



CENTER FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of LINGUISTICS
at Klaipeda University

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Report language – English

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Programme “English and Another Foreign Language (Swedish, Spanish, German)”	Programme “English and Another Foreign Language (German/French) and Business Communication”	Programme “Baltic Languages and Culture”
State code	6121NX002	6211NX050	6211NX053
Type of studies	Bachelor	Master	Master
Cycle of studies	First	Second	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time (4 years)	Full time (2 years)	Full time (2 years)
Credit volume	240	120	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Humanities	Master of Humanities	Master of Humanities
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English	Lithuanian, English	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Bachelor’s degree and English language B2 level	Bachelor’s degree
Registration date of the study programme	21-03-2017	23-04-2014	29-01-2007

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

The study field is **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 is **accredited for 3 years** if one of the evaluation areas was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

The study field is **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point).

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was completed according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The Visit to HEI was conducted by the panel on **10/05/2021**.

Prof. dr. Srebren Dizdar (panel chairperson), *Bosnia and Herzegovina*;

Prof. dr. Alberto Fernandez-Costales, *Spain*;

Doc. dr. Karolina Grzech, *Spain*;

Mr. Snorre Karkkonen Svensson, *Latvia*;

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1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the 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.	<i>Material base</i>
2.	<i>Final Theses</i>

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

Although the interest for studying diverse language features could be traced several thousand years ago, it was only in the last two hundred years that there had been a number of attempts to establish a specific academic / scientific discipline on its own. However, despite rather productive activities and results that classical Philology studies have attained in the course of 19th century, it was in the 20th century when *Linguistics* gained its renowned status as a vibrant research area and respective study field in Humanities and Social Studies across universities, primarily in Europe and USA, and, subsequently in other parts of contemporary world. In this ongoing process, at the outset of the 21st century and its first two decades, certain burning issues about the actual nature of these studies have still remained unresolved. They mostly revolve about the interrelated set(s) of issues of how Linguistics as the field of studies should be and could be organised in ever-changing approaches to phenomena in and around language as the primary focus of academic and scholarly interest. This dilemma is present not only on the theoretical level, but even more so in the practical organisation, structure, facilities, management, and, above all, in regard to the key actors – students, teachers and researchers that happen to be involved in the actual execution of different activities closely related to the manner respective departments respond to the needs and requirements that had been set up within the European Area of Higher Education (EHEA) under the auspices of the Bologna Process. It also seems feasible to bring the current Linguistics study field closer to international standards and academic excellence both at the level of the national legislation in higher education in Lithuania and its actual legal requirements. A rather fair and objective evaluation about the state of such studies, their features, challenges in view of opportunities and threats, and possible recommendations to help improvements and further advanced organisation and execution of these studies was not only needed from the point of view of the regular assessment, but highly necessary for future activities in the envisaged period following the evaluation.

That is why the international Team of experts (hereafter - the Team), having been entrusted by SKVC to perform the review of the Linguistics field of studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Klaipėda University (hereafter – KU), had to take into account many issues that could better illuminate how these studies could be understood from external perspectives, as well as to, in a number of online interviews with the senior management, the team that has prepared Self-Evaluation Report (hereafter - SER), teachers, students, alumni and social partners; gather as much as possible additional findings that, in the end, form a larger picture in the form of the Final Report. Having followed the prescribed methodology, the Team tried its best to assess not only the required seven specific areas of expertise, but, also, to take into consideration that the difficulties having been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic since mid-March 2020 had definitely affected the process of instruction and research, as well as all aspects of everyday life, in particular the inability to carry out traditional face-to-face classes and communication between teachers and students. That is why virtual visits, although they could never replace a direct human communication, seemed to be the best solution under the given circumstances, and, thanks to a good will and efforts of fellow-colleagues, the interviews conducted by the Team members managed to produce an active interaction with colleagues from Linguistics studies at Klaipėda University. A minor issue was the need to translate both questions and answers from / to Lithuanian and English, which somewhat prevented in-depth elaboration of some questions within the allotted time.

Another difficulty was the actual nature of Linguistics studies at KU that includes one BA "English and Another Foreign Language (Swedish, Spanish, German)," and two MA study programmes: "English and Another Foreign Language (German / French) and Business Communication," and "Baltic Languages and Culture." Having been designed and oriented, at the time when KU had been established in 1991, as traditional philology courses with the strength emphasis on the regional specificity of Western Lithuania, i.e. Klaipėda region, and its focus on the more general aspects related to both academic rigour and methods of instruction and research; but even more and more so on its active involvement with the particular needs of its larger geographical, social, cultural, and, above all, business environment, the efforts to bring them under the common auspices of Linguistics field of study have still been in the early stage of implementation. Since the Team could not direct its findings to any of aforementioned study programmes in greater detail, even at the horizontal level between two separate MA study areas, let alone between the single BA programme that is linked at the Second Cycle of Studies with German as the second language, it is difficult to assess how these three areas of skills and competencies can be understood as a larger whole. This is especially notable when the more recent / contemporary concepts of Linguistics studies have been duly compared to dominantly envisaged and executed studies from the point(s) of view of more traditional philological approaches to language phenomena. On the other hand, "Baltic Languages and Culture" do not cover a wider spectrum of interrelated issues not only in the framework of the majority of languages in the Baltic region and their

respective culture(s), but have no real connection with either aforementioned BA and MA programmes in "English and Another Foreign language", with the possible exception of Swedish. Nevertheless, the Team has recognised elements of various levels of advancement in all these three study programmes to converge to a substantial extent to the more comprehensive concept of Linguistics that, eventually, can lead towards better integrated Linguistics field of studies in contrast to sufficiently structured and executed study programmes at each cycle of studies. On the other hand, alongside such a much-needed transformation within the study programmes, there is the equally relevant necessity to connect with available interdisciplinary fields of study at KU. It seems to be a rather urgent strategic decision by both the KU and other levels of the Department management that will ensure not only the survival of studies at this stage of development, but, also, to open much to international accomplishments in similar, primarily, regionally-oriented higher education institutions in the Baltic region and Central Europe, as well as potential partners across EHEA. In this way, KU Linguistics study field may aspire to secure its academic and scholarly future and to create such an attractive profile of studies at the national level of Lithuania, but, in due time, even beyond its present, mostly regional, position in the larger context of such studies in Europe and elsewhere.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Linguistics study field and **first cycle** at Klaipeda University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Study aims, outcomes and content	3
2.	Links between science (art) and study activities	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Studying, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and publicity	3
	Total:	22

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

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

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

4 (very good) - the field is 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.

Linguistics study field and **second cycle** at Klaipeda University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Study aims, outcomes and content	3
2.	Links between science (art) and study activities	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Studying, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and publicity	3
	Total:	22

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

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

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

4 (very good) - the field is 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. STUDY AIMS, OUTCOMES AND CONTENT

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 study field of linguistics at KU aims to provide its students with knowledge of philology/linguistics, as well as with broad, generic competencies in the area of humanities. This is reflected in the programme's curriculum, which includes subjects related to general education within the field of humanities. The first and second cycle programmes aim to address the needs of the local labour market. The career paths of the graduates of the first cycle study programme *English and Another Foreign Language (Swedish, Spanish, German, henceforth EAFL)* include professions such as (language) teachers, administrative staff, translators/interpreters or tourist guides and, according to the social partners, meet the needs of the local labour market. These potential career paths are clearly communicated to prospective students, e.g. on the KU website in both English and Lithuanian. The curriculum aims to build the skills required for these career paths.

The second cycle study programme *English and Another Foreign Language (German/French) and Business Communication* (henceforth: EAFLBC) aims to prepare graduates for roles requiring the knowledge of languages and business communication. The career paths of graduates include working in public relations, international business, and business-related careers which require specialist knowledge of the languages taught within the programme. The aims and objectives of the study programme are clearly communicated to prospective students on the KU website in both English and Lithuanian.

The second cycle study programme *Baltic Languages and Culture* (henceforth: BLC) aims to prepare specialists on languages and culture of the Baltic area, with a broad humanistic education background. Information about this study programme is not available on the KU website in either English or Lithuanian.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The EAFL and EAFLBC programmes are successful in educating graduates with good language skills who are valued on the local labour market and who follow the career

paths which KU prepares them to work in, such as translators, guides, teachers or business employees. It is commendable that the graduates of the EAFL and EAFLBC study programmes develop language skills praised by the social partners.

According to the description provided in the SER, the EAFLBC programme aims to prepare graduates not only to work in business, but also to pursue a research career in linguistics. However, the scope of linguistic studies within the programme is limited. The content of the curriculum is not sufficient to prepare the EAFLBC graduates to undertake independent research in contemporary linguistics, and this should be reflected in how the aims and objectives of the programme are conceptualised by the KU and described to prospective students. In sum, the EAFL and EAFLBC study programmes give their graduates good-quality vocational training, preparing them well to work in language-related professions, but the linguistics-related research training the students receive should be improved if the programmes are to meet their aims professed in this respect.

The BLC study programme prepares specialists in Baltic languages and cultures. This is a niche specialisation, but one which definitely meets the needs of the community in the region. However, the programme is not visible at the KU website, which limits the possibility of attracting prospective students. It could also be beneficial for the programme if it was more accessible for prospective students from outside Lithuania, e.g. by offering Lithuanian language courses the interested candidates could take prior to the start of the course, or by offering some of the courses in English.

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

The aims and outcomes of the study field are consistent with the statute of the KU, as well as the strategy “Klaipeda 2030: Vision, Development Scenario, and Strategic Directions” in that the field aims to contribute to the needs of the city of Klaipeda, the region of Western Lithuania, and the Baltic Sea region in general. The field also contributes to developing humanistic and humanitarian values, in line with the KU Strategic Action Plan 2020-2022.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The linguistics study field at KU contributes to the study of history, cultures and languages of the region. The education provided by the EAFL and EAFLBC study programmes also contributes to fulfilling the aims of KU, educating language teachers, translators, guides, who become valued and needed professionals in the local community. In the case of the BLC second cycle programme, the field also educates researchers in the area of philology/linguistics. However, more progress could be made

with respect to the aim of providing the 'highest international level of studies in Lithuania', which is one of the KU goals according to the Klaipeda 2030 strategy. According to the information made available to the Team, the research skills developed by the graduates are focused on the local region, but not competitive on the international level.

Moreover, the maritime focus of KU is not reflected within the study field. This could be changed e.g. by implementing courses focused on maritime aspects of business language relevant to the Baltic region, or maritime English.

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

(1) Factual situation

The EAFL BA study programme comprises 240 credits distributed over 4 years (8 semesters), which corresponds to a constant number of 30 credits every semester. The credits are distributed as follows: 21 ETCS are allocated to general study subjects, and 189 – to study field subjects. The remaining 30 credits are distributed evenly between practice (15) and the final thesis (15 ECTS). The number of study hours corresponding to one ETCS is constant across the different courses.

The EAFLBC MA programme consists of 120 ECTS credits distributed over 2 years (4 semesters). Of those, 90 ECTS credits are allocated to university courses, and 30 ECTS credits – to the final thesis. The number of study hours corresponding to one ETCS is constant across the different courses, and higher than in the first cycle studies.

The BLC MA programme consists of 120 ECTS distributed over 2 years (4 semesters). The courses correspond to 90 ECTS credits, while the MA thesis corresponds to 30 ECTS credits. The minimum requirement of 60 ETC credits being allocated to subjects related to linguistics is met. The structure of the programme is based on study sessions, each lasting up to two weeks.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

All the legal requirements regarding the organisation of the study programmes are met. The number of study hours corresponding to one ETCS is constant across the different courses within each study programme, and allocated appropriately to the study level. The number of ECTS per semester is 30 in all study programmes, which is appropriate and ensures that student mobility is possible.

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 linguistics programme is small. In 2020, 20 students were accepted, and 26 teachers on average worked within the programme over the last three years. Under COVID-19 conditions, the use of Moodle and Big Blue Button platforms became commonplace within the study field.

The methods used in work with students include group projects, presentations and – on the MA level – also dialectology expeditions. In the first cycle studies, varied methods of end-of-course assessment are applied, while in the second cycle studies all courses are evaluated through a course-final exam. The learning outcomes are described in detail and cover a wide range of competences, and the courses taught throughout the programme and specific language outcomes are defined for each course taught within both study cycles.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The small size of the study programme translates into a personalised approach to students and a good student-teachers relationships, which are recognised and appreciated by the students and staff alike, and contribute to good student experience. The process of instruction under the Covid-19 pandemic conditions, and virtual teaching and learning tools are used adequately, although the first cycle/first year students report more difficulties in adjusting to the online situation than the students who have had the chance to meet the teachers in person. The move to online teaching allowed for more interaction with international lecturers (a professor from India) and interaction with students from Latvia, which is a very positive development. This means of internationalisation seems to be affordable and can be kept and developed in a systematic way even after the situation gets back to normal. It is a rather accessible way of opening the KU Linguistics study field to the world and vice versa.

Good language skills developed by the students and their compatibility with the local job market indicate that the learning aims and outcomes related to practical language skills are met satisfactorily.

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

The EAFL first cycle programme envisages the progression from general subjects to more specialised ones. This applies to both the subjects related to general competences, theoretical subjects related to the study field, and practical language learning. In the

final year, the students gain practical experience from the theoretical knowledge they acquired, and develop their final theses. The same rules of progression from general to specific subjects are applied in the second cycle EAFLBC study programme. In the second cycle BLC programme, the consistent development of competences is more dependent on the individual decisions of each student, as only two courses per semester are dedicated to core subjects, and a large overall proportion of the courses within the programme is dedicated to elective subjects.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Each of the study programmes in the field is internally coherent. However, the coherence of the progression from the EAFL first cycle studies to the EAFLBC second cycle studies is not clear. At the moment, the EAFL students can specialise in Swedish, Spanish and German, while the EAFLBC ones can specialise in German and French. The first cycle students interested in Swedish or Spanish are thus not given an option to continue into the second cycle, and the second cycle French students cannot gain their language competence within the programme.

In the BLC programme, in line with the legal requirement, 60 ECTS credits are allocated to linguistics-related subjects. However, most of these subjects are related to ethnolinguistics and historical linguistics, while other sub-disciplines have not been covered in detail – this could adversely affect the preparedness of graduates to pursue research in linguistics on a broader array of topics than those covered by the BLC programme.

All the evaluated study programmes aim to give their graduates a general education within the humanities, which is commendable. However, as mentioned by the teachers themselves, the programme is ‘not technologically oriented’. In the Team’s opinion, in 2021 this is no longer an option. Humanities, including linguistics, are rooted in classical study fields such as philology and philosophy, but this should not mean that 21st century humanists can afford not to be familiar with contemporary technological tools at their disposal, such as translation software or software/technologies used within Digital Humanities.

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

In the EAFL programme, students can choose several elective courses, and they gain 30 ECTS credits each semester, which makes it possible to easily participate in a semester abroad. In the EAFLBC programme, the students also have the possibility of choosing

elective subjects. Moreover, the courses are taught in the afternoon, which allows students to pursue professional careers while studying. The BLC programme is taught through relatively short study sessions, and offers a large number of elective subjects.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study field offers good opportunities for personalisation of both the first and second cycle studies, which are acknowledged and appreciated by students. This is possible partly due to the way the programmes are structured, both with respect to the choice of courses and their schedule, and partly because the staff are really committed to providing the students with a good learning experience. While the way the programmes are structured allows for student mobility, the actual mobility could be improved. Since a large number of students also work at home, a possible way of achieving this could be through 'internationalisation at home' – inviting more foreign lecturers, or making students aware of online resources made available by other universities, both in Lithuania and abroad. The Team acknowledges that some steps were already taken, but more action in this regard would be beneficial for the quality of the study field.

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

(1) Factual situation

The students are assisted by the Department in their choice of topic, and assigned supervisors with the corresponding expertise and adequate qualifications. The thesis defence procedure and the criteria for thesis evaluation are clear and described in sufficient detail. The BA theses are allotted 15 ECTS credits, and the MA theses – 30 ECTS credits, in line with the respective study cycle requirements.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The preparation and evaluation of the final theses in both study cycles complies with the field and study cycle requirement. In terms of formal qualities, the theses which achieve high grades (9-10) reference up-to-date and relevant scientific work, and show sufficient evidence of independent research work. The two broad topics which stand out in terms of the quality of the theses are lexicography and broadly understood business communication.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. An excellent relationship between teachers and students has been identified, especially on the MA level. This creates a good working atmosphere and a sense of affiliation, enhancing the study experience.

2. Graduates of the study programmes within the field are valued on the local job market.
3. The BLC study programme has a unique thematic focus. It attracts students with specific research interests, which they could not pursue at other HEIs in the country/region (e.g. Old Prussian).

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The field of Linguistics at KU is still conceptualised mainly in terms of philology studies, with a lack of adequate focus on the latest developments in contemporary linguistic scholarship.
2. The BLC programme is not visible or promoted enough, and it could benefit from expanding its curriculum to cover more aspects of linguistic theory, as well as from opening up to international students.
3. Not enough emphasis is placed on teaching modern technologies and tools.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDY ACTIVITIES

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

Professors engaged in the study field of linguistics focus on research and teaching activities related to “Society and Culture on the Baltic Coasts”, as this is a distinctive and specific area of interest for KU. There are a relevant number of conferences organised in collaboration with national institutions and entities in the field of humanities, and the teaching staff have been engaged in national research projects. There is also a fair number of publications, predominantly in the domestic academic scope.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Since KU provides students with the opportunity to specialise in a rather unique and specific field, it would be advisable that the study programmes are more visible in the domestic scenario and also internationally. Strengthening current links with international institutions will be beneficial for the study field, and attracting foreign researchers (as visiting scholars, for instance) will also contribute to stimulating research activities and opening new perspectives in linguistics. In particular, collaborating with foreign research groups will allow young professors to boost their academic profile regarding publications and research projects.

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

(1) Factual situation

Constant efforts are being made by the teaching staff to ensure graduates acquire “the necessary knowledge and practical and professional linguist skills” (p. 34 of the SER). Most activities and initiatives undertaken are linked to the field of philology and language learning. The number of research activities and other initiatives (innovation projects, academic exchanges, etc.) concerning the latest developments in linguistics are deemed not to be sufficient and could be higher.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The specific area approached by KU is unique regarding the study of the society and culture of the Baltic Coasts. That essence may be preserved since it is valuable and very distinctive. However, the studies of linguistics cannot be just aligned to “language skills,” but they need to be framed within the more updated concept of linguistics of our times. The content of the SER and the information from the visit to the university suggest that linguistics is understood in terms of “language skills” and, perhaps, lexicography. Still, there could be more insights into other specific areas of modern linguistics closer to digital humanities.

It is recommended that the teaching staff and the institution explore new insights and research/teaching avenues within the more recent concepts of linguistics as it is widely understood today. This might include working in areas closer to applied linguistics, corpus linguistics, and so on. The alignment with more up-to-date trends in the field of linguistics will bring new insights into the study programmes offered by KU.

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

The engagement of students in scientific activities is done mainly through their work with the final theses and the collaboration with the teaching staff. Besides, the Faculty organises conferences for young researchers and also promotes the participation of students in research projects and activities being implemented. Since the number of students is not large, there are opportunities to stimulate the participation of undergraduates in research-oriented tasks.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The involvement of students in academic and research-oriented activities could be higher if there are more projects on applied linguistics. Collaborating with national and international research groups may bring new perspectives and provide teaching staff and students the opportunity to work on language and technology related fields, audiovisual translation, corpus linguistics, and so on. Also, more efforts could be made to develop joint research projects with other departments and areas within KU to foster interdisciplinarity (e.g. the field of linguistics is not included in the business incubator).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

1. Strengths:

1. The academic activity of the teaching staff is related to the subjects taught.
2. The institution keeps a regular number of scientific and academic events.
3. Working with small groups of students may be optimal for their learning process.

2. Weaknesses:

1. The number of research projects, academic activities and publications related to the latest trends in linguistics is moderate.
2. The national and international visibility of the field could be improved
3. Further collaboration with international research groups would be welcome.
4. Junior lecturers could be engaged in more academic and research-oriented activities.
5. The interdisciplinarity of the field could be boosted by collaborating with other areas within KU.
6. The study field is not particularly technologically oriented.

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 criteria for students are clear, and their application is consistent and unchanging. During the admission process, all the legal requirements established by the Republic of Lithuania are being followed. The number of students is constant.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The administration adapted quite easily to the pandemic situation. Students are quite aware that, when studying, attention must be paid not only to language studies, but also to the acquisition of general competences, as well as the necessary skills.

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

The criteria for recognition of foreign degrees are in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention indicators and in line with other recommendations having been developed for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. If students embark on a study abroad programme, they first agree on a study plan with their advisors, so that the credits obtained abroad can be recognised at KU.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The system is fair and transparent for the students and potential applicants. The recognition of credits obtained abroad (if not within the ECTS scheme) follows clearly established procedures. Agreed study plans are a very effective way to ensure students remain on track. It would be useful to see how communication is maintained with students studying abroad, or if there is collaboration between the Faculty administration and the students, in regard to any objective problems.

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

(1) Factual situation

KU takes part in the Erasmus+ agreement, enabling a large share of its student body to study abroad for any period of time. Mobility grants enable the students to also study outside of the EU at one of the partner universities, or do internships abroad.

The useful pieces of information have been disseminated through various channels: KU website, faculty administration, faculty lecturers, or the students who have studied abroad.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Due to the specific preparation of students studying linguistics at KU, if they consider doing part of their studies abroad, they are most likely to continue their studies in the countries of the nearby region. It would be recommended to further expand the perimeter of studies abroad, and to create conditions for linguistics students to acquire

those competencies that are not provided by KU. This could provide greater attractiveness of studies, not only for the people of Klaipeda region.

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

Student support (financial, wellbeing, careers) is coordinated centrally through relevant departments within KU, whereas academic support is provided locally. KU offers the opportunity to reduce tuition fees in certain cases. Students can also use various external or nominal funds, as well as request the assistance of local authorities or social partners in accordance with the procedure established by the Republic of Lithuania.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The question remains whether students have access to all possible benefits associated with financial aid for their studies. On the other hand, it can be deduced from the meeting with the students that they are sufficiently informed and satisfied, especially in their close and friendly relationship with the administration and the lecturers.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling.

(1) Factual situation

All relevant study information is disseminated properly and students can access them on time via email, phone call, live meetings, or by visiting KU websites. Students are satisfied with maintaining a close collaborative relationship that is quite personal with faculty or administration.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Students are completely satisfied with the flow of information. Due to close collaboration with teachers and personal communication, students do not experience excessive information overload.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Timely and sensitive communication of information is in place. Working in a close collaboration with students, the necessary support is provided if any problems are encountered.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Although students are optimistic about their learning outcomes and further career opportunities, not so many of them are interested in further research activities that cannot be simply substituted by pedagogical work. It seems that establishing close contact with students has not always been followed by appropriate activities in a more businesslike manner.

3.4. STUDYING, 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 students to take into account the needs of the students and enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

(1) Factual situation

KU linguistic studies aim at preparing specialists who have fundamental and interdisciplinary knowledge and to develop an open, creative and tolerant, whole-life-learning personality, capable of effectively applying the acquired linguistic and interdisciplinary knowledge, capabilities and skills. A variety of methods is used in addition to traditional lectures and seminars, for instance, case studies, portfolios/learning logs, reflection on action, problem-based learning, blog, imitating/modelling real-life situations, creativity workshops, role play, problem-solving sessions, etc. University teachers attempt to organise the study process creatively and attractively.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is positive to see the orientation to increase the variety of methods of teaching and learning, and the teachers should also be encouraged further in this direction. The Team visit showed that still some of the approach is rather traditional. Although the employers praised the skills of graduates, there could be even more orientation toward skills needed in market and/or research, e. g. project writing and project management.

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

(1) Factual situation

The programmes are designed to take on students from socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. The library has a variety of special equipment for different groups of special needs. New university buildings are adapted to students with different needs.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Despite some visible efforts to ensure access without physical restrictions and other impediments for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs, the premises where the programmes are taught can be still improved with more specific equipment provided for persons with deficiencies in seeing and hearing, and thus allowing such students to move freely and do their studies without challenging barriers.

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

Students' achievements are periodically and systematically evaluated with fixed assignments in the Academic Information System, where the students can find information about the whole semester's work – the teaching (learning) contents, assignments, their due time, accumulative evaluation, etc. Semester study results are evaluated continuously (activities during seminars, practice, home assignments, or presentations). Students receive feedback on a regular basis during the study process.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The visit has shown that there is a close relationship between students and teachers who seem to be ready to provide more information about self assessment and systematic feedback. Such means of mutual communication on a regular basis is very positive and it can certainly help students throughout their study process on a regular basis.

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

(1) Factual situation

Both the SER and the visit showed that the graduates are highly employable. Alumni get employed within both the public and the private sector, and current students do not express any worries about finding employment after graduating.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is room for improvement regarding the connection between university and graduates, as this is valuable both for the promotion of the study field, further development of it, and connection with social partners. A tighter connection with alumni could be a great resource for publicity, getting new social partners, and other contacts, ensuring quality, and getting ideas and suggestions for development and improvement. It would be useful to develop a more formalised forum for contact with alumni, e.g. an alumni association. In order to broaden the possibilities of graduates, students should be given opportunity and get encouraged to get acquainted with entrepreneurship and start-ups, possibly in joint projects with students of other faculties.

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

(1) Factual situation

Academic honesty, tolerance, and guaranteeing non-discrimination have been duly defined in the Klaipėda University Academic Ethics Codex. There is a system to check for plagiarism electronically.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on SER and Team visit, this area seems to be meeting standards and needs.

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

Students who do not agree with the evaluations of a concrete subject have a right to address the Appellation committee. There has not been a single appellation from linguistics students for the last three years.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The system of appellation is appropriate, based on the appropriate information.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There is good practice in the diversity of teaching and learning processes, and also close relationships between students and teachers.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. A lack of a more formalised and systematic contact with graduates has been identified.
2. The scope of social partners should be wider both by type (including, e.g., global business centres) and geographically, also with partners in other parts of Lithuania.

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. Entrance requirements are well-founded, consistent and transparent.

(1) Factual situation

The teaching staff working in Linguistics study programmes is properly qualified and meets the requirements of General Study Requirements Description. 50% of the subjects in the study programme are taught by PhD lecturers in compliance with the Lithuanian legal framework. The teaching staff working in the study field being examined includes 26 lecturers (22 of them working at KU as their main job): 9 lecturers teach in the Baltic Languages and Culture programme; 17 lecturers teach in English and Another Foreign Language (Swedish, Spanish, German) programme; 8 lecturers teach in the English and Another Foreign Language (German/French) and the Business Communication programme. Business communication subjects in this programme are taught by highly qualified scientists who have practical experience. 5 teachers of business communication have a PhD; one of them is a professor at KU.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The teaching staff engaged in this study field has a sound pedagogical experience at the university level, and their expertise and research track in relation to the subjects being taught is adequate. Staff turnover is low, and the teachers within the Department in the last years have remained steady. The student-teacher ratio is appropriate.

The lecturers engaged in the programme show an average profile in terms of their research activities, although the academic productivity (especially when it comes to

publications in peer-reviewed and impact journals outside Lithuania) could be more remarkable.

It would be interesting for the field of studies to have international scholars or visiting academics from other institutions, and perhaps also incorporating young researchers or early career academics to guarantee a smooth generational transition at KU.

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 institution complies with Senate Resolution No. 11-60 on the Approval of the Provisions for the Improvement of the Qualifications of Pedagogical and Scientific Staff at Klaipėda University. The university does encourage teaching mobility under the Erasmus+ Programme and also in the framework of research activities (financing teachers travel expenses in the absence of other sources of funding).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Following up on the previous evaluation reports, the outgoing mobility of the teaching staff has been promoted in the last 3 years, and 25 teachers have visited institutions of higher education in several European countries (with Erasmus+ mobility programmes). It is also worth mentioning that KU has joined the EU-CONEXUS network, although some visits planned for 2021 could not take place due to the pandemic.

The university is encouraged to keep on promoting outgoing mobility, not only in the framework of the Erasmus+ mobility scheme, but also participating in other international networks and initiatives such as research projects, or other opportunities, such as COST actions, Jean Monnet projects, etc. In particular, collaborating with research groups in the field of corpus linguistics, computational linguistics, translation studies, applied linguistics, and any field within digital humanities will be beneficial for the study field. Also, it is important that KU continues making efforts to attract international visiting scholars willing to take part in teaching and research activities, co-supervising PhD theses, etc.

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

(1) Factual situation

Professional development at KU is promoted by the five-year certification of pedagogical and scientific staff. This certification helps to determine whether the staff are in line with their current duties and can participate in a competition to take the office for the

next term. Teachers exceeding the requirements significantly can apply for a higher position before the end of the five-year term.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The conditions to improve the competence of the teaching staff are adequate, and teachers are provided with sufficient opportunities to progress in their careers. Suitable training and support is offered by administration, and teachers can update their skills.

Regarding the research activities of the teaching staff, the administration could try to allocate more resources to promote the scientific career of young researchers who will be leading the field within KU in the medium term.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

1. Strengths:

1. There is a steady and consolidated number of staff - teachers/researchers working in the field.
2. Most teachers have sound academic and pedagogical expertise.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. More efforts should be made to attract visiting scholars.
2. Research activities should be intensified in terms of publications in peer-reviewed journals, and the collaboration in research projects with colleagues from other institutions.
3. Further resources should be allocated to boost the scientific careers and productivity of researchers, especially those in their early and mid- careers.

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 actual KU premises at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities consist of 30 high-quality classrooms with 780 workplaces. All the classrooms and reading rooms have been properly furnished, including a standard computer equipment, online wireless and wired communications, and the classrooms are duly equipped with a

stationary multimedia that seem to be adequate in size and quality. Given the small number of students both at the BA and MA level of studies in the three programmes within the broader field of Linguistics, there is no need to dedicate specific premises for their work at KU, since most of them, prior to the Covid-19 pandemics, had used to come to classes on specific days and times, due to their work and personal obligations outside the study programme. However, in the last five years, since 2016, classrooms for language studies have been fully updated and upgraded. A similar situation can be seen in terms of the computer equipment in the auditoriums, which is constantly updated. Currently the Faculty premises are being renovated as well as the auditoriums, new furniture and computer equipment are being purchased, but the actual completion of these important infrastructural works cannot be ascertained. On the other hand, teachers are still in a dire need of larger and properly furnished offices, as at the moment, they mostly share with a few other fellow-colleagues.

All the lecturers and students of Klaipėda University use the services and funds of all 6 departments of Klaipėda University Library (KUL). Plenty of printed books, journals and other resources on the central focus of studies, primarily in the domain of classical philology primary and secondary sources, but also some more recent ones in the diverse branches of Linguistics, have been offered to both the staff and students. The holdings pertaining to the study programme in the Linguistics study field are somewhat limited, even when titles from other similar or interdisciplinary fields of expertise, such as sociology, cultural studies, literature, international relations or other relevant disciplines, important to the broader picture of Klaipėda region cultural heritage have been taken into account. The main Klaipėda University library lacks larger amounts of diversified resources in terms of more appropriate / recent titles, both in printed or electronic form, as well the regular access to different yet highly relevant periodicals and licensed databases. However, the publications indicated in course descriptions could be, definitely, more numerous, structured and diverse and show a variety of more recent sources dealing with theoretical and critical primary and secondary sources necessary for the research. This situation has been explained by the lack of KU funds for the purchase and high prices of printed materials, but more electronic sources could have replaced the printed books. The situation somewhat improved under the pandemic conditions, when students could not go physically to the Library, but were, in a sense, forced to rely more and more on electronic resources. This was mainly due to the increased procurement of multimedia equipment in the recent years, both in terms of the number of computers and licensed software necessary to the modern studies in Linguistics, but also in ensuring the electronic information resources, such as databases, to become readily accessible for the needs of students, researchers and teachers alike. This proved to be crucial when it was necessary to switch to an online instruction process in March 2020. Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) at KU provided a smooth transition to the new pandemic conditions of work. The necessity to adapt to this unprecedented situation could be best seen in an increased number of blended courses,

internships and preparation of seminar papers and final theses that used ever more than before electronic resources instead of traditional printed materials.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The existing teaching and research facilities seem to be adequate and appropriate for the needs of both teachers and students. Since KU is a mixture of buildings that, due to their heritage value, cannot undergo major refurbishment works, and more recent, modern facilities, it is important to try to upgrade them wherever possible in the period to come. It particularly refers to the plans for new offices for staff, rooms for PhD students and recreational spaces.

Since the overall knowledge of foreign languages, English in particular, and the actual use of available resources has not been a stronger quality of most students, and, to some extent, of the academic staff, the issue of obtaining more appropriate titles in foreign languages (not necessarily only English) must coincide with efforts to acquire the increased array of skills and competences in order to use them in a more diversified context. That is why the inclusion of different printed and electronic materials from different areas of Linguistics studies, other than Lithuanian only, can be a real asset towards the policy of supplying more international resources which, in addition to those that can be obtained within the context of Lithuania, and not just the Klaipėda region, will ensure better conditions for learning and research, and instigate students and teaching staff to combine the available resources for the purpose of producing quality research papers and final theses, as well as to add to the overall visibility of results attained by both lecturers, younger researchers and particularly talented students.

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

(1) Factual situation

The actual KU premises (the classrooms and reading rooms) have been properly furnished, including computer equipment, and are adequate in size and quality. Given the small number of students, there is no need to dedicate specific premises for their work at KU. However, the plans to provide more electronic resources in combination with the new classrooms and office space for teaching staff are still burdened with the complicated process of securing the necessary funding, but even more so in choosing contractor(s) and completing the physical works within the reasonable period of time.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Within the existing circumstances, it seems that the process of planning and upgrading of resources can be accelerated with concentrated efforts of KU management, government authorities and social partners in Western Lithuania in order to improve

the existing and build new physical premises for smaller / medium size university such as KU, and, especially, virtual space capacity that can meet the needs in the next five to seven years period.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

1. Strengths:

1. Adequate physical facilities and electronic resources to carry out the three study programmes at BA and MA level under the auspices of Linguistics study field within the given size of KU and the number of student and teaching staff.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The existing resources have not been efficiently used in regard to the overall changes in the academic environment that leans more and more to the combined use of physical facilities and diverse virtual opportunities in the digital humanities and social sciences.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICITY

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

The internal quality insurance system of the studies complies with the existing ISO 9001:2015 standards and operates according to several descriptions of the quality management system. The descriptions provide information related to the stages of the process (planning, implementation, control and improvement): activities, outcomes, responsible persons and documents regulating the process. Moreover, they comply with the European higher education quality assurance regulations and guidelines and the main law and legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania regulating higher education in Lithuania. The internal quality of studies is determined by the resolutions of the KU Council and Senate and the strategy of implementation of Rector's orders. The study programme quality assurance is ensured by the Committee of Humanities. Decisions regarding management and quality assurance of the study programme are made collegially. The Department of Philology and the Head of the Department are directly responsible for the implementation of study programmes in the field of Linguistics, and a supervisor of the study programme is responsible for proper implementation and improvement of the study programme. The Committee of Humanities is supervising the

study programmes of the study field and their implementation. The electronic information system Point contains documentation relevant for quality management. Currently, Klaipėda University is implementing a new Academic Information System where more processes will be automated, for instance, the provision of feedback and the calculation of pedagogical workload. The quality of study programmes is discussed at the meetings on different administrative levels on a regular basis. In 2020, a new salary system was introduced for teaching staff with a variable part depending on individual contribution to the improvement of the quality of the study programme.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study programme quality assurance has been dealt with properly at all levels of management in compliance with pertinent legal documents and appropriate European regulations and guidelines.

3.7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources need to be carry out in the field studies.

(1) Factual situation

The university has a close relationship to social partners, and there is a procedure for handling input from and giving feedback to them. The Committee of Humanities is cooperating with the Study Quality Commission of KU, the Vice-Rector for Studies, the Study Service, the Student Union of KU and other administrative divisions. Students' opinions are received through assessment questionnaires every semester. Students' representatives are involved in the activities of the Committee of Humanities, the Faculty Council, the Senate, the Council of KU and other committees and work groups of KU; lecturers and administration are directly involved in the development of the study programme, employers are informed and feedback is collected from them.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Stakeholders (e.g. students and social partners) seem to have a somewhat peripheral role in some areas of the internal quality assurance system. Social partners and alumni could be included in a more systematic way.

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

(1) Factual situation

There are surveys conducted regarding the content of the study subject and assessment of the quality of lecturers' teaching (assessed by students); evaluation of KU activity through the prism of graduates (evaluated by graduates); assessment of internship (assessed by students); efficiency of the study process (assessed by graduates); implementation of the study programmes (assessed by the administrative staff and lecturers); and other surveys.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It might be useful also with mid-semester surveys for separate subjects, so the teachers can adjust according to students' feedback.

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

At the end of each semester, students evaluate the content of the study subjects and the quality of their teaching by filling in the assessment questionnaire, targeting to get feedback from all students on each subject. The general results of the survey are discussed at the meetings of the Department and the Dean's office. A generalised summary of the survey results is published. In addition, KU systematically conducts surveys on study internships, reasons for termination of studies, and surveys of graduates. At the end of each semester the meetings with the representatives of the KU Student Union are organised. According to the SER, students and graduates generally evaluate their Bachelor and Master's studies positively.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During the visit, the students expressed satisfaction with the studies, especially with the BLC MA programme. There is no discrepancy between the information given in the SER and the general impression from the visit.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There are good systems of study quality management and publicity for the study field of Linguistics.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Some of the stakeholders (social partners, employers, and alumni) could be included in the quality management processes in a more formalised way.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation area	Recommendations for the evaluation area at HEI (study cycle)
Study aims, outcomes and content	<p>It is advisable that the departments engaged in this field of study promote interdisciplinarity.</p> <p>A more updated perspective on linguistics should be taken when engaging in research projects and activities. In particular, new research avenues in the broad area of contemporary trends in Linguistics today could be more explored by the teaching staff.</p> <p>Additional efforts should be made to make KU more attractive to international students, focusing on the uniqueness and singularity of some of the topics covered in the study programmes within linguistics.</p> <p>Integration between the EAFL and EAFLBC study programmes could be improved, as well as the visibility of the BLC programme.</p>
Links between science (art) and study activities	<p>The scientific productivity of the teaching staff could be more intense regarding papers and book chapters in renowned journals and publishing houses outside Lithuania.</p> <p>The field would benefit from cooperating with foreign research groups and institutions in digital humanities and trendy research lines in linguistics.</p> <p>It would be advisable that the junior lecturers are more actively engaged in academic and research oriented-activities.</p> <p>It is recommended that the interdisciplinarity of the field is promoted through cooperation with other areas within KU.</p>
Student admission and support	<p>To ensure and provide students with more opportunities for international studies abroad, to encourage them to do so within the regular plan of international experience at other international studies in Linguistics Provide all necessary support to implement this.</p>
Studying, student performance and graduate employment	<p>Development of skills that are needed both in an academic path, as well as labour market, e.g. project planning and management, critical thinking, should be considered introduced/strengthened in the programmes.</p>

	<p>should be developed with the alumni of the programme, e.g. by establishing an alumni association. Also, the scope of social partners should be wider both by type (including, e.g. global business centres) and geographically also with partners in other parts of Lithuania.</p>
Teaching staff	<p>More efforts should be made to attract visiting scholars and young academics in their early careers from other countries to join the departments working in this field of study.</p> <p>The scientific productivity of the teaching staff could be more visible regarding the publication of their research results in peer-review journals outside Lithuania.</p> <p>Additional support could be granted by the administration to offer more possibilities to the teaching staff in terms of mobility and research activities outside KU.</p>
Learning facilities and resources	<p>Plans for upgrading existing physical facilities, such as classrooms, study areas, and, especially, adequate office space for teaching staff and younger researchers should materialise before long in order to create a pleasant environment for study and research, as well as recreational space.</p> <p>There should be a substantial increase in diversified electronic resources, particularly for the purpose of blended learning that could improve the quality of instruction and boost research, internships and the preparation of final theses and other scholarly work.</p>
Study quality management and publicity	<p>Social partners and alumni should be included in a more systematic way in the quality management processes.</p>

V. SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the findings of the expert panel based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and the interviews with the university / college administration (senior management and faculty administration staff), staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff and stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, social partners).

The expert panel gives a positive evaluation to the implementation of the Linguistics First and Second Cycle Study Field at the Klaipeda University with all areas of evaluation assessed as good or very good.

The study field of linguistics at KU aims to provide its students with knowledge of philology/linguistics, as well as with broad, generic competencies in the area of humanities. This is reflected in the programme's curriculum, which includes subjects related to general education within the field of humanities. The first and second cycle programmes aim to address the needs of the local labour market. The career paths of the graduates of the first and the second cycle study programmes are clearly communicated to prospective students. The curriculum aims to build the skills required for these career paths. The EAFL and EAFLBC programmes are successful in educating graduates with good language skills who are valued on the local labour market. The preparation and evaluation of the final theses in both study cycles complies with the field and study cycle requirement. The students are assisted by the Department in their choice of topic, and assigned supervisors with the corresponding expertise and adequate qualifications. The thesis defence procedure and the criteria for thesis evaluation are clear and described in sufficient detail. Excellent relationships between teachers and students have been identified, especially those on the MA level. This creates a good working atmosphere and a sense of affiliation, enhancing the study experience.

All the legal requirements regarding the overall organisation of the study programmes are met. The small size of the study programme translates into a personalised approach to student and good student-teachers relationships, which are recognised and appreciated by the students and staff alike, and contribute to good student experience. Each of the study programmes in the field is internally coherent. However, the coherence of the vertical progression from the EAFL first cycle studies to the EAFLBC second cycle studies is not clear. All the evaluated study programmes aim to give their graduates a general education within the humanities, which is commendable, but, the field of Linguistics at KU is still conceptualised mainly in terms of philology studies, with a lack of adequate focus on latest developments in contemporary linguistic scholarship. The BLC programme is not visible or promoted enough, and it could benefit from expanding its curriculum to cover more aspects of linguistic theory, as well as from opening up to international students. Not enough emphasis is placed on teaching modern technologies and virtual learning tools, such as translation software or tools,

which, in 2021, is no longer an option, as clearly shown during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

The field contributes to the study of history, cultures and languages of the region. The research skills developed by the graduates are focused on the local region, but not competitive on the international level. However, more progress could be made with respect to the aim of providing the 'highest international level of studies in Lithuania', which is one of the KU goals according to the Klaipeda 2030 strategy.

Since KU provides students with the opportunity to specialize in a rather unique and specific field, it would be advisable that the study programmes are more visible in the domestic scenario and also internationally. Strengthening current links with international institutions will be beneficial for the study field, and attracting foreign researchers visiting scholars can also contribute to stimulating research activities and opening new perspectives in linguistics. In particular, collaborating with foreign research groups will allow young professors to boost their academic profile regarding publications and research projects. Most activities and initiatives undertaken are linked to the field of philology and language learning. Despite significant efforts made by the teaching staff to ensure their presence and visibility in academic conferences and publications, the number of research activities and other initiatives (innovation projects, academic exchanges, etc.) concerning the latest developments in linguistics could be higher.

It is recommended that the teaching staff and the institution explore new insights and research/teaching avenues within the broad concept of linguistics as it is widely understood today. This might include working in areas closer to applied linguistics, corpus linguistics, digital humanities, and so on. The alignment with more up-to-date trends in the field of linguistics will bring new insights into the study programmes offered by KU. The involvement of students in academic and research-oriented activities could be higher if there are more projects on applied linguistics. Collaborating with national and international research groups may bring new perspectives and provide teaching staff and students the opportunity to work on language and technology related fields, such as audiovisual translation or corpus linguistics. More efforts could be made to develop joint research projects with other departments and areas within KU to foster interdisciplinarity.

The admission criteria for students are quite clear, and their application is consistent and unchanging. The number of students is maintained the same, although not very high. The system fostering academic exchanges is fair and transparent for the students and potential applicants. The criteria for recognition of foreign degrees are in line with the applicable national regulations and international standards.

The useful pieces of information have been disseminated through various channels: KU website, faculty administration, faculty lecturers, or the students who have studied abroad. All information received reaches students on time. Students are satisfied with knitting a close collaborative relationship that is quite personal with faculty or administration. Information is accessed by students via email, phone call, live meeting, or centrally.

Due to the specific preparation of students studying linguistics abroad, they are mostly prepared to continue their studies in the countries of the nearest region. It would be recommended to further expand the perimeter of studies abroad, and to create conditions for linguistics students to acquire those competencies that are not provided by KU. This could provide greater attractiveness of studies, not only for the people of Klaipeda region.

Student support (financial, wellbeing, careers) is coordinated centrally through relevant departments within the KU, whereas academic support is provided locally. Klaipeda University offers the opportunity to reduce tuition fees. However, the question remains whether students have access to all possible benefits associated with financial aid for their studies. On the other hand, it can be deduced from the meeting with the students that they are sufficiently informed and satisfied, especially in their close and friendly relationship with the administration and the lecturers.

KU linguistic studies aim at preparing specialists who have fundamental and interdisciplinary knowledge and to develop an open, creative and tolerant, whole-life-learning personality, capable of effectively applying the acquired linguistic and interdisciplinary knowledge, capabilities and skills. A variety of methods used in addition to traditional lectures and seminars is a positive example. On the whole, the teachers attempt to organise the study process creatively and attractively, which should be encouraged as the orientation for the future activities in the similar direction. Students receive feedback about their academic achievements and progress on a regular basis during the study process. The programmes, together with the current Library and new university buildings, have been adapted to take on students from socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.

Employers praised the skills of KU graduates, and there is a high degree of employability within both the public and private sector. Still, there are ample possibilities for the connection between university and graduates, and connection with social partners. A tighter connection with alumni could be a great resource for publicity, getting new social partners, and other contacts, ensuring quality, and getting ideas and suggestions for development and improvement.

The teaching staff engaged in this study field has a sound pedagogical experience at the university level, and its expertise and research track in relation to the subjects being taught is adequate. Staff turnover is low, and the teachers within the Department in the

last years have remained steady. The student-teacher ratio is appropriate. The lecturers engaged in the programme show an average profile in terms of their research activities, although the academic productivity (especially when it comes to publications in peer-reviewed and impact journals outside Lithuania) could be more remarkable.

The university encourages outgoing mobility in diverse international networks and initiatives. Collaborating with research groups in the field of corpus linguistics, computational linguistics, translation studies, applied linguistics, and any field within digital humanities will be beneficial for the study field. It is vitally important that KU continues making efforts to attract international visiting scholars willing to take part in teaching and research activities, co-supervising PhD theses, etc.

The conditions to improve the competence of the teaching staff are adequate, and teachers are provided with sufficient opportunities to progress in their careers. Suitable training and support is offered by administration, and teachers can update their skills. Regarding the professional development research activities of teaching staff, the administration could try to allocate more resources to promote the scientific career of young researchers who will be leading the field within KU in the medium term.

The existing teaching and research facilities seem to be adequate and appropriate for the needs of both teachers and students. Since KU is a mixture of buildings that, due to their heritage value, cannot undertake major refurbishment works, and more recent, modern facilities it is important to try to upgrade them wherever possible in the period to come. It particularly refers to the plans for new offices for staff, rooms for PhD students and recreational spaces

Since the overall knowledge of foreign languages, English in particular, and the actual use of available resources has not been a stronger quality of most students, and, to some extent, of the academic staff, the issue of obtaining more appropriate titles in foreign languages (not necessarily only English) must coincide with efforts to acquire the increased array of skills and competences in order to use them in a more diversified context. The inclusion of different printed and electronic materials from different areas of Linguistics studies, other than Lithuanian only, can be a real asset towards the policy of supplying more international resources. They can ensure better conditions for learning and research, and instigate students and teaching staff to combine the available resources for the purpose of producing quality research papers and final theses, as well as to add to the overall visibility of results attained by lecturers, younger researchers and particularly talented students.

There are good systems of study quality management and publicity for the study field of Linguistics, which comply both to the national and international educational and legal standards in the field.

The study program quality assurance is ensured by the Committee of Humanities. Decisions regarding management and quality of the study programme assurance are made collegially. The Department of Philology and the Head of the Department are directly responsible for the implementation of study programmes in the field of Linguistics, and a supervisor of the study programme is responsible for proper implementation and improvement of the study programme. The Committee of Humanities is supervising the study programmes of the study field and their implementation.

The university has a close relationship to social partners, and there is a procedure for handling input from and giving feedback to them. Stakeholders (e. g. students and social partners) have a somewhat peripheral role in some areas of the internal quality assurance system. Social partners and alumni could be included in a more systematic way.

At the end of each semester, students evaluate the content of the study subjects and the quality of their teaching by filling in the assessment questionnaire, targeting to get feedback from all students on each subject. KU systematically conducts surveys on study internships, reasons for termination of studies, and surveys of graduates. At the end of each semester the meetings with the representatives of the KU Student Union are organised. The general results of the survey are discussed at the meetings of the Department and the Dean's office. A generalised summary of the survey results is published. According to the SER, students and graduates generally evaluate their Bachelor and Master's studies positively. There has been no visible discrepancy between the information given in the SER and the general feeling from the visit.

Expert panel signatures:

1. Prof. dr. Srebren Dizdar (panel chairperson), *academic*
2. Prof. dr. Alberto Fernandez Costales, *academic*
3. Doc. dr. Karolina Grzech, *academic*
4. Mr. Snorre Karkkonen Svensson, *representative of social partners'*
5. Mr. Gabrielius Simas Sapiega, *students' representative*