



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of CIVIL ENGINEERING

at KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

Expert panel:

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Evaluation coordinator – Jūratė Čergelienė

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Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	Civil Engineering and Port Facilities	Port Constructions
State code	6121EX067	6211EX070
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (4 years) Part-time (6 years)	Full-time (2 years)
Credit volume	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Engineering Sciences	Master of Engineering Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary Education Passed three State Final Exams: Lithuanian Language and Literature; Foreign Language, no less than level B1; Mathematics. The average of five study subjects is not less than 7.	Bachelor's degree in the field of Technology or its equivalent
Registration date of the study programme	19-05-1997	12-10-2007

** if there are joint / two-fields / interdisciplinary study programmes in the study field, please designate it in the foot-note*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of study fields is based on the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) 31 December 2019 Order [No. V-149](#).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study process and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI); 2) site visit of the expert panel to the higher education institution; 3) production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

On the basis of this external evaluation report of the study field SKVC takes a decision to accredit study field either for 7 years or for 3 years. If the field evaluation is negative then the study field is not accredited.

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 3 years** if one of the evaluation areas was evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

The study field and cycle are **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on *23rd November, 2021*.

Associate Professor dr. George Markou, *associate professor at Pretoria University (South Africa);*
Professor dr. Tõnu Meidla, *professor at Tartu University (Estonia);*
Professor dr. Nikolaos Theodossiou, *professor at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece);*
Professor dr. Marija Malenkovska Todorova, *professor at University “St.Kliment Ohridski” – Bitola (North Macedonia);*
Professor dr. Žymantas Rudžionis, *Director of Lithuanian Association of Civil Engineers at Kaunas branch (Lithuania);*
Mr. Tomas Bedulskij, *second cycle student of Asian Studies at Vilnius University (Lithuania).*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	Absolventu anketos Jūrų inžinerijos katedra 2021 SKVC
2.	Jūrų inžinerijos katedra dalykų apklausų anketų lentelės 2021 pavasaris SKVC
3.	Protokolas 2020 02 12
4.	Studijų grįžtamojo ryšio organizavimo tvarka
5.	JIK SKK sudeties teikimas
6.	JTGMF SKK2020_Study Committees
7.	MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHERS AND RESEARCHERS OF KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY
8.	Nr. LIN-12_Lygių galimybių liniuotės ataskaita_KU [10-AUG-2020]
9.	Questionnaire _ parental leave LT_EN

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD POSITION/STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HEI

The Klaipėda University (hereafter – KU) was established on 1st January 1991, which is the only structural oriented classic university of Western Lithuania, as stated in the Self-evaluation report (hereafter – SER). Fifteen thousand jobs will be created for the implementation of a future wind farm project, where the “Klaipėda 2030” strategy aims at extremely ambitious goals that foresee doubling the city's economy, create 2,000 new companies, 25,000 thousand new jobs, implement 100 projects, and attract 1.5 billion euros of foreign investments.

The university has undertaken, along with 5 universities located in Europe, the development of a European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS). The university has goals that foresee addressing problems related to urbanized coastal areas and the creation of climate change, decarbonisation, energy efficiency, and adaptation to the new needs of modern build environments.

The KU is managed by the Council, which has nine members, and the Senate, both elected for a 5-year period. The activities of KU are organized and coordinated by the Rector and three

Vice-Rectors (Vice-Rector of Studies, Vice-Rector of Science and Innovation, Vice-Rector of Infrastructure and Development).

In 2015-2018, the number of faculties has reduced from 7 to 3, where the number of departments has halved. The current number of students is approximately 2,700 that are registered in a total of 108 study programmes.

The last external evaluation of the BSc programme was performed by the Study Quality Assessment Centre (hereafter - SQAC) in 2014, and the programme was accredited for a 5-year period. The last external evaluation of the MSc programme was performed by the SQAC in 2017, and the programme was accredited for a 3-year period.

The programmes that are under evaluation form a crucial part of the study field since they are the only structural engineering-oriented programmes in the region.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Civil Engineering study field and first cycle at Klaipėda University (KU) is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	20

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

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

3 (good) - the field is being developed systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (excellent) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

Civil Engineering study field and second cycle at Klaipėda University (KU) is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	20

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

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

3 (good) - the field is being developed systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (excellent) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

Study aims, outcomes and content shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)

(1) Factual situation

The aims and goals of the study programmes at the Klaipeda University (KU) are in agreement with the overall aims of the organization to educate future specialists and creative personalities on the basis of advanced research, develop scientific activities at the international level, provide the highest-level experimental development services and increase the contribution of KU to the sustainable development of the maritime sector in the region and the country. The BSc programme is aimed at training highly qualified civil engineers, with the ability to apply advanced BIM technologies in all stages of work, but also to evaluate and reconstruct port structures and other construction objects. The MSc programme is aimed at educating highly qualified specialists of civil engineering with a sufficient amount of knowledge and skills in mathematics and other physical, technological sciences and engineering design.

The KU defends its views on the extreme demand for specialists in civil engineering with data reflecting rapid economic growth, with about 10 000 economic entities operating in the region, 15 000 new positions created over the last few years and another 15 000 positions that will be created in the future. The argumentation is sound but the response of KU in terms of output of specialists, in average with less than 20 BSc graduates and less than three MSc graduates of the civil engineering programmes during the last three years, can hardly be called adequate response to the needs of the society. The SWOT analysis provided by KU is referring to declining number of students, inefficient marketing of engineering studies and high dropout rate, making the situation worrisome. At the same time, the practice of KU to close free access to the content of the study programmes on the KU website and, instead, request personalised queries to be sent to the administration does not add popularity to the study field and could not be considered efficient marketing. All reported trends suggest that KU is not able to manage the critical situation well enough. The negative trends are likely further amplified by the factors that are beyond control of KU, like COVID-19 hampering the development of joint programmes within EU-CONEXUS, or the methodology for allocating state-funded places that allows to admit only very small groups of MSc students and only every second year.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel concludes that the KU programmes in the field of civil engineering are addressing relevant aims and competencies in general terms. In spite of high demand for specialists in the region, KU has not been able to respond adequately to the challenges caused by high specialist demand and rapid economic growth on the one hand and by decreasing student numbers and ineffective marketing of the field on the other side. The negative trends are likely amplified by factors that are beyond the control of the KU.

3.1.2. Evaluation of the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI

(1) Factual situation

In its mission, the KU positions itself as a higher education institution supporting regional development. In its vision, it is targeting internationally recognised research achievements and well-being of the Baltic Sea coastal region. The list of strategic directions includes facilitating business, study and scientific cooperation in coastal ecosystem development. The KU emphasises that the specific qualities of coastal areas with fast-growing maritime and coastal businesses require specific academic knowledge and skills in order to support sustainable economic growth. These aims of the first and second cycle study programmes in the field of civil engineering are adequately considering the strategic position of KU in the field of regional development.

The international ambition of KU is expressed in joining the initiative of five European universities in the development of the European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS) addressing the specific problems of urbanised coastal areas related to climate change, decarbonisation, energy efficiency and adaptation. Among the four joint research institutes established within this programme, the Institute of Coastal Engineering is obviously targeting the same strategic aspects that are expressed in the vision of KU.

In the teaching of civil engineering, however, the KU positions itself clearly as a regional university and this is reflected in estimates of quantity and profile of specialists required in the field. The directions are based on the strategic documents like “Lithuanian Progress Strategy Lithuania 2030”, “Klaipėda 2030: Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Action Plan Smart Specialization”, etc. KU is paying attention to modernisation and development of the engineering supply of the district that is one of the fastest developing regions in Lithuania, under the impact of the Klaipėda State Seaport and the related industry. KU is the only higher education institution in western Lithuania that trains specialists in civil engineering with a university degree. At the same time, somewhat controversially, the university expects that these specialists will work not only in the regional companies but also in foreign institutions and elsewhere in Lithuania. Graduates can also pursue an academic career at KU or choose EU-CONEXUS.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel concludes that the field of civil engineering has an important position in the strategies of KU and the Klaipeda region, and the aims and goals of the study programmes are adequately considering the strategic priorities of KU.

3.1.3. Evaluation of the compliance of the field and cycle study programme with legal requirements

(1) Factual situation

The objectives of the programmes and the learning outcomes have been identified in accordance with the national legislation, including the Description of the Group of Engineering Study Fields (Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, V-964, September 10, 2015).

The scope of programmes and student's work at KU is described in ECTS credits, 1 ECTS equals 26.67 hours of student work (including both contact tuition and independent work).

Graduates of BSc programmes receive a BSc degree in engineering, after completing a programme that's scope is found to exceed 240 credits. The KU declares that the scope of independent work of each studied subject is at least 30%. The programme consists of general subjects of KU (18 ECTS), field study subjects (192 ECTS), practice/internship module (15 ECTS), and final degree project (15 ECTS). There is an additional module of specialisation elective subjects in the amount of 9 ECTS and the courses taken from this module are added to the total amount of programme (240 ECTS). This means that the BSc programme in its present form does not conform to the legal requirements as its scope is exceeding the nominal value when the elective specialisation subject(-s) will be taken.

Graduates of the MSc programme receive a master's degree in engineering after completing a programme that equals or exceeds 120 credits. The programme consists of 90 ECTS of study field subjects, a final thesis (30 ECTS) and a module of specialization electives consisting of nine 6-ECTS subjects. The list of study field subjects contains room for one specialization elective subject. The total volume of the programme is specified as '120+ ECTS' and this is likely meaning that the students are encouraged (or pressured) to take additional specialization subjects and bring the total scope of their studies to exceed 120 ECTS. The self-evaluation report (SER) specifies that the number of subjects per semester does not exceed 5 and the list of study field subjects consists of 15 subjects, leaving no room for additional subjects to be taken. This means that the additional subjects could be taken only during the fourth semester that, according to the programme, is allocated for preparing the graduation thesis. The MSc programme in its present form does not conform the legal requirements as its total scope is exceeding the nominal value when the additional subjects will be taken.

The pressure put on the students to exceed the nominal scope of the programmes is not in compliance with legal requirements. Compliance with the requirements of the national law is a prerequisite for a higher education institution in order to obtain the right to conduct studies.

However, as compliance with the legal requirements is one of the evaluation subcriteria, it has to be assessed by the panel on the same methodological basis as the other sub-criteria, on a five-point scale. The particular shortcoming is certainly not in line with good international practice, however, its direct impact on the overall quality of programmes can be rated as moderate, as it does not directly affect the quality of education of the graduates and the problem can be remediated with moderate effort by introducing relevant changes to the programmes. The negative impact from this discrepancy on the qualification of graduates is in fact of the same order of magnitude compared to other weaknesses that the panel has identified in course of evaluation. Under these circumstances, and only assuming that the university is in the condition of taking swift and decisive action for bringing the programs into full compliance with the legal requirements, the panel considers it possible to downgrade the weight of this deficiency.

According to the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania 'On approval of the description of general requirements for the provision of studies' (V-1168, 30.12.2016) specifies that no less than 20% of the scope of study field subjects in a MSc programme must be taught by teachers occupying the position of a professor. In this regard, the MSc programme conforms to the quality requirements.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel concludes that the BSc programme in its present form does not conform to the legal requirements due to the ECTS count, exceeding the nominal scope. The MSc programme at KU is also not in agreement with the legal requirements specifying the scope of the programme. These aspects of the programmes need to be remediated urgently and in a full extent.

3.1.4. Evaluation of compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning, and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes

(1) Factual situation

The BSc programme is aimed at training highly qualified civil engineers, with the ability to apply advanced BIM technologies in all stages of work, but also to evaluate and reconstruct port structures and other construction objects. The MSc programme is to educate highly qualified specialists of civil engineering, with a sufficient amount of knowledge and skills in mathematics and other physical, technological sciences and engineering design.

The study programmes contain field specific knowledge and skills, engineering analysis and design, principles of fundamental and applied research, practical skills for solving engineering tasks, but also complementary skills. The reasonable constructional logic of both programmes is well expressed in the distribution of subjects. Different skills are offered in a logically ordered succession of items where the advanced knowledge is built on understanding of basic principles of the field and the graduate level programmes are logically extending the undergraduate studies. The learning outcomes of the individual subjects together are well

covering the spectrum of necessary knowledge. The numbers of first and second level programmes are reasonable.

The learning outcomes (knowledge, understanding, skills) are evaluated using a ten-point grading system that is in detail explained in the study regulation of KU that is available on the web page of KU and is in full agreements with the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania On the Approval of Learning Outcomes Evaluation System (No. ISAK-2194, 24th July 2008). The assessment system as a whole looks trustworthy and is clearly in line with the clear organisation of the study programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel concludes that compatibility of aims, learning outcomes as well as teaching/learning and assessment methods is clearly and convincingly demonstrated.

3.1.5. Evaluation of the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures consistent development of competences of students

(1) Factual situation

In both the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes, the subjects are presented in a logical order and their content does not overlap. The BSc programme is organised along the axis of progressive specialization, from general subjects and fundamental knowledge to the special subjects of the study field and further towards deeper specialisation. The MSc studies follow the same logic, starting from the knowledge about modern port structures and their technical condition, design, construction, use, reconstruction, being followed by data gathering and research work for compiling the final thesis. This order of subjects is well supporting constant improvement of theoretical and practical knowledge of the students and continuous development of their skills. As a result of the previous evaluation, a number of BIM-related courses were included in the BSc programme, more attention was paid to the final theses and the number of general subjects was reduced.

The teaching methods comprise lectures, workshops, lab works, seminars, and include internships, individual or team projects, study tours, etc. The use of a variety of assessment methods seems to be well supported. The expected learning outcomes are well justified and in accordance with the levels of the programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert commission concluded that logical arrangements of the studies along the array of increasing competence are evident from the programmes and this is fully ensuring the consistent development of competences of students.

3.1.6. Evaluation of opportunities for students to personalise the structure of field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes

(1) Factual situation

The self-evaluation report contains tables that summarise the opportunities of personalising the studies, claiming that the BSc programme contains 29.17% and the MSc programme even 50% of personalised content. A more detailed investigation did not confirm these figures. The BSc programme is allocating room for two elective subjects of general education, 6 ECTS in total. The students are also allowed to select a foreign language. The rest of 'personalisation' comprises course projects, manufacturing and design practice, and the final degree project. The MSc programme is allocating room for individual semester projects and the graduation thesis, accompanied by two specialization electives that in reality mean the possibility of selecting two of three pre-defined elective subjects. This shows that the real personalisation opportunities, beyond the individualised projects and practice, are quite limited in the BSc programme comprising 2.5% of the total scope of the BSc programme and 10% of pre-defined content with very limited variation in the MSc programme. According to the Study Regulations approved in 2018 (available on the university website), paragraph 191.5, the students selecting and passing subjects that are not included in the programme have to pay for the additional studies. This is limiting the opportunities of personalising the studies for BSc students and is considered very restrictive for MSc students. The practice of taking fees for subjects taken from other programmes has a negative influence on the personalisation opportunities and limits access to personal complementary skills development in relevant areas like basics of management, public speaking, etc. In this context it is remarkable that the employers and other stakeholders are not acknowledging the teamwork and management skills of the graduates and would like to see widening of the overall spectrum of their skills.

A rather specific means of variation in the MSc programme is the opportunity of including subjects of the next study year in the individual study plan and complete studies in a shorter period of time. This may be interpreted as evidence of relatively low workload of students.

Participation in exchange programmes is not well supported by the study plan. The voluntary internships and traineeships are not part of the study programme. An additional option for personalisation of the study plan is offered through permission of free attendance but this is made highly complicated, requiring the consent of the subject teacher and a special permission from the Dean of the Faculty.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel concluded that the possibilities of personalizing the studies are very limited and restricted by the fact that tuition for subjects outside the programme is subject to a fee. This is limiting access to personal complementary skills development. This aspect of the programmes needs to be developed.

3.1.7. Evaluation of compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements

(1) Factual situation

The requirements for preparation of final theses are affirmed by the KU Senate Resolution (11-35, 6.02.2020, Description of the General Requirements for Independent Written Works of Klaipėda University Students) and Minutes of the Faculty meeting (45JG-21, 3.12.2020). An

in-house handbook (published in 2018) is also available. However, the expert panel could not find confirmation of availability of these instructions on the open website of KU.

For supporting preparation of the final theses, members of the teaching staff publish schedules of bi-monthly consulting meetings and hold written records on individual progress of the students.

The topics of the BSc theses are relevant for the field of civil engineering. The KU states in SER that the selection principles of topics take into account their suitability to the maritime region and this was investigated in more detail. It appears that this relationship is not evident from the list of the topics of BSc theses where common-purpose objects (various commercial, manufacturing and storage buildings, entertainment and recreational centres, office and residential buildings) are prevailing. Selective examination of the BSc theses indicates that the specific features of the maritime region are not systematically addressed for such common-purpose buildings.

Relationship of some of the topics of the MSc theses to the field of civil engineering in general and to the maritime civil engineering in particular is rather arbitrary (e.g. 'Examination of Origin Hypothesis of Right Side of River's Minija Terrace, Neighborhood of Divilai in Seaside Region').

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel was pleased to recognise that the overall spectrum of topics of the final theses is relevant to the field of civil engineering and that the requirements to the theses are clearly formulated. With some caution, the relevance of the topics of the MSc theses could also be reported. At the same time, the selection of topics of the BSc theses is insufficiently supporting the statement about specific relationships with the problems of maritime area.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The programmes in the field of civil engineering are generally addressing relevant aims and competencies.
2. The field of civil engineering has an important position in the strategies of the university and the region. The aims and goals of the study programmes are adequately considering the strategic priorities of the KU.
3. Compatibility of aims, learning outcomes as well as teaching/learning and assessment methods is clearly and convincingly demonstrated.
4. Logical arrangements of the studies along the array of increasing competence are ensuring consistent development of competences of students.

5. The overall spectrum of topics of final theses of the BSc programme are relevant in the field of civil engineering and clear requirements to the theses and defending procedures are available.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The university has no clear and concise plans on how to respond adequately to the challenges caused by high specialist demand and rapid economic growth on the one hand and by decreasing student numbers and ineffective marketing of the field on the other.

2. The BSc and MSc programme does not conform to the legal requirements, exceeding the nominal scope. **The negative impact from this discrepancy on the qualification of graduates is preliminarily rated as moderate, provided the KU will take swift and decisive action for bringing the programmes into full compliance with the legal requirements. The effectiveness of this remedy should be taken as a precondition for reducing the weight of this weakness in the final assessment.**

3. The possibilities of personalising the studies are very limited and further restricted by the fact that tuition for subjects outside the programme is subject to a fee. These restrictions and measures limit access to personal complementary skills development.

4. The relationships between the topics of the final theses of the MSc programme to the field of civil engineering are not always well expressed.

5. The relationships of the programmes to the problems of maritime area may need to be further developed.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

Links between science (art) and study activities shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.2.1. Evaluation of the sufficiency of the science (applied science, art) activities implemented by the HEI for the field of research (art) related to the field of study

(1) Factual situation

During the past few years, researchers in the field of civil engineering together with scientists and lecturers of related fields at KU carried out a number of scientific projects. With the implementation of the Marine Valley Program and the acquisition of research equipment and the number of R&D services provided to business companies has increased. Research topics related to civil engineering and other scientific fields, such as numerical modeling of structures under specific operational conditions or remote soil monitoring or robotic solutions for geophysical surveys etc., are developed.

During the evaluation period, two monographs were published, in 2019 an international seminar “The importance of geotechnical engineering for design and construction of seaport

structures” was organized, in 2020 scientists participated in the international conference "Ocean, Offshore and Arctic Engineering Division of ASME", in 2021 in ICCS24 - 24th International Conference on Composite Structures and ICOMP2021 2nd International Conference on Theoretical, Analytical and Computational Methods for Composite Materials and Composite Structures.

Between 2018 and 2021 researchers and pedagogues in the field of civil engineering together with scientists and lecturers of related fields at KU carried out five scientific projects and four R&D projects for business companies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel acknowledges the fact that research and teaching staff of KU are involved in R&D activities.

3.2.2. Evaluation of the link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology

(1) Factual situation

Teachers working in research programs in the field of civil engineering gain scientific experience by conducting research, participating in projects, and the practical experience by working as constructors, designers, project managers or company managers. The gained experience and new knowledge is transferred to students through coursework and the final theses. Since 2006, KU implemented 134 projects. Traditionally, half of the KU budget consists of project funds and income from outsourced works, therefore project activities are very important in terms of funding and the development and implementation of relevant results. In 2018-2020 KU purchased laboratory equipment for 2.2 million euros.

The content of the programs in the field of study of civil engineering correlates with the research carried out in this field, the latest design and construction technologies, development of new materials, introduction of digital technologies, etc.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel acknowledges the fact that research and teaching staff of KU involved in R&D activities, introduce the results of their research to the study program.

3.2.3. Evaluation of conditions for students to get involved in scientific (applied science, art) activities consistent with their study cycle

(1) Factual situation

KU students are involved in research activities during the study process so that, as future graduates, they can continue by creating innovations in companies or by choosing an academic career. In addition to the tasks required by the field of civil engineering, students have an opportunity to complete coursework or bachelor theses by involving them in

research projects carried out by researchers in the field or by conducting R&D research in industrial enterprises.

In 2020 the Civil Engineering Study Field Committee prepared the description of work requirements for students of the Faculty of Marine Technology and Natural Sciences of Klaipeda University, which was approved by the KU Council, in which it is recommended to choose work topics related to lecturers' research or applied research relevant to construction and design business companies, giving priority to seaport transport structures, logistics engineering structures and buildings; to apply modern engineering information technologies, Building Information Model (BIM), finite element method (FEM) to research; to participate in doctoral dissertation defences, EU-CONEXUS events, various national competitions, to participate in research, prepare and read reports at conferences and prepare scientific articles together with lecturers.

Students are informed about various scientific events through group mails, on the website of KU and the faculty and other social networks. Students have an opportunity to choose an internship in a company and in research laboratories, e.g., in the Laboratory of Mechanics and Marine Engineering of the Marine Research Institute of Klaipeda University.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel acknowledges the fact that KU students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to get involved in research activities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Students are offered the opportunity to participate in research projects.
2. Their projects and dissertations include research elements.
3. The members of the staff are involved in research projects.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Most students are not willing or are not available to travel abroad and gain from international agreements and opportunities.
2. The university should benefit more from the support of the stakeholders in ports to make their study program more attractive.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

Student admission and support shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process

(1) Factual situation

The admission requirements for the first-cycle studies are well-defined on the KU website and are in compliance with national regulations on higher education. Information can be found in two sections – one provides general documents for the upcoming admissions' period (national such as minimum requirements for BSc studies, and institutional such as rules for admission to KU study programmes), and another one illustrates each study programme along with its admission requirements, career opportunities, description of study programme together with its study plan and so on. As for the second-cycle studies, the information is provided on the KU website and also, as stated in the SER, from 2021 admissions to second-cycle studies via the LAMA BPO system was implemented. Students who enter second-cycle studies from colleges or other fields have to apply for additional studies. The intake of students for both cycles is rather low.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Although the information about admissions to first-cycle studies is clear, the same does not apply when talking about second-cycle studies. It is worth mentioning, that University's website lacks information for those students who apply from other fields or the other HEIs – it has to be specified, what specific competences (or study subjects) students must earn in their first-cycle, because now it is quite vague, who may enroll into study programme without necessity to finish additional studies beforehand.

On one hand, admissions for the first-cycle studies show slight increase during 2018–2020, but on the other hand, second-cycle studies have a decreasing number of admitted students. Moreover, the admissions to second-cycle studies is conducted every two years – this may negatively affect students' intake due to a one-year gap if BSc students graduate in the year when no admissions to MSc occur.

3.3.2. Evaluation of the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application

(1) Factual situation

KU has procedures and regulations regarding recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning. In the case of foreign qualifications, candidates must contact the University via e-mail. Consultation and study-plan assessment procedures are implemented in the process of preparation for partial studies. Recognition of non-formal and informal learning competencies is conducted by two separate commissions.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Information about recognition of foreign qualifications during the process of admissions has to be expanded, because currently published information (in Admissions' rules, which are provided in the KU internet page) redirects only to contacting the University. There should be a separate section as well as clear public regulation for such candidates (documents, country-specific requirements, exceptional cases, additional information about the recognition of qualification).

It seems that the process of applying for partial studies and recognition of partial studies is proper and enables students to (in theory) go abroad without fear of having their results not recognized.

The topic of non-formal and informal learning recognition is addressed by two separate commissions – the Candidate Admission Commission and the Commission for the Assessment and Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Achievements. The latter commission decides on the recognition of learning outcomes after organizing the evaluation of candidate's competences, while the first commission evaluates the compliance of candidate's non-formal and informal competences (provided by documents and / or interview) with the study programme. It may be good practice to have a separate body (or several bodies) which works specifically with life-long learning procedures, but it is questionable why study programme committees are not involved in this process. Moreover, SER does not provide numerical data on how many students applied for these procedures – it is recommended to analyse this data and take actions (if needed) on disseminating information about such possibilities or improve the procedures for recognition of non-formal and informal learning competencies.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students.

(1) Factual situation

KU has about 300 Erasmus cooperation agreements in various fields and mobility opportunities for students are presented in informational seminars. The field does not accept incoming students, because the study subjects are read only in Lithuanian. As for the outgoing students, these rates are low – it is about 1 or 2 students per year or per semester, although the SER does not provide very detailed data on mobility rates (separated by years and by study-cycles) and provides a general number of 15 % mobility. KU is planning to use EU-CONEXUS opportunities to raise student mobility.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The SER does not indicate how many Erasmus agreements are suitable for the Civil Engineering study field. These data are provided on the KU website, but mobility opportunities are provided in a downloadable "Excel" document. This aspect could be improved by implementing some changes in the infrastructure of the website (for example, creating a section in the website which has convenient filtering options).

Although the percentage of student mobility rates is 15 %, it is not clear about the stability of this number and its coverage on each of the study programme. Thus, it can be deduced that KU should put more effort into boosting the mobility rates of students in order to let them gain valuable international-intercultural experience. The reasons for low mobility are understandable for second-cycle students (majority of them are working and tend to be less mobile), but there is a general explanation provided in the SER, that first-cycle students are not mobile also due to work-related reasons. This question should be addressed more carefully, because the duration of first-cycle studies should allow students to gain international experience for at least a semester. Also, short-term mobility may be introduced for second-cycle students (as well as for first-cycle students) as an alternative for those, who cannot spend the whole semester abroad.

3.3.4. Assessment of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students of the field

(1) Factual situation

KU has three types of incentive scholarships (the KU Senate scholarship, the FMTNS Council scholarship and the Learning outcomes scholarship) and one-off scholarships (for various achievements as well as unexpected temporary material situations) and three types of financial support for students with special needs. As in other Lithuanian HEIs, KU students can apply for the social scholarship. The university provides career consultation services for students who register for these services. There is no information about academic counselling neither in SER nor on the website – it seems that the university does not have such services. As for psychological support, students can contact one psychologist who is working in the KU. The English version of the webpage does not have a section on student services.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The variety of financial support for students from the first glance seems to be sufficient, but the SER does not cover any type of analysis of this support. The SER preparation group also did not provide such data when asked, so it is possible that KU does not have practices of reviewing financial support services for the students. It is strongly recommended to collect and analyze such data in order to see the status quo of the current situation and make changes if needed. Also, it is strongly advised to have a exclusively separate category and funds for the one-off scholarship in a case of temporary worsened material situation and not to mix it together with the one-off scholarship, which is granted on the basis of student's achievement (like participation in research, cultural, social or sports activities).

The section of career services on the university's web page is inadequate – currently it provides only contacts of the career center and shortly introduces the available services. The section could be expanded with various templates (CV, motivational letter, etc.), tips for job interviews, career tests, internships, etc.

It seems that the KU does not have an academic support system – although students can consult with the program managers, dean's or rector's office, introduction of academic

consultants (at least one per each faculty) could have a positive impact on students' academic process (for example, when students choose elective subjects).

The information provided in the SER shows that KU has only one psychologist. Taking the number of students into consideration, the psychological consultation service is not sustainable.

Lastly, the KU web page does not have the „Services“ section in the English version. The experts' group suggest translating the „Paslaugos“ section with all of the sub-sections into English, because the SER as well as interviews with administration reveal that the study field has ambitions for bigger internationalization.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

Students are introduced to the university during the beginning of the first course study year and also they get tutors who help students with their problems during the first year (only BSc students have tutors). First-cycle students have a study subject “Introduction to Civil Engineering” which expands information provided at the beginning of September. Interviews with students revealed that they get information via these mediums: Moodle, e-mails from program managers, bulletin board, dean's office. Students said that they also receive information from lecturers (by e-mail or sometimes phone calls). Moreover, BSc 1st year students are introduced to library services during the start of September. MSc students are introduced to library services during the start of the period when they have to prepare research works.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

KU has quite strong integration activities which is a positive aspect, but it would be beneficial to think more about the integration of MSc students (for example, by introducing a first-year tutor for MSc students). The study subject “Introduction to Civil Engineering” (3 ECTS credits, 1st semester) enables BCs students to get holistic knowledge about their study programme, but such study subject raises question whether it is needed to have as a separate subject – instead of it there can be an integration week – a prolonged period for integration of BSc students, where students during the first week of September do not study programme lectures and instead of those, they participate in informational lectures, seminars and / or workshops which introduce them to the university and provides needed social-academic information. Needless to say, such events should be organised on the central level with slight changes according to faculties.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. KU has the potential to improve the mobility of students using the EU-CONEXUS opportunity.
2. Free psychological help should be continued, but there is a need to evaluate whether one psychologist for the whole university is enough.
3. BSc first-year students integration activities are sufficient, but there may be a necessity to revise the need for “Introduction to Civil Engineering” by adding more topics regarding the issues of this field and putting the general information about the KU part in “Orientation Week” or any other integrational concept.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low intake of BSc and MSc students.
2. Requirements for admissions to MSc studies should be elaborated on a public website by including necessary prerequisites (study subjects and / or learning outcomes, credits, etc.).
3. Admission rules for international students remain vague and need to be provided in clear documentation (together with country-specific requirements). An admission platform such as “DreamApply” would help with the user-friendly experience during the admissions period.
4. Low mobility for BSc students needs to be addressed – more academic support as well as a positive informational environment about exchange experiences, counselling and, if needed, strong accent on English language skills could help students to gain international experience.
5. There is a need to improve the academic support system, because now it is very reactionary – introducing and promoting mentorship as well as tutorship (for example, staff members, who would help students with choices made in the scope of study programme) would help with the process.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Studying, student performance and graduate employment shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.4.1. Evaluation of the teaching and learning process that enables to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes

(1) Factual situation

Assessment methods and a wide variety of study methods, (literature analysis, oral presentation, laboratory work, case studies, practice reports, discussions, seminars, group

presentations, discussions in joint seminars), are indicated in the description of each study subject in the study programs, focused both on developing independent learning and team work abilities.

There is a detailed time table that includes students' obligations and exact time of their completion as well as the cumulative score for the students' independent work and students can track their progress in the Academic Information System (AIS).

There are opportunities for continuation of studying on second cycle, upon graduation and completion of the Port Structure study programme.

The obtained competencies allow graduates to work as managers in Lithuanian and/or foreign construction companies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Implementation of different teaching/learning methods, as well as, ways for assessment is explained not only in the provided modules of study subjects and the Self Evaluation Report, but also during the discussions with teaching staff and students (additionally, the students mentioned the possibility for professional and personal development according to their needs and aspirations, by elective subjects. Also, one of the students emphasized his engagement in a research project). Therefore, these characteristics of the learning environment lead to individual as well as team work of students, in order to successfully meet the intended learning outcomes (Annex 8 – Diagrams of Intended Learning Outcomes of the first and second cycle study programme and the academic subjects).

3.4.2. Evaluation of conditions ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs

(1) Factual situation

The institution provides facilities adapted for people with motor and visual disabilities (Business Incubator, Marine Research Institute, new dormitory, Studland buildings), as well as, possibilities for using remote modern video tools and teaching materials placed in a virtual environment and has future plans for upgrading other spaces for these needs (STEAM methodological centre). Also, the University website has a special version for people with visual impairments - [Klaipeda university \(ku.lt\)](http://ku.lt). Library departments offer access to special programs in reading rooms (a program that converts texts and notes into Braille, a program that converts a text into the audio format in Lithuanian and English, a program that allows enlargement of all or part of the information on the computer screen, a software that analyses information on the screen and passes it to a speech synthesizer that converts the text to audio, a stationary electronic image magnifier, an alternative computer mouse for people with motor problems, a reading device for the visually impaired and the blind, designed to read a printed text, a printer which can print Braille and tactile graphics, printers which offer the possibility for tactile colour rendering of tactile graphics using dots of different heights).

This Report doesn't provide details regarding the ways in which the university supports socially vulnerable groups through their studies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During conversations with teaching staff, the team heard that the institution strives to provide the best possible support for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. (This is evident from the SER and the University website - [Klaipėdos universitetas \(ku.lt\)](http://Klaipėdos universitetas (ku.lt)))

3.4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

(1) Factual situation

As noted in the SER, the University study feedback organization procedure, approved by the Rector, regulates the procedure for surveys of KU students, listeners, graduates on study programs, teaching of study subjects, organization of study process, quality of assessment of students' competencies, and organization of these surveys, data analysis, accessibility, use and publicity.

Study feedback (anonymously electronically or by submitting a written questionnaire) is provided on the study subject, study internships, the reasons for termination of studies, and a survey of graduates, at least once a year. Student surveys are at the faculty level, carried out by employees (administrators) authorized by the dean of the faculty. The analysis of the results is realized by the department implementing the study program and the Study Program Committee of the field. Additionally, if there is a need, the results are analysed by the KU Student Union, Academic Affairs, Science and Innovation, Communication and Marketing Departments and / or other University departments and presented and discussed at meetings of the relevant departments or the Study Program Committee. The feedback loop is guaranteed since, based on the obtained results, the content of the program, study subjects are improved or the new subjects are introduced. Also, teacher certification and competition, study quality improvement, marketing, KU strategic planning and others make use of the obtained results from the surveys and the feedback. The results are transparent and public as they are published on the University's website in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts.

Study feedback is an integral part of the monitoring study progress and consists of a survey of students on the subject of study, practitioners and graduates. Direct communication with graduates is limited by the Individual Data Protection Act.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In accordance with the discussions during the meetings with various target groups, surveys for different stakeholders (students, teachers, employers, alumni), is one of the ways which is applied for study process improvement. Additionally, the University provided documents related to the different focus groups surveys and relevant questionnaires, analysis,

availability, implementation and publication of obtained data, feedback results of the survey on study subject, as well as survey of graduates on the first study cycle.

However, the expert panel team finds that there is no evidence-based approach in the process of Quality Assurance of teaching and learning. Namely, the impression is that the surveys are organized and conducted periodically, rather than systematically and the concrete measures which are undertaken are not fully based on the results of surveys. Stakeholders are not equally involved in surveys (some of employers and alumni as well as the representative of Student's Union were not familiar enough with these activities in the frame of Quality Assurance system).

3.4.4. Evaluation of employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field.

(1) Factual situation

The rate of graduates who find suitable employment, in line with their competencies, or start working in their final year of study immediately after graduation is found to be high. There is a reasonable explanation for the graduates who do not work in the field after graduation that usually involves personal reasons or the students move ahead with their own business.

KU graduates, based on labour market demands, are highly appreciated and business companies regularly send job offers to students at the *Jūros Technologijų Ir Gamtos Mokslų Fakultetas* - JTGMF Dean's Office and Department.

The University promotes its studies in the best possible way – successful Alumni recorded a video-interview about his work.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel team found that social partners and alumni have positive relations with the University. This is seen through participation in creation of study programmes (for example, in their opinion expressed during the meeting, graduates need more managerial skills), development of social partner network, delivering lectures at the University (in order to strengthen practical skills needed for the employment), signing the agreements between the institution and employers (for effectively dealing with the concern for employability of graduates), participation in mutual event, participating in engineering classes of the Gymnasium (mentioned in the institution documents, as well as during the meeting with the social partners).

Analyses of submitted documents (according to the University SWOT analyses, there is a need for enhancing the relationship with alumni), as well as interviews with internal and external stakeholders lead to the conclusion that the higher education institution should improve graduate alumni tracking. This means a more systemic approach in the career tracking of graduates, bearing in mind developing procedures for tracking graduate outcomes within the University, focusing on the required type of data and timelines for release, as well as data collected tailored to the needs of the University and a wider social environment.

3.4.5. Evaluation of the implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination

(1) Factual situation

The KU Code of Academic Ethics defines the principles and measures for ensuring academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.

Student knowledge, abilities and skills are assessed in terms of fairness, honesty, impartiality and consistency with the objectives of the course being taught. Strict requirements for teachers for ensuring transparency of studies are proscribed, such as: reporting to the ethics committee dishonesty of students, protecting the student's personal data, providing the equal conditions for regular realization of assessment procedures regardless of the student's political or social activities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The KU Code of academic Ethics outlines the responsibilities and expectations of different stakeholders across the academic community. Namely, there is an institutional legal base for reliable, fair and recognized outcomes through valid assessments of the students' knowledge, skills and competencies.

3.4.6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies

(1) Factual situation

The study regulations of Klaipėda University of 2018 guarantee the right of students to appeal against the assessment of study results, under clear and fulfilled terms (Evaluation of the term paper/project, illegal deny to defend the final thesis/project or/and to take the final exam, violation the procedure for defence the final work/project, or violation the norms of academic ethics during the defence). The final decision regarding the measures that should be undertaken is approved by the Board of Appeals.

The above-mentioned act is publicly accessible on the University web page.

There are cases when these regulations were put in place with evident results of the undertaken procedure (students reset the exam, and the lecturer was discharged).

Students can also appeal against violations of ethics to the KU Academic Ethics Committee, based on The Code of Academic Ethics.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In order to create a learning environment which is supportive for the higher education stakeholders, an institutional legal procedure, for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process is admitted. In addition, the main responsibility of

the Academic Ethics Committee is promotion of high ethical standards in the University as a whole.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Applying various forms of students' participation in the study process (teaching, learning and assessment) is an important factor in their academic achievement.
2. The institution is engaged in learning environment improvement in order to meet the needs of socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.
3. Good legal base for common understanding, management and development of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.
4. Legal protection of the participants in the University higher education process.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. University system for Quality Assurance.
2. Relations and flow of information between the higher education institution and the labour market.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching staff shall be evaluated in accordance with the following indicators:

3.5.1. Evaluation of the adequacy of the number, qualification and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff within a field study programme(s) at the HEI in order to achieve the learning outcomes

(1) Factual situation

The University declares in the SER that 16 lecturers work in the bachelor's and master's degree programs in the field of Civil Engineering, of which 11 occupy more than half of the full-time. 69% of teachers have a doctorate in technology and 31% of teachers have a pedagogical title. The academic staff of the Civil Engineering study field is suitable to ensure the achievement of the study aims and outcomes of both study programmes ("Civil Engineering and Port Facilities" at bachelor level and "Port Constructions" at master level). Most of the teachers carry out research in the field of Civil Engineering, which is related to the subjects taught.

Staff, in general, are well matched to the modules they deliver. They have wide and varied experiences in the port construction industry and through pedagogical practice. Some of the

staff continue to remain active in practice and this brings to the programme a high level of currency in terms of the evolving practices that are being used and developed.

The staff is generally effective in delivering the programme.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The academic staff of the Civil Engineering study field is suitable to ensure the achievement of the study aims and outcomes of study programmes. 69% of teachers have a scientific degree. The scientific, didactic and professional qualifications and competencies of teaching staff are at an adequate level, but the permanent development of competencies of employees could be assured constantly.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile)

(1) Factual situation

The mobility of teaching staff is limited. Only four teachers have participated in internships by ERASMUS + mobility programme in the last few years and nobody has had ERASMUS + teaching visits in foreign universities. Teaching staff have possibilities to reach for teaching or internship exchange programmes as Erasmus+ teaching visits to KU partnership universities in the EU as well to use possibilities of EU CONEXUS CAMPUS programme, which is not utilized effectively.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The conditions for ensuring teaching staff academic mobility is quite good at the University, but the mobility of the teachers is limited. It has to be improved with the encouragement of teachers. The knowledge of the English language of teaching staff has to be improved.

3.5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff

(1) Factual situation

Staff are encouraged to become members of the professional body and to acquire a PhD qualification relating to their area of expertise. The majority have had experience in the industry and practice. Lecturers maintain their currency with practice through consultancy activities and through research practice.

There is a doubt that not all of the teaching staff participate in the professional skills development courses and in the list of teachers who participated in the professional development events for civil engineers it is possible to find only five from 16 persons. The knowledge of the English language of teaching staff has to be increased, because the university has declared that they have English courses for students in the civil engineering field.

The teaching staff is working on research projects and publication of papers, but the number of publications by faculty researchers has to be more impressive. The teaching staff published 19 research works (see SER Annex No.3) and only less than half of them were published in high-level research journals, which are included in the list of journals indexed in the ISI Web of science with impact factor (Q1 or Q2).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The University provides appropriate opportunities for teachers to increase their didactic competencies, e-learning skills and other qualifications. The planning of improving the competencies of the teaching staff at the University must be more systematic. There is no effective annual staff appraisal system to identify weaknesses as well as potential for improvements.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The qualifications and competencies of teaching staff working in the programme is suitable for achieving the study results.
2. The University provides appropriate opportunities for teachers to participate in international exchange programs and to increase their qualification.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The mobility of teaching staff is limited.
2. The planning of improving the competencies of the teaching staff at the University must be more systematic. There is no effective annual staff appraisal system to identify weaknesses as well as potential for improvements.
3. It is a matter of concern that only 18,8 % of the lecturers work as full-time teachers of the current staff. The number of students has to be increased, to improve this situation.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Study field learning facilities and resources should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

3.6.1. Evaluation of the suitability and adequacy of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process

(1) Factual situation

The provision of resources to support these programmes is good. The technical and hygienic conditions of premises for studies, work conditions in libraries and reading rooms are

suitable. The facilities in the department, which include laboratories and rest zones, offer students a good learning experience. Students and teachers can access research equipment, which is located in the Marine Research institute.

Laboratory pieces of equipment and measurement instruments are sufficient for the study process. The University community has access to 12 databases. The number of students using the databases is growing each year. Students and teachers may access the databases through the computer networks of KU, both from all buildings of the University and from remote work places outside the University. The information from the databases allows both the teachers and the students to become familiar with the subject or specific problem in more detail. Since 2001, KU had the virtual library (<https://vb.ku.lt>) and books can be ordered remotely.

Teachers use different methodological tools for the study process to ensure their learning outcomes where they use handouts, slides and films. Teachers announce the materials of modulus in the Moodle system of the University.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The technical and hygienic conditions of premises for studies, work conditions in libraries and reading rooms are suitable for effective learning process. However, there is a need to improve the quality of the premises and the equipment of some laboratories.

3.6.2. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies

(1) Factual situation

The University systematically plans to upgrade laboratory equipment for all study programs. The Institute of Marine Research is operating new study laboratories, which have been modernized, new research methodologies are being mastered, and internships of lecturers and researchers in foreign science and business structures are planned. In order to achieve the economic breakthrough of Klaipeda, the city municipality and the higher schools of the port city have joined efforts and made the agreement on cooperation intentions.

One of the key objectives of the library is to improve the supply of the most recent literature and electronic resources, necessary for studying. The literature is purchased according to the teachers' recommendations and requests; therefore, the library stocks are added with the most recent literature and publications that are necessary to the students of the programme. Students have the possibility to find needed books for every subject on the internet.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The University systematically plans to upgrade laboratory equipment and library resources for all ongoing study programs, including the Civil Engineering field. Although financial resources are limited, the efforts made ensure a sufficient supply of material resources for Civil Engineering programs.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Facilities in labs and classrooms are quite good and satisfactory, to achieve results of the study programme. Especially impressive equipment is located in the Marine Research Institute.
2. The Library has enough resources for the suitable study process organization.

(2) Weaknesses:

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3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Study quality management and publicity shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER, the internal quality assurance (QA) system at KU operates in accordance with the descriptions of the Quality Management System that consists of:

- Study Program Development,
- Evaluation and Improvement Process,
- Study Implementation Process,
- International Degree Study Implementation Process,
- International Partial Study Implementation Process,
- Career Guidance and Career Management Process,
- Student and Listener Admission Process,
- Stakeholder Feedback Management Process,
- Inadequacy Management Process,
- other

The frequency of internal evaluation is usually one year as stated in the SER. The study programme's QA is implemented and monitored by the Construction Study Areas Committee (hereafter - CSAC) formed by the KU Rector's approval. As stated in the SER, all study program management and QA decisions are made collegially. The Head of the Department of Marine Engineering is directly responsible for the implementation of the study programme of Civil Engineering. The Head of Department (hereafter - HoD) is responsible for submitting any change proposals related to the study programme, through managing all stakeholders. All the reporting is done by the HoD.

The CSAC is the academic body that supervises the study programmes of the study field and it is accountable to the Faculty Council, which is the body that evaluates the quality of the study programmes. The Senate performs the final assessment and approves the recommendations accordingly.

The CSAC also cooperates with the KU's Study Quality Commission (SQC), the Vice-Rector for Studies, the Study Service, the Students' Union and other administrative units. The SQC is an advisory institution to the Rector, which analyses the study quality and provides relevant recommendations. In 2014, the electronic information system Point was introduced, which provides detailed normative documents describing the decision-making sequence and the process of consideration and approval of program quality assurance: Senate resolutions, rector's orders, etc. There is an annual internal cycle through which the programmes are assessed.

Internal evaluation and certification of the study program is carried out every three years. CSAC carries out internal certification of the study programme. For this purpose, by the order of the Rector, a study program self-assessment preparation group is formed, which provides a self-assessment summary.

There is a system in place that foresees the use of surveys offered to students to get their feedback on courses and teachers.

Teachers stated that the university is supporting them and that their feedback is acquired through surveys sent to them. A set of surveys were also provided prior to the visit.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The evaluation team is pleased to find out that there is an independent body (SQC) that is responsible for QA issues related to the institution. Unfortunately, the evaluation team did not have the chance to meet with the SQC officer during the visit, since the officer was sick. The fact that there was no one to replace the QA officer and provide basic information to the evaluation team indicates that there is only one person working in the QA field at the university. This is an area of concern that the university should look into, especially having a situation where an evaluation team visits the university to assess different study programmes and the QA officer or representative is absent. This can lead to unpleasant situations that can affect the entire university and not only the under-review study programmes.

The evaluation team requested for the analysis of the survey results and received a pdf titled "Nr. LIN-12_Lygių galimybių liniuotės ataskaita_KU [10-AUG-2020]". The equal opportunity report found that the university had an overall rating of 8 out of 10. Even though this is an indication of good practice, the evaluation team requested for the analysis of surveys sent to students, teachers and social partners, which they did not receive. Survey results from students were received, but not the analysis of the feedback received by students.

3.7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance

(1) Factual situation

As stated in the SER, the QA process in improving the effectiveness of the study programmes includes all stakeholders. A 6-month cycle is applied where the courses are being evaluated according to the students' feedback. Students are also involved in this procedure through their representatives.

In addition to the above, once a year the administration has a general meeting of teachers to present the latest developments related to KU activities, including studies. Employers and social partners are also involved in this procedure as stated in the SER. Finally, graduates are providing with their recommendations towards improving the study programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Even though the evaluation team requested from the QA unit to send the latest analysis of the student and teachers surveys (not just survey results), they did not receive any. The same applies to results and their analysis when it comes to the feedback received from surveys sent to companies and social partners. This shows a deficiency in the QA system.

Based on the factual situation in relation to the valuation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance, the KU seems to have a practical system in place that considers the feedback from all stakeholders. The social partners and companies are providing with their feedback which is accounted for during the development and improvement of the study programmes.

The evaluation team was pleased to find out that companies are also assisting the university with the maintenance of its buildings, which demonstrates the close relationship between the stakeholders and the university. The companies also contribute to the QA procedure by providing direct feedback on the students' performance during their internship.

It is strongly recommended to send official surveys to the social partners and companies to record their feedback on improving the current study programmes. The interviewees stated that they did not receive any surveys yearly asking for their feedback, even though they communicate orally with the teachers of the study programmes.

3.7.3. Evaluation of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER, there are 6 points that the university is concentrating on:

1. content of the study subject and assessment of the quality of teachers' teaching (assessed by students),

2. evaluation of KU activities by graduates (evaluated by graduates),
3. internship assessment (assessed by students),
4. efficiency of the study process (assessed by graduates),
5. implementation of study programmes (assessed by administrative staff and teachers)
6. other one-time quantitative and qualitative research performed in order to find information relevant to the activities of KU.

The summarized information is provided publicly on the KU website in the annual KU report and it is also uploaded on the university's website.

The team was expecting to receive information on the feedback provided by all stakeholders so as to evaluate the QA procedure and how it collects and processes the information received from them (companies, social partners and alumni). This information was never received.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The deficiency is now clear in the collection, analysis and distribution of QA related information, since the evaluation team did not receive the requested documentation that should have been made available the same day or at least by the end of the week. It seems that the university and not the study programme's management, fails to recognize the importance of these evaluation visits and the contribution that the QA unit has during these visits. This is a significant weakness that can lead to significantly negative consequences. It is strongly recommended that the QA unit should be resourced with at least two personnel that will be able to answer questions and provide information to anyone that is entitled to request them.

In order to test how often the university's website is updated, the review team asked about the total number of students that were studying at the university. The answer that was received by the SER team was 2,700 which was the same number found in the SER. The website states 3,000 as shown in Fig. 1.

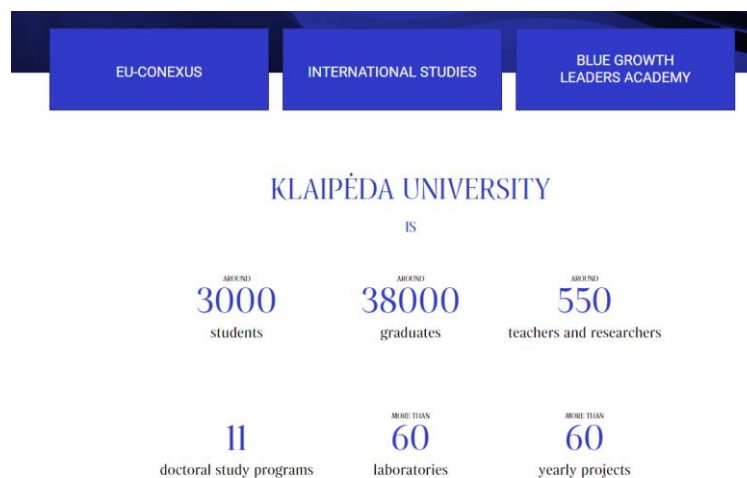


Figure 1 Snapshot taken on 06 Dec 2021.

It is evident that the website does not show the updated number of current registered students. This is not good practice, thus it is strongly recommended to keep an updated webpage that reflects current data.

3.7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the SKVC or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI

(1) Factual situation

There is a system in place that allows students to provide with their feedback through surveys. In one of the recent surveys offered to students, the overall average in the course of Hidromechanika was 3.45 out of 5.00, while the lowest grade received by the students was 2.00 out of 5.00 related to the question “Vertinama laikantis paskelbtų vertinimo kriterijų ir būdų” (“The evaluation is carried out in accordance with the published evaluation criteria and methods”). This indicates a serious weakness for which the QA internal self-evaluation system should have developed a proposal on how to improve the situation. This information was not received. The survey results reflected the feedback of 80% of the students (participation rate). Another point that is not addressed in the SER and it is found in the survey results provided by the university prior to the team’s virtual visit, was the 2.25 out of 5.00 grade that the students gave to the question “Studentų atlikti darbai, užduotys aptariamai su dėstytoju (jei vertinamos ir / ar pratybos/ seminarai, laboratoriniai darbai)” (Work performed by students, tasks are discussed with the lecturer (if exercises and / or exercises, seminars, laboratory works are assessed)). This shows a high dissatisfaction from the students that they do not receive the required teachers’ support through feedback on their work. The highest grade received through the provided survey results (5.00 out of 5.00) was for the question: “The teacher follows the schedule of lectures (starts and ends lectures on time, does not miss classes, etc.)” A 4.75 was given to the question: “The specified mandatory literature is available.”

The evaluation team was pleased to see that the rest of the courses were positively evaluated, with students positively commenting on how they enjoyed their lectures and that they were satisfied with their teachers’ performance and personality. This is a good indication that the teachers are doing a very good job, but again, there is no QA reporting in the cases where improvement is needed.

The SER states that due to the Law of Personal Data Protection the KU’s students and graduates cannot be interviewed directly. Then the SER mentions results from surveys offered to students in relation to the quality of their studies, a survey conducted by the Lithuanian Student Union. It is not specified how many students were registered students of the under-review study programmes.

Tables 33 and 34 are provided within the SER, where comments from previous expert visits and actions taken by the university are discussed.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is evident that the feedback of the students on the quality of the studies is in place. There is a procedure to collect feedback on the quality of the study programmes.

It is also evident that in general teachers are doing a good job in their classes, but in cases where improvement is needed, there is no official reporting system that acknowledges these findings (feedback from students after the end of the semester), where it will recommend remedial actions towards improvement through monitoring the implementation of the suggested actions. This must be improved by involving the QA unit in coordination with the Head of Department and the Dean, all of which should be able to record any study programme related issue and propose remedial actions, where they will be able to implement and check the results for these actions. Therefore, it is recommended to develop a QA cycle that will be able to efficiently implement the Plan, Do, Check and Act processes. So far, the university is planning and acting, but there is no checking of the efficiency of the implemented actions. This is evident from the table where the strengths and weaknesses are presented.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Direct involvement of the social partners and companies in the QA procedure.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The QA unit is understaffed, leading to the inability of interviewing the QA officer or any other related employee that is handling QA processes.
2. There is a deficiency in distributing QA related data, which poses a concern.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

N/A

V. RECOMMENDATIONS*

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<p>The scope and content of the programmes should immediately be adjusted to meet the legal requirements. Swift and decisive action of remediation should be taken as a precondition for reducing the share of this weakness in the final assessment.</p> <p>A clear and concise plan must be developed for responding adequately to external challenges and negative trends of admission.</p> <p>Better opportunities for personalising the studies have to be created.</p>
Links between science (art) and studies	<p>Find methods to convince students to register for the Erasmus programme.</p> <p>Include more courses and research on coastal engineering topics.</p>
Student admission and support	<p>Expand the admissions information (admissions to second-cycle, international admissions) on the official website.</p> <p>Discuss the option of a tutor or other duty that would strengthen the academic support for students.</p>
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<p>Applying an evidence-based and systematic approach in monitoring and improvement of the process of University Quality Assurance.</p> <p>Improve graduates' career tracking at institutional level.</p>
Teaching staff	<p>Find ways to increase the mobility of teaching staff.</p> <p>The planning of improving the competencies of the teaching staff at the University must be more systematic. There is no effective annual staff appraisal system to identify weaknesses as well as potential for improvements.</p> <p>Increase the number of full-time teachers.</p>
Learning facilities and resources	<p>Continue improving learning facilities and resources.</p>
Study quality management and public information	<p>Reinforce the Quality Assurance of the University by hiring at least an assistant that will be able to handle basic operations when the QA officer is sick or absent.</p>

*If the study field is going to be given negative evaluation (non-accreditation) instead of RECOMMENDATIONS main **arguments for negative evaluation** (non-accreditation) must be provided together with a **list of “must do” actions** in order to assure that students admitted before study field’s non-accreditation will gain knowledge and skills at least on minimum level.

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field of Civil Engineering at Klaipėda University:

The evaluation team found that the Civil Engineering field was in general well organized and offered its students the level of education that is demanded by the SKVC in Lithuania.

On the other hand, the expert panel concluded that the BSc programme in its present form does not conform to the legal requirements, potentially exceeding the nominal scope. The MSc programme at KU is not in agreement with the legal requirements specifying the scope of the programme. These aspects of the programmes need to be developed and effectiveness of this action of remediation should be taken as a precondition for reducing the share of this weakness in the final assessment.

There is also concern about the way that the QA procedures are handled and the distribution of data related to the programmes, where the University should take immediate actions towards remedying the situation (strengthen the QA department by hiring at least one more qualified QA officer).

Expert panel signatures:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. George Markou, (panel chairperson), academic