously (The Guide, 2003). It is crucial therefore to identify the stakeholders, find out what their interests in an evaluation and involve them!

Evaluation questions and evaluation criteria

Defining evaluation questions is an essential part of every evaluation. Evaluation questions may be on different levels, tackling different evaluation criteria and involving different stakeholders in search for the answer (Macur, 2010). Evaluation is expected to address various stakeholders with different evaluation criteria. Figure 1 presents main evaluation criteria, universally applicable to various policies, programmes, and measures. They bear different importance according to the evaluand¹ and purpose of the evaluation itself. They also have different relevance for different stakeholders therefore combination of evaluation criteria and stakeholders are presented later on in the table 1.

Figure 1: Main evaluation criteria



Source: The Guide (2003:44)

Figure 1 presents evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, utility & sustainability) that take into account different elements of the system: inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts, objectives and needs. Important element of the system is process, which is located between inputs and outputs. In Figure 1 authors didn't include processes probably because mentioned evaluation criteria can be explained without.

¹ Subject of evaluation: type of policy, programme, organisation etc.

Crucial evaluation questions fall primarily into one of the following four categories:

- Those related to the relevance of the programme;
- Those related to its effectiveness;
- Those related to its efficiency, and
- Those related to its utility.” (Guide, 2003:44)

Effectiveness is one of the most important evaluation criteria, because it measures whether objectives of the programme are being achieved. Was programme successful, are planned outputs achieved. To what extent have the planned outputs been achieved? If not, if programme did not achieve planned outputs and impacts, is it best to terminate it? We can see in Figure 1 that not only outputs, but also outcomes and impacts are presented. Evaluand produces outputs, but outcomes and impacts are achieved not only with the policy/measure/organisation's activity but has also to do with other policies, local community and other environment. From the perspective of users and society impacts and outcomes (which are long-term than outputs) are more, however they are not as easy to measure than outcomes (i.e. number of graduates as output, influence of knowledge of the study programme on local policies as outcome and impact).

Effectiveness refers to the objectives of the programme – are they achieved and if so in what scope? But objectives are not necessarily relevant. Relevance is an important evaluation criterion since objectives of a program may or may not be relevant. “Defining a social problem and specifying the goals of intervention are thus ultimately political processes that do not follow automatically from the inherent characteristics of the situation.” (Rossi et al. 2004). In our particular case we can find competences of the study programme defined by the founders of the programme: researchers and professor of particular field. Minor emphasis is usually placed on the needs of the environment (industry or public and non-profit sector)¹. If those needs are not taken into account, than objectives of the study programme are not relevant (enough) or at least not relevant to the environment of the faculty. Relevance is therefore an important evaluation criterion, revealing broader worth of the program. It is welcomed that study program is evaluated by employers (current and potential) for their relevance; as well as by graduates of the study program, who know how relevant acquired knowledge from the study program is in their professional life or in a

¹ Accreditation process takes into account similarities of the proposed study programme with programmes abroad, as well as competences of the teaching staff. Needs of the environment/society don't seem to have so high importance.

search of a new job. Current students feel relevancy of the study program according to their current personal needs, but not necessarily to the needs of the environment.

In Figure 1 we see two other criteria that are driven directly from the needs and problems in the environment. Utility and sustainability connect environment (needs, problems, issues) with the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the programme. "The criterion of utility judges the impact obtained by the programme in relation to broader societal and economic needs. Utility is a very particular evaluation criterion insofar as it makes no reference to the official objectives of the programme." (The Gide, 2003:45). This criterion is important when objectives are badly defined, which is often reflected in poor outputs and no relevant impacts. The question about relevance of the programme necessarily returns us back to the question of needs of the environment. Who is programme for and is it the answer to the needs of the environment? If not, major changes are needed.

Sustainability is a "modern" criteria nowadays. A lot of activities under the umbrella of development were planned to increase profits of the few and did not contribute to the development or prosperity of the majority. Impact on the environment (pollution in particular) of quick economic growth is so drastic that sustainability is becoming one of the most important criteria and is most often mentioned in relation to our natural environment. "Sustainability has emerged as a result of significant concerns about the unintended social, environmental, and economic consequences of rapid population growth, economic growth and consumption of our natural resources.....Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.« (Sustainability, EPA).

Sustainability does not refer only to the environment – sustainability as an evaluation criteria refers to the extent to which the results and outputs of the intervention are durable.

Utility and sustainability give us an opportunity to see beyond stated objectives. Most evaluations start with stated objectives and take effectiveness as the most important criteria. For Michael Scriven it is quite the opposite. He advocates for goal free evaluation, where evaluators should not consider goals but instead gather information on broad range of outcomes and judge whether they meet the assessed

needs of targeted beneficiaries. (Stufflebean & Shinkfield, 2007). For some authors, utility, relevance and sustainability are very important criteria.

If objectives are relevant, effectiveness becomes very important. Through effectiveness criteria we learn whether planned outputs have been achieved and make recommendations what is needed to be achieved. However our recommendations are not the only ones that matter, because every government or other financing body will carefully examine efficiency of the programme as such. "Resources for social programmes are limited so their accomplishments must also be judged against their costs. Some effective programmes may not be attractive because their costs are high relative to their impact in comparison to other program alternatives." (Rossi et al., 2003:60).

Efficiency compares inputs and outputs of the programme. Inputs are in a form of personnel needed for programme implementation; also time and money count as inputs and are measured as such. Study programme is more efficient when its costs are less. Reducing costs is important but not always possible – there are some standards that should be kept in order to preserve effectiveness of a study programme. More efficient study programme can mean less effective study programme, so management should always carefully balance effectiveness and efficiency, because they are two criteria on a different poles – effectiveness demands more personnel and more money, but they both are scarce. Each institution manages its resources differently – for each faculty crucial questions, concerning efficiency would be: Is the same implementation of the programme possible to achieve with less inputs? Less contact hours, less time involvement of the teaching staff, which consequently means different time schedule of the programme (in accordance with current legislation)? Is it possible to achieve the same level of knowledge of students in a cheaper way?

Every stakeholder perceives efficiency in a different way – for students the efficiency of their work is measured with the speed of finalising the exams; on the level of the faculty efficiency of students' work is measured with the number of students that fulfill the requirements to enroll next study year. Faculty carefully examine those statistics and possible reasons for students' dropout.

We suggest use of additional evaluation criteria for the study programme: Accessibility measures whether study program is accessible to those, who wish to enroll. Accessibility consists of geographical accessibility, physical (for example people in wheel chair)

and economical (Zaletel-Kragelj et al., 2011). In Slovenia economical accessibility is guaranteed for public study programs¹ - they are free of charge for students, who finalised the type of the secondary school required for enrolment, who have never studied as regular students in Slovenia before and who fulfill other requirements if or when they are needed. If too many students enroll, students with better grades and competences can study in the study programme.

Majority of students in Slovenia enroll to public study programmes and don't pay scholarships. That doesn't necessarily mean that study program is economically accessible to them – economic crisis affects all families and some young people can't afford to move to another city to study. Geographical accessibility depends on the location of the faculty, location of the student and his/her mobility (use of a train or car, bus connections, moving to the location of the study). Physical accessibility of the faculty is obligatory by the law, so that students in wheelchair can enter the building. New buildings need to be accessible with wheelchair; however, old ones sometimes do not have such accessibility yet.

Accessibility can not be seen in Figure 1 because it is taken from the Guide. We can however draw it between environment and processes. Processes as a separate box always stands between inputs and outputs. We measure accessibility (various meanings of accessibility) with the help of students of the study program (current and potential). Dropouts (temporary and permanent) are very important, since accessibility of a study program may be one of the reasons for their current no activity in a study programme.

Acceptability of the study program is another important criterion that relates to process (box that is missing in a figure 1). Process can be acceptable or not, it can be acceptable to most students and unacceptable to some of them. Most common reasons for unacceptability of the study program are bad relations between professors, assistants and students. Study program can be unacceptable also to students, who have poor prior knowledge and cannot cope with study obligations and cannot their study for a particular exam. Dropouts (temporary or permanent) are important source of information for this criterion since acceptability of the study programme can be one of the reasons for dropout. Dropout is not entirely negative phenomena; sometimes students get a serious job offer or get married and shift their priorities, maternity leave is often the case for temporary

¹ Those who are available at public faculties. Study programmes at private faculties with a concession from the state have the same accessibility for students. Other study programs at private faculties require scholarship.

dropout, students sometimes move to a different country etc. In another situations dropout is a result of a poor quality of a study programme, unacceptability of the delivery of the programme, lack of relevance and like. These reasons are important and need to be discovered through evaluation of a study programme.

Equity is an important criterion especially in social programs. We understand it mainly in relation to equal opportunities because we are not equal (we have different physical and mental skills). To achieve equal opportunities of students faculties sometimes decide to give some students a special status, that are defined in internal regulations. Special status relates primarily to two categories of students: the ones who are actively engaged into one activity (active sportsmen and sportswomen, active culture workers and like) and students with special needs, usually because of certain disability (being in a wheelchair, having hearing or writing problems and like). If such a status is granted than certain rights are defined for them in faculty regulations, for example being able to write the exam outside exam periods (active sportsman and sportswomen, who are on international competitions at the time of exams) or write an exam longer than other students (for example in a case of dyslexia) or have only oral or only written exams depending on a disability). Evaluation that includes students with special status should reveal if equal opportunities are given to those students: are faculty rules applied and do they guarantee equal opportunities to those students compared to other regular students.

Appropriateness of the implementation of a study programme refers to the level of expertise, provided at lectures. It is assumed, that degree of expertise is assured not only by formal education of teachers (Ph.D. in a relevant field of science) and assistants but also by regular checks of qualifications of the teaching staff.

Combining evaluation criteria, evaluation questions and stakeholders in evaluation model

Evaluation research is not easy; it is complex and includes many stakeholders and many criteria. Results of an evaluation are not short – usually list of requirements on different levels are offered and huge evidence on a study programme. List of evaluation criteria are important to remind us on complexity of evaluation. We have to be aware also that each evaluation criteria is differently understood by each stakeholder and that not all evaluation criteria are relevant for each stakeholder. To better understand the complexity of evaluation we present the meaning of evaluation criteria to each stakeholder in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation model: combination of stakeholders, evaluation criteria of an academic study programme, evaluation questions and research methods

STAKEHOLDERS	EVALUATION CRITERIA	MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION	RESEARECH METHOD
Current students	relevance	Does a study programme fulfil their needs and expectations?	Questionnaire among students of 1 st Bologna level and 2 nd level, focus group among PhD students
	efficiency	What are the reasons for not finalising exams in time?	
	effectiveness	Do they feel that fulfilling study obligations at various courses competences defined by the programme?	
	acceptability	Is implementation of a study program acceptable to the student (timetable, is he/she able to follow the programme etc.)?	
Dropouts (temporary and permanent)	acceptability	Is implementation of a study program acceptable to the student (timetable, is he/she able to follow the programme etc.)?	Focus group if possible, if not personal interviews with those who can be found and agree to participate
	equity (equal opportunities)	Did they feel they were not treated the same as other students? Is that one of the reasons for dropout?	
	accessibility	Is a study programme accessible (geographicaly, financialy or physicaly) to them?	
	efficiency	How do they comment the reasons for not being able to study as quickly as successful students?	
	relevance	Does a study programme fulfil their expectations?	

STAKE-HOLDERS	EVALUATION CRITERIA	MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION	RESEARCH METHOD
Students with special status	equity (equal opportunities)	Do students with special needs ¹ or higher workload have equal opportunities to finalise the exams in comparison with regular students?	Focus group or interviews
Potential students	relevance	Does study programme fulfil their needs and reasonable expectations?	Questionnaire among high school pupils ² in a region where students come from
	accessibility	Is study programme accessible (geographically, physically, financially) to potential students? Is hampered accessibility of a study programme one of the reasons for not choosing the study programme?	
graduates	effectiveness	Did they achieved competences (general and specific) defined in the study programme?	Questionnaire among graduates of a study programme (combination of open and closed questions is needed).
	relevance	Did the study fulfil their expectations? Is it relevant in the line of their current work (especially for those who work in that field)	
	efficiency	Is it possible to achieve the same level of the knowledge with less contact hours / in a shorter time?	
	utility, sustainability	What is the utility of the knowledge that graduates gained through study programme in their working environment (for those who work in the same field of their study / for those, who work in other areas)?	Preferably focus groups (also interviews are welcome)
teaching staff	effectiveness	Do the students gain competences of the course (general and specific) when they pass the exam and other obligations of the course?	Preferably 2 focus groups (faculty teachers separately, assistants separately)
	efficiency	Is the same level of the students' knowledge possible to obtain with less contact hours (in the classroom, laboratory, etc.) and less staff?	
academics of the same profession	Appropriateness of the implementation	Is the appropriate level of expertise determining implementation of a study programme?	Peer review of teaching
Other faculty employees ³	Efficiency	Is the same level of knowledge achievable with less staff or less time spent in classrooms? Are there other administrative barriers?	Personal interview
similar study programs	utility	What is the utility of graduates' knowledge compared to their graduates?	Interview with important informants

¹ Students with more obligations than others or have certain disability.

² Preferably 3rd or 4th year; type of high schools – if relevant – should be taken into account.

³ Especially management and students' office.

STAKEHOLDERS	EVALUATION CRITERIA	MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION	RESEARCH METHOD
Present employers	effectiveness	Do graduates achieve general and specific competences defined by the study programme?	focus group or interviews
	relevance	Is study programme relevant to their needs and expectations?	
	utility, sustainability	What is the utility of the knowledge graduates gained through in the study programme for present work environment?	
Potential employers	relevance	Is study programme relevant to the needs of the employer concerning workforce? If yes, which?	questionnaire
Local community	Utility, sustainability	What is the utility of graduates in local community?	Personal interview with important informants
	relevance	Are goals of the study programme and defined competences of the graduates relevant to the needs of the local community?	

Conclusion

Proposed evaluation model is comprehensive and complex because all groups of stakeholders are involved and relevant evaluation criteria are presented from their perspective. The evaluation model includes both quantitative and qualitative methodology. The remaining question is do we need to conduct all the proposed studies and measure all evaluation criteria from various stakeholders' perspective? Which study and which stakeholder can be excluded in which cannot be? Which dimensions are extremely important and which ones have minimum importance? These are difficult questions and there are several ways to determine importance:

- Having stakeholders or consumers "vote" on importance
- Drawing on the knowledge of selected stakeholders
- Using evidence from the literature
- Using specialist judgment
- Using evidence from the needs and values assessment
- Using program theory and evidence of causal linkages (Davidson, 2005:105).

Seldom all stakeholders are involved and all evaluation criteria included in evaluation. If there are no students with special status (like athletes or

students with special needs) in the programme, they won't be part of the evaluation. The rest of the stakeholders are relevant – some of them more than others. Radej et al. suggest analysis and mapping of the stakeholders to determine which are more relevant than others. Evaluators should get to know them first to be able to determine, which ones can be excluded (Radej et al., 2011). If careful evaluation of the stakeholders is not made than the decision to exclude one of them or some evaluation criteria reveals value orientation of the decision maker. In that case evaluation is not neutral. This evaluation model helps not only design evaluation research of a particular academic study programme but also evaluate evaluation studies in this field. What stakeholders were excluded and why? Which aspects of an academic study programme were not part of the evaluation?

For the ones doing the evaluation question of the merit remain. What is excellent, good enough and what is not acceptable? We rarely find one of these overall assessments; usually components or dimensions are evaluated separately. Focus groups and interviews give most answers needed to determine the merit, however bringing it all together remains to be done by the evaluator. Merit of the study programme therefore highly depends on the ambitions (goals and objectives) of the faculty concerning its environment and its students.

Among evaluation criteria effectiveness is usually presented as the most important one. Managers and financers of an academic programme always want to know if goals have been achieved. However Figure 1 shows that some other evaluation criteria are even more important, like relevance, utility and sustainability of an academic programme, as well as acceptability. They all reveal wider importance of academic programme in relation to its environment and students' needs and expectations. Evaluation often reveals impacts that were not planned and wished for. That's why it is important to take into account many different evaluation criteria and different stakeholders. Taking into account only one stakeholder does not give enough information for making decision about an academic programme. Evaluation is and should be complex such as evaluation model presented in this paper.

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