



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of MARKETING
at Vytautas Magnus University

Expert panel:

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Marketing	Marketing and International Commerce
State code	6121LX028	6211LX044
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time (4)	Full time (2)
Credit volume	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Business Management	Master of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian English
Minimum education required	High school degree	Bachelor's degree
Registration date of the study programme	22/02/2011	19/05/1997
Title of the study programme	Advertising Management	Marketing and Sales
State code	6211LX045	6211LX043
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	Second cycle	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time (2)	Full time (1.5)
Credit volume	120	90
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Master of Business Management	Master of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree
Registration date of the study programme	01/03/2011	24/04/2011

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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 27 April, 2021. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the site visit was conducted online using video conferencing tools (MS Teams).

Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson (panel chairperson), *Head of Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu, Estonia;*

Dr. Dario Miočević, *Associate Professor of Marketing at the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, Croatia;*

Dr. Ákos Varga, *Associate Professor at the Institute of Marketing, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary;*

Dr. Giedrius Romeika, *Director of the Institute of Social Sciences and Applied Informatics at Kaunas Faculty, Vilnius University, Lithuania;*

Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis, *Communication project manager, “Topo Centras”, part of EURONICS alliance, Lithuania;*

Ms. Alicia Presencio Herrero, *1st year PhD student of Audiovisual Communication, Advertising and Public Relations, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain.*

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 the site visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	Virtual presentation (slides) of learning facilities used by marketing field students at Vytautas Magnus University.
2.	Course descriptors of marketing field subjects

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

Vytautas Magnus University (hereafter – VMU) was established in 1922 and re-established in 1989. It is a classical university providing degree studies of all three cycles – bachelor, master and PhD studies covering a broad spectrum of fields ranging from humanities, social sciences and arts to the fundamental sciences, environmental sciences, and biotechnologies. There are 15 academic divisions at VMU from which one is Faculty of Economics and Management (hereafter – FEM). In FEM the study programs and research are organized by 3 departments: Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies and Scientific Research departments. FEM represents VMU in the Consortium of 5 European Business Schools (CBS, Denmark; HEC, Paris, France; IAG, Louvain, Belgium; NHH, Bergen, Norway; VMU, Kaunas, Lithuania) in the international EMBA Program which is organized at Baltic Management Institute in Vilnius. FEM has undergraduate (bachelor), graduate (master) and postgraduate (doctoral) levels representing the study field of Marketing, the study field of Business, the study field of Economics and the study field of Finance. At present, four degree-programmes are offered at the Study field of Marketing: 1 undergraduate study programme – Marketing, and 3 graduate study programmes: Marketing and International Commerce, Advertising Management, Marketing and Sales. Marketing Programme’s (BA) duration is 4 years, 8 semesters, 240 ECTS. Master’s studies duration in FEM is 2 years, 4 semesters, 120 ECTS (“Marketing and International Commerce”, “Advertising Management”) or 1,5 years, 3 semesters, 90 ECTS (“Marketing and Sales”). Studies in the Marketing field are provided at VMU FEM since 1993.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Marketing study field and **first cycle** at Vytautas Magnus 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.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	5
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	27

*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.

Marketing study field and **second cycle** at Vytautas Magnus 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.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	5
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	27

*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

The self-evaluation report (hereafter - SER) provides data on salaries and job demand for qualified graduates in the field of marketing (SER, p. 7-10). At its very core, the study programmes are focusing on competencies rather than specific professions in marketing; special attention was given to developing the personal development competencies, especially in the first two years of the undergraduate study programme. Link with specific positions in business practice is clearly presented which helps students to get a fine grained picture of the qualification they obtain. Tight link between learning outcomes and qualification is presented for all three programmes in general.

While the rationale for having one undergraduate and three graduate study programmes has been clearly substantiated with factual data, statistics and market insights, these study programmes run for a long time and expert committee found very little evidence on the formalized processes that would show how VMU is keeping the programme up to date. Although there is some evidence presented that provides insights on how actual changes took place, the expert committee concludes that revisions are mostly done reactively. Although the programmes can be labeled as being highly connected to the labour market needs, during the session with representatives of social partners and alumni, the expert committee got the impression these connections have greater potential and can be exploited further.

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

SER provides evidence that all study programmes are aligned with the mission, vision and strategic goals of VMU (SER, p. 10-11). This is indicative in the *liberal arts* profile of the University which is strongly embedded in how the study programmes in marketing are delivered.

According to the expert committee's assessment, the study programme aims, content and outcomes are well aligned with the strategic posture of VMU, although it was noted that the new strategic framework is still under development. During the sessions with key constituents (management, teachers, students and social partners) it became evident that study programmes in marketing live up to the expectations of the strategy. Expert committee especially commends the internationalization efforts (strategic approach to choosing international partners, double degree programme and attentive care for international students) which have strengthened the school's profile.

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

The study programme is well aligned with the legislative requirements and VMU provides clear evidence on this in SER (SER, p. 11-18). The study programme structure, LOs, ECTS

credits are elaborated clearly and corroborate the value-added contribution of each course to the overall study programme aims.

The management of the study programme is diligent and the procedures for revising and updating the study programme aims, LOs and content are transparent and regulated thus enabling each of the direct constituents (teachers and students) to initiate the process of required changes in the study programmes. Also the coordination of the revisions is done with the input from all relevant stakeholders, including social partners.

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

Constructive alignment matrix (Annex table 3) has a clear logical structure for each of the study programmes showcased in the SER. Course syllabi seem to cover all the necessary information for the students. Study programmes use a wide array of teaching and assessment methods which seem to be aligned with the aims and LOs and contribute to the development of students' competencies. The VMU puts a lot of effort in trying to innovate its teaching and assessment processes in light of more intensive and simultaneous usage of offline and online methods. Teaching materials and cases are frequently updated.

According to SER and the sessions with both teachers and students at the evaluated study programmes, it seems that the pedagogical methods seem appropriate and enable students to achieve the LOs and aims of the study programme. The practical component is present in the curriculum by various teaching methods such as company visits, case study analyses, guest lecturers, student competitions, etc. Moreover, during the talks with social partners and students they seemed to praise the liberal arts approach in which students' competencies extend into the personal development domain.

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

The structure and the logic of study programme curriculum is achieved by a well-defined structure of courses that a student undertakes each year. During first year, the special emphasis is given to equipping students with basic horizontal skills (group A courses) and liberal arts mindset (group B courses) and then proceeds to the fundamentals of marketing and key subjects from other fields (organization, management, finance, accounting) to enable students get a broader picture on how marketing operates in firm's ecosystem (SER, p. 20-24). As students progress towards final years, they undertake more complex courses. The academic depth is achieved with the *Term paper I & II* (at graduate level this is additionally strengthened by the *Research Methodology* course) where students are obliged to review up to date theories and concepts from marketing and apply them in solving real life marketing problems. These courses have an important role of preparing the students for writing the final thesis. The practical relevance in the study programme is achieved through *Qualification practice* course.

The expert committee's judgement is that the study programmes offer a coherent curriculum that fosters students' competencies in key areas that contemporary marketing requires. These include not only functional and core marketing subjects but are strengthened with courses from other relevant fields that enable students to become more knowledgeable about the complexity of the environment in which modern marketing professionals operate. The academic depth and research component seem to be at high levels in study programmes,

especially in three graduate programmes. However, the expert committee found that some significant overlaps between undergraduate and graduate courses exist. For instance, there is little difference between Small Business Management Marketing (undergraduate) and Entrepreneurial Marketing (graduate). The same goes with Digital Marketing (undergraduate) and Digital Marketing Strategy (graduate). Hence, the expert committee thinks that more amalgamation between courses must be considered in order to provide students' distinct and unique learning outcomes from different courses (especially in Advertising Management programme). Through meetings with social partners, the expert committee concludes that social partners are highly satisfied with the levels of competencies that graduates attain.

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

According to evidence presented in SER (SER, p. 24-26), students at VMU are able to personalize their study programme by being able to choose from a wide array of optional courses which are not necessarily related to marketing but are important because they equip students with personal development skills (group A courses) or broader set of social science skills such as psychology, sociology, etc. (group B courses). Also, the study programme envisions additional course enrolment for motivated and successful students to study beyond what is required by the fulfilment of ECTS. In the process of preparing and writing the final thesis, the students are able to freely choose the topic they want to investigate.

Although great effort has been put in securing that students personalize their studies as much as possible in various aspects (e.g., optional courses from: IT, languages, other fields of business and broader social sciences), there are some evident obstacles to this process. For instance, the students from International commerce & Marketing graduate programmes have limited options to choose courses from Advertising graduate programme.

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

The procedures and regulations underlying the final thesis preparation, writing and defence are in place and transparent. During thesis preparation, writing and defence, students are tackling all the important aims and LOs of the study programme. As noted in the SER, some of the theses have been directly ordered by firms and other organizations which makes them more relevant in achieving the tight connection with business practice (SER, p. 27). The anti-plagiarism system has been in place since 2020, which further helps sustaining academic integrity. The assistance to students in this process is achieved via Moodle where students can access all the important aspects related to the final thesis (timetable, methodological guidelines, etc). Additionally, students are mentored by the supervisor and according to talks with students, the teachers' support seems to be instrumental since teachers are available to them through both formal (consultation) and informal (social media groups) channels.

According to SER and sessions conducted with key constituents, the expert committee concludes that the overall process of attaining the final thesis is in accordance with regulation and substantiates the aims of the study programme. The component of achieving practical relevance is already achieved by tight cooperation with social partners (some of final theses seem to be ordered by them directly), however, the academic depth can be developed further.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The strategy clearly emphasizes the core pillars and the VMU lives up to the expectations and delivers these promises in its undergraduate and graduate marketing programmes.
2. Academic depth is present in the programmes (research methods classes, term paper, especially in graduate programmes).
3. Internationalization seems to be at commendable level (double degree programme, the presence of international students).

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There are some repetitions in study programmes that need to be resolved, especially in Advertising Management. This was indicated by students who attended the study programme.
2. The options for students to personalize studies exist but can be improved. First, through shredding the repetitions in the study programme and by freeing more ECTS for optional courses, preferably from other graduate studies (so that Advertising students can choose more courses from Marketing and Sales and Marketing and International Commerce programmes).

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

The links between science and study activities must be differentiated according to the different study programmes (bachelor and masters alike) offered by VMU. The VMU successfully balanced the enormous amount of information regarding their different marketing programs. A clear strength would be the clear motivation for internationalization, which is currently done through the existing Erasmus connections, international meetings - the VMU is eagerly looking for strong international partners.

As it can be found in the clear and straightforward self-evaluation report, marketing research and studies play a significant role in their activities, making it a distinctive institutional characteristic.

Being part of the leading institutional consortium of doctoral studies can ensure a growing amount and quality regarding research outputs. The institutional support for research activities (both pre- and post-forms) ensures the continuous research output. This leads not just to an increase in number, but also to a higher quality body of research. The highlighted courses (e.g., Neuromarketing, Entrepreneurial marketing) clearly reflect current trends and needs both academically and professionally.

During the site visit, we were glad to hear the staff has balanced workload in general. During the teaching staff meeting, it came clear that they coherently implement their research results in their courses: the arch of it is clearly visible.

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

Besides the specific research outputs, it is important to mention they are paying attention to another aspect of science, namely ethics: it can be found in the form of a special course for master students within the programme.

Nonetheless, the expert committee would also like to point out some shortcomings. There are some overlaps in courses, especially in Advertising Management: there is no clear distinction in bachelor and master courses. This needs to be adjusted properly. A stronger focus on internationally renowned academic articles is desirable. It is necessary for the desired internationalization as both academic staff and international students look for the highest quality partners possible.

The staff seem to be willing to participate in both national and international associations regarding the field of marketing. It seems that the teaching staff is able to keep the balance amongst research, market relevance and teaching activities.

However, VMU should pay attention to balance the course content to be more comprehensible for all students, regardless of their level of knowledge or skill-set when they are enrolling to a course. In this regard, they should implement their research output more coherently into their teaching materials and methods, ensuring the maintenance of interest.

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

The students can participate in research activities, the form of talent management could lead them to become PhD students, they are able to go through real-life issues coming from external partners and see how the academic research can provide relevant answers. Having half of the Ph.D. students specialized in marketing shows an increasing interest in research.

The integration of students with different backgrounds seems to be an issue, the expert committee suggests taking proper measures to give equal opportunities and chances by balancing study materials in a better way.

The weaknesses articulated for this evaluation area are based on the master students' feedback during site visit: they expressed their general feeling toward study materials that are hard to understand for the students without prior marketing knowledge or experience. Perhaps a catch-up course, a summer school course would be helpful.

Furthermore, they missed the appearance of primary research results of their professors on the courses: they felt the repetition of marketing principles in some courses, and they mentioned that it would be interesting to implement more personal experiences and results from the academic staff.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Academic staff is producing relevant research output in the field of marketing.
2. FEM is applying talent management process through the entire student path up to Ph.D. level.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Tilted balance in study materials which are not equally comprehensible to all students.
2. Putting own research outputs marginal could lead to overlapping study content and may lead to loss of interest.

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

The admission criteria depend on the type of study: admission to undergraduate studies is administered and organized by LAMA BPO. Graduate studies have the following admission criteria: a bachelor's degree in the area of marketing or social sciences, or another bachelor's degree and at least one year of demonstrable experience in marketing. For the Master in Marketing and International Commerce, students must demonstrate a B2 knowledge of English. All admission criteria are public and available on the University website. However, the Marketing Degrees and Masters website is not translated into English – currently there is only that of Marketing and International Commerce. During the analysed period, the number of students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degrees in marketing remained stable (SER, p. 43-44). Even in 2017, two marketing degree groups were created due to a specific demand.

During the meeting with students, it was found that most of those who are studying a graduate degree at the University, do so because they have previously studied the Degree in Marketing. The most valued and chosen graduate course in enrollment is Marketing and International Commerce, not only by Lithuanian students but also the foreign ones. The programme is taught in two languages: Lithuanian and English.

It is observed that the studies that are not funded by the state are those with the lowest enrollment, but also those with a lower cut-off mark. The undergraduate and graduate degrees in Marketing at VMU are in high demand, something that is valued positively.

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

Every year the rules for admission of foreign citizens to VMU are updated and approved, and they outline the assessment of foreign qualifications, its application, documentation, and evaluation. Each year, VMU reports to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) about the decisions that are made on academic recognition. Recognition of partial studies can be carried out for current and newly enrolled VMU students. Current students participating in study exchange programmes agree on the study plan with VMU before leaving for a partner university. Newly enrolled students, who have completed part of their studies at another university and apply for recognition, must show an academic certificate or other document certifying study courses of another institution.

As stated in the SER, there were no inquiries for recognition of foreign qualification in all study programmes in Marketing field despite the students who came back from their exchange period in foreign university. A total of 20 students requested for recognition of partial studies in the evaluated time. They were transferred to undergraduate study

programme Marketing from other universities, faculties, or study programs, according to the SER (p. 47, table 14). The clarity of explanation of the credit recognition processes is valued very positively, and the annual collaboration with the SKVC favors transparency in the credit transfer process. This meticulousness has repercussions in favor of university quality. No deficiencies have been observed in this criterion.

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

The VMU has 71 active agreements in Europe where its students can carry out the Erasmus experience, and 57 partner institutions outside the EU. On average, about 15 Marketing field students take advantage of this opportunity each year. They can do Erasmus between 2 and 12 months during their study time and up to 6 months after graduation. They can also make international stays to carry out their internships in a company.

Because the Marketing programme is taught entirely in Lithuanian, foreign students are not eligible for it. On the other hand, the most demanded Master for foreign students is Marketing and International Commerce. Information about international activities is carried out by the International Relations Office, and uses various channels to transmit it: webpage, social networks, meetings with students, etc.

It is recommended to promote the Erasmus experience, especially in the Degree in Advertising Management and Marketing and Sales, that have zero participants. The numbers of outgoing students are low compared to the large number of agreements that the University has. VMU's efforts are recognized when signing collaboration agreements to ensure international activity for its students. Perhaps with greater financial support from the University to those people who are really interested and with better academic records, internationalization could be promoted and, indeed, the website information translated into English.

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

As stated in the SER (p. 49), students have the opportunity to easily access information, to have regular teachers' consultations to clarify topics of study courses or assignments and evaluate students' learning progress. To older ones, differentiating activities from the competition are added, such as thematic movie nights with discussions followed; contact evenings with board games; e-sport evenings, allowing students to get knowledge about new types of sport business and marketing opportunities. The information that affects students is complemented through email and the Moodle platform. Additionally, every teacher spends 20 academic hours per semester consulting students on their homework, individual or group assignments and other course-related issues.

There is a financial aid fund for students. Those who find themselves in a special situation can write their motivation to the Rector explaining why they should be worthy of such help. For representations of the University in congresses or meetings of special importance, the participation of students and professors can be fully reimbursed. Upon the need, students can receive free-of-charge counselling of a psychologist at VMU Psychology Clinics in individual meetings or online

There are numerous types of scholarships designed to support the economy of its students. It is positively valued that each case is studied with time and resources. During three recent

years, 12 students in the Marketing field (9 bachelor students and 3 master students) were awarded this scholarship. Meetings are also organized between alumni and students in which they talk about their work and exchange synergies. During the meeting with teaching staff, evidence of absolute integration of students with special educational needs was observed, they provided the committee with cases in which functional diversities were correctly integrated. The VMU has the material and resources to serve this student body on equal terms.

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

New students have the introductory week, it includes: faculty and staff presentations, foreign language options, opportunities to study abroad, Student Council and academic clubs' presentations, information about the use of library resources, campus facilities, etc. They too have the Faculty Day, when first-year students are introduced with the chosen study programme in more detail. The University uses social media to keep in touch with students and alumni.

The most valuable support for students in the Marketing field comes from FEM administration and teachers, they are always close to maximum. During the meeting, the students were especially satisfied with the attention that the University showed towards them. They knew how the Students Council worked and they knew its representatives.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Complete integration of students with functional diversity is an additional bonus for FEM.
2. FEM provides numerous activities that encourage the involvement of students in the University's activities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The university has numerous agreements to carry out international activities, however, it is recommended to promote the involvement of students in them even more.

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

University emphasizes that the majority of lectures and seminars are organized in Problem-Based Learning form. The students themselves design their own timetable of the general university courses (for undergraduate students), i.e. choose the priority and time of study courses. Both undergraduate and graduate students have an opportunity to study not only

compulsory study courses but also optional courses, which enables them to further develop their special, personal, and social skills to better meet the needs of the labour market.

In the frames of a course, students choose the topics of independent individual or group work, i. e. homework, the degree s/he involves in the discussions or case studies, can reach teachers and administration member via convenient for them communication means, discusses the time and form of interim assessments with teachers before scheduling, etc. The only compulsory part of assessment is taking an exam; students formally have a right to choose whether they are willing to take part in assessments of other parts of accumulative grade or not.

The information gathered during the meetings with Students, Alumni and Teaching Staff allows to confirm the statement of the University that the VMU Study Regulation gives students fairly enough freedom, at the same time with the aim to raise responsible personalities for their career and decisions. It is concluded that 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 works properly.

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

During the self-assessment period there were no students with disabilities in undergraduate or graduate study programmes in Marketing field. Students with special needs are given the opportunity to study according to an individual study schedule. Thus there is organised facilitating of the learning process for students with disabilities. Socially vulnerable groups receive different discounts for tuition or dormitory fees, scholarships are provided for these students. Following the needs of students with disabilities, the University's buildings and equipment are constantly maintained and updated. Disability education campaigns are organized at the University. Assurance of access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs is implemented consistently and effectively.

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

The monitoring of student learning progress is regulated by VMU Study Regulations and the Description of Procedure for Student Learning Achievement Monitoring and Assistance. According to the VMU Regulations on Studies, every teacher spends a certain amount of hours (at least 20 hours for full time position) per semester consulting students on their homework, individual or group assignments and other study-related issues. Monitoring of learning achievements and delivery of assistance covers interrelated processes, which include the following:

1. An analysis of student enrolment in studies and learning situations in study courses.
2. An analysis of the reasons for the students' non-participation in interim and final examinations.
3. An analysis of intermediate and final evaluation of students.
4. Implementation of preventive measures to manage student failure and improvement of organisation of studies.

The information received during the meeting with students allows to confirm the statement of the University that students themselves are invited to make self-monitoring of their progress in studies and follow the processes of studies (to register for studies, to amend their study

plans, to observe evaluations of their own learning and make improvements, to mark the mastered topics in Moodle course pages, to get acquainted with results of surveys for quality improvements, etc.). Both teachers and students during the meetings confirmed and substantiated the Administration's statement that administrators are constantly monitoring students' registration to study courses, review results of interim assignments, and collect information from teachers about students not participating in lectures and/or examinations. Processes of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress are properly documented and operate in practice

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

University monitors the employment and career of VMU graduates. The main sources of information are: VMU alumni survey, statistics provided by the Employment Service and statistics provided by the Government Strategic Analysis Centre. Each year VMU Career Centre performs an online survey for alumni, one year after their graduation. Alumni are also asked to evaluate VMU's contribution to their preparation for the labour market. According to the EXIT survey (of students ending their studies), conducted in centralised way by VMU Career Centre in 2019, a number of employed students on average comprise 69% of all FEM students, which is the highest score in University.

University emphasizes that comparative data of surveys for 2017-2019 show that graduates of FEM Marketing field study programmes get employed easier and quicker than Lithuanian average. The most successful graduate career examples are presented at the Faculty's website, Facebook and in bulletin boards. Regularly, at least once a year, face-to-face meetings with Faculty's Alumni members are organized. After evaluating the submitted material and information from the meeting with Alumni, Employers and Social partners, it can be stated that collaboration with Alumni is consistent and periodic. Graduate career tracking process is systematic, effectively exploited.

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

The principles of integrity are defined in the VMU Statute, the Code of Ethics of VMU, The Plagiarism Prevention Procedures of VMU, VMU Study Regulations. Non-discrimination measures are regulated by the Code of Ethics of VMU following the principles of academic freedom and responsibility, honesty, ethical personal relationship, fostering equal rights and opportunities, respect for personal dignity and autonomy, etc. All students and teachers of undergraduate and graduate study programmes in Marketing are provided with access to specialised plagiarism detection software (through University library) to be able to check written papers before submission/evaluation.

Statement of University that cases of detected plagiarism are very rare, which may be explained by timely presentation of relevant information and professional counselling and supervision of Faculties' teachers may be based on data, information and evidence collected during the virtual visit. Even if the possible conclusion to be drawn is that academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination ensuring system is oriented exceptionally to written assessment evaluation/monitoring, it can be said that the system works.

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

Procedures for appeals and complaints of the study process are regulated by VMU Description of Procedure for Appeal Investigation, The Plagiarism Prevention Procedures of VMU, and VMU Study Regulations. After analyzing the provided data and information, listening to student feedback, it can be concluded that the process of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies is properly described, formalized and functioning properly.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Teaching and learning process designed according to principles of *Artes Liberales* enables unique assumptions to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
2. Clear and effective process of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies.
3. Process of collaboration with alumni (documentation) is clear, harmonized and designed for effective collaboration.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination ensuring system is oriented exceptionally to written assessment evaluation/monitoring.

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

There are 22 teachers currently delivering courses from the marketing field out of which 18 are employed on a permanent basis (working more than 3 years at VMU). The actual ratio (students/teachers) is showcased for all programmes accordingly (SER, p. 61). Teachers in average have adequate academic and practical experience. The alignment with teachers' research interest and courses taught is achieved which further contributes to the quality of teaching delivery. Additional talks with VMU management revealed that there is a distinction between teacher-practitioners and teacher-scholars. VMU demonstrates the ability to manage the workload of its teachers and there are provided examples on how certain teachers were replaced either because of retirement or extremely high teaching load. The composition of teaching staff is well aligned with the formal regulations and requirements. Special attention has been paid to securing teachers who are proficient in English to undertake teaching in English-based programme (Marketing & International commerce).

Although the VMU places a lot of emphasis in effectively and efficiently managing its human resources, the expert committee indicates that there is a lack of formalized systems that could ensure that this process is properly coordinated. For instance, based on sessions with key constituents it is unclear how the school balances between teaching and research activities of

the staff (in a way that teaching load is truncated if a teacher publishes in highly ranked journals). Carefully balancing the research and teaching component should enhance the academic depth both in institution and in its undergraduate and graduate study programmes in Marketing.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility

VMU offers its teachers possibilities to engage in international teaching and training mobility, gain necessary international experience and grow cross-cultural mind-set. The mobility is dominantly arranged through the Erasmus+ programme and includes more than 50 partner schools where VMU teachers can go on mobility (SER, p. 63-64). During the meetings held with teachers, the importance of mobilities has been highly emphasized for their personal and professional development.

Although mobilities are encouraged and provide teachers with the possibility to enhance their cross-cultural skills and mindset, there is rather lack of justification on why it is strategically important for the study programmes per se. In other words, there is a lack of formalized mechanisms how the know-how from mobility is transferred into the study programmes.

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

There is evidence in SER (SER, p. 64-65), as well corroborated through interviews with teachers, that VMU organizes a wide array of training workshops which are aimed at strengthening teaching and research capacities of the staff involved in teaching. This was confirmed during the session with teachers from both first and second cycle marketing programmes.

VMU organizes a wide array of training workshops which are aimed at strengthening teaching and research capacities. While dominantly the teaching aspects have been emphasized and are at satisfactory level (8.4 training sessions per teacher), there is less evidence on how VMU builds research competencies of its teachers. The expert committee thus concludes that since all of study programmes have the significant research and academic depth, that more efforts needs to be put in the systems/regulations/procedures that would encourage and motivate teaching staff to publish more in top tier journals and integrate these insights into teaching, at least for staff that aspires more towards research. While the inclusion of both academics and practitioners is of great value-added, more diligent management of requirements for these two distinct groups should be envisioned. During the session with the VMU Management it became evident that balancing research and teaching is done on a case-by-case basis without systematic approach. Furthermore, the presented evidence on scholarly output in Annex table 4 suggests that the research output could be improved qualitatively. For instance, there has been only one A-star journal publication (according to ABDC rankings).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Teachers are highly skilled and very supportive to students not only in terms of helping them develop core marketing competencies but also in terms of professional development which reflects the *liberal arts* orientations. Student autonomy is encouraged, while ensuring adequate support and guidance from teachers. This was also praised by social partners.

2. Teachers are enthusiastic about internationalization and possibilities to grow their mindset and skills through academic mobility.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Given the environment and infrastructure, the research outputs should be of higher quality. The school should establish the system on how to support excellent researchers who publish in top tier journals.

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

VMU facilities and learning resources are suitable both in their size and quality to implement Study Programmes successfully. Constantly renovated VMU buildings are in one area, the number of classrooms (222 classrooms in total) equipped with a multimedia necessary for presentations and wireless internet, laboratories and social spaces provide a good basis of overall University functioning, achieving the Study Programme goals, learning outcomes and at the same time - as a place to socialize and have meaningful breaks.

Copies of learning materials for the lectures are provided by the University and there is a possibility to use self-services printing and scanning both for students and staff. It is commendable that VMU's social spaces change together with recent trends - Magnus eSports space can serve as a space for after class socializing. Needs of different students are taken seriously: disabled could both teach and learn in VMU as all facilities and its premises are adjusted fully for their needs.

During the meetings with students, it was confirmed that the University provides all necessary resources for distant learning, has licenses for MS Teams, BigBlueButton and Zoom (staff can freely choose between these programs), for team working - breakout rooms with the help of Adobe Connect. Main study information, as grades are provided privately in the Student Portal and the Teacher Portal, are accessible both in Lithuanian and English. IT software is used by teachers for anti plagiarism purposes, especially for screening thesis and other students' paperwork.

Distinguishable among VMU resources is the Laboratory of Neuromarketing, equipped for in-depth marketing field research. This Laboratory is an undoubtful winner while attracting most ambitious students from the Marketing field, especially those who are looking for a research career. It would be highly commended to use this exceptionally valuable resource fully both for internal study, scientific research purposes and external, as renting to private companies as soon as the pandemics situation will allow this. During the online site visit, it was mentioned by the students that they would like to use the Laboratory and at the same time it is not clear to them under which circumstances they could use it. Accessibility to such valuable resources should be clearly communicated with a clear process in place.

To implement problem-based learning and to ensure teamwork VMU uses Moodle, Adobe Connect. Specific needs of different marketing courses are taken into account, e.g. simulation games for management, Adobe Photoshop for developing visuals, etc. During the pandemic

period cloud software is used, both students and teachers have remote access to all computer classes.

VMU possesses all needed Library infrastructure for effective research and study needs of all academic units, students can move freely between 8 Libraries of different faculties with 770 working places, some equipped with computers or places with possibility to connect with personal computers. It is commendable that it also has implemented self-taking / returning devices, it is possible to return borrowed documents at any time with the help of a self-return device at one of the Library branches. All departments of the Library are equipped with workplaces for users with special needs.

According to SER, the total number of electronics resources exceeds 600 thousand and 58 databases that can be accessed on the University premises and from remote computers. There are a number of relevant Marketing field resources too: more than 26.000 of traditional resources, 43.000 e-resources, 27 databases.

The premises and teaching resources available for teaching students are adequate both by size and quality, allowing to carry out a good performance both in terms of teaching obligations as well as in administrative tasks.

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

VMU upgrades computers and multimedia equipment according to the resource development plans prepared according to the study needs. About 20% of computers are renewed annually. Both software and hardware are supervised, updated and audited periodically with the help of a centralized system. The evidence shows that study process related resources development is in place and changes are made constantly with the help of all stakeholders.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Resources provided by the University are impressive both in number and quality, and have all aspects to be highly commendable for other Universities.
2. It is a highly commendable approach when management is looking for synergies between different faculties and using all available resources as efficiently as possible.
3. Systematic approach to renewal of the resources works as a safeguard and lets VMU have all possible (and most importantly - up to date) assets for modern marketing studies.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The Laboratory of Neuromarketing should have a clear and well communicated process of it's usage and invite a wider circle of current and potential stakeholders, in order to have all possible benefits and make VMU a center of marketing theories development not only in Lithuania but also in the region.
2. Having ambition to keep the leadership as being best equipped for Marketing studies University in Lithuania, management should have a vision of what could be the next big thing in the upcoming 5 to 10 years.

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

The VMU successfully implemented an internal quality assurance in order to ensure higher quality study programmes. The Study Programme Committee (SPC) coordinates the programme management and updates the relevant processes frequently. The Study Quality Unit was identified as responsible for preparation and implementation of strategies for study quality assurance, development of internal quality assurance system of studies, initiation of training on assessment and improvement of studies, consultations on study quality issues.

The documentation regulates issues of study quality assurance process, regarding developing, implementing and improving studies, information gathering and assessment. During the site visit it was stated that all learning outcomes were reviewed as a starting point for any quality management process. Regarding the internal quality assurance system, the expert committee finds it carefully established and viable. The expert committee admits the results of content management regarding the study programmes.

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

The quality assurance involves staff members along with students and alumni, the expert committee welcomes the involvement of third parties in internal quality management. The frequent surveys for all parties ensure both quality and quantity of data in order to maintain high quality study programmes at VMU.

The expert committee acknowledges the cooperation with several partners (e.g., social partners, alumni, and students) who are actively participating in the Committee's activities. However, they should put more emphasis on closer cooperation with alumni and social partners. Indeed, they are included as part of lectures as guests, supervising master theses and different projects elaborated by students in various courses, however, there is a well-articulated need from them to form these informal connections into some formal cooperation. Both teaching staff and students are encouraged to participate in the quality management process.

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

The quality surveys (whereas students have the opportunity to evaluate the content of the modules, teaching methodology, teacher's competence and submit their suggestions) provide not only quantitative, but qualitative data as well. The annual analysis provides an opportunity to realize necessary adjustments. The aims and intended learning outcomes are announced and updated periodically not only on the VMU website but on the social media sites as well. The results of student surveys are taken into account for discussion and programme improvement decisions. The expert committee acknowledges the Progress Reports and its updates. One of the most tangible results of the importance of surveys is the changed title of "Marketing Management" study programme to "Marketing".

The expert committee acknowledges the good level of information flow. All information about the study programmes are available publicly. The expert committee acknowledges the frequent updates in AIKOS, faculty's websites and Facebook. Further utilization of more options (e.g., developing an application, using a wider variety of social platforms) could be an opportunity to increase awareness and engagement.

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

VMU developed an adequate system of regular self-assessments and implementation of improvements. The annual analysis of feedback from students and on their studies provide the opportunity to deliver necessary adjustments. The expert committee acknowledges the existence of qualitative data besides quantitative: the open questions provide a good opportunity to give useful feedback for professors, therefore giving the basis to improve their study content and methods.

The existing channels for publishing survey results are good: the website, emails, presentations, social media are updated frequently. This approach to publish quality management results is sufficient.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There are adequate quality management structures and quality assurance processes in place.
2. Involving stakeholders in quality management in working well.
3. FEM is frequently asking feedback via various surveys.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The quality and quantity of feedback from alumni is not yet satisfying.
2. There is a well-articulated need from the alumni and social partners to form, from existing informal connections, more formal cooperation patterns.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Resources provided by the University are impressive both in number and quality, and have all aspects to be highly commendable for other Universities. Distinguishable among VMU resources is the Laboratory of Neuromarketing, equipped for in-depth marketing field research. This Laboratory is an undoubtful winner while attracting most ambitious students from the Marketing field, especially those who are looking for a research career. It would be highly commended to use this exceptionally valuable resource fully both for internal study, scientific research purposes and external, as renting to private companies as soon as the pandemic situation will allow this. Usage of the Laboratory of Neuromarketing should invite a wider circle of current and potential stakeholders to have all possible benefits and make VMU a center of marketing theories development not only in Lithuania but also in the region.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The expert committee is of opinion that more concrete activities in strategic planning should be carried out in order to ensure that the positioning of VMU and its study programmes in marketing is relevant to key stakeholders. This should include answering some of the key questions in the next strategic framework, for instance: 1) What differentiates your study programmes from other programmes in the field? 2) Why is the programme unique? 2. The management in charge of study programmes should re-analyze their study programme structure, especially the LOs at the course-level and make clear distinction how each course contributes and ensure that two different courses are not contributing with the exactly the same LOs. 3. VMU and the study programme management is highly advised to revise (and possibly restructure) study programmes and make a tighter bridge between their three graduate study programmes. This was advised by the previous expert committee as well so VMU is urged to strongly attend to this issue and demonstrate the progress in the upcoming evaluation period. 4. The study programme management is advised to increase the research-oriented perspective by stimulating joint publishing efforts from supervisors and talented students originating from promising final theses (accentuate this more at the graduate level).
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage more active participation of students in scientific activities. 2. Implement a more coherent method to apply research results in teaching. 3. Ensure a transparent system for professors in order to avoid overlapping study content.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The university has numerous agreements to carry out international activities, however, it is recommended to promote the involvement of students much more.

<p>Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expert committee advises a more intensive use of the Laboratory of Neuromarketing with a clear and well communicated process and wider circle of current and potential stakeholders. 2. Improve Academic integrity ensurance system with tools and procedures for controlling verbal, creative, and other (non-written) forms of assessment.
<p>Teaching staff</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The expert committee advises introducing more formalized systems that could measure each teacher's contribution to both teaching and research. This seems to be mandatory since the VMU positions its study programmes as university-level and excellent research is one of its core strategic goals. 2. The expert committee advises strongly to organize the in-house dissemination events (once per semester) where teachers who undertook the mobility will share their experiences to other teachers and report on how they plan to utilize the generated know-how in the courses they teach. 3. Introduce support mechanisms and motivation to teachers to focus publishing in top tier journals.
<p>Learning facilities and resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is advised to have a clear and well communicated process for new valuable resources with an approach to exploit and benefit from it fully, especially developing and checking new marketing theories. 2. In order to keep supremacy in resources, it is advised to have a clear vision and action plans on how to keep this pace.
<p>Study quality management and public information</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is advised to develop a motivation system to improve the quantity of feedback from students, alumni and social partners. 2. Improve the formal approaches towards social partners to take part in quality management.

VI. SUMMARY

The strategy of VMU clearly emphasizes its core pillars and the University lives up to the expectations and delivers its promises in its undergraduate and graduate marketing programmes. Academic depth is present, especially in graduate programmes. Teaching and learning processes designed according to principles of *Artes Liberales* enable a unique approach for broad education.

Teachers are highly skilled and very supportive to students not only in terms of helping them develop core marketing competencies but also in terms of professional development. Student autonomy is encouraged, while ensuring adequate support and guidance from teachers. Teachers are enthusiastic about internationalization and possibilities to grow their mindset and skills through academic mobility. Internationalization is at commendable level, there is a double degree programme and quite a few international students.

At the same time, there are some repetitions in study programmes that need to be resolved, especially in Advertising Management. The options for students to personalize their studies exist, but it could be improved further through shredding the repetitions in the study programme and by freeing more ECTS for optional courses, preferably from other graduate studies. The integration of students with different backgrounds is an issue, the expert committee suggests taking proper measures to give equal opportunities and chances by balancing study materials in a better way. The University has numerous agreements to carry out international activities, however, it is recommended to promote the involvement of students in them. Also, a lot of information is missing from the webpage in English.

There are numerous types of scholarships designed to support the economy of its students. Complete integration of students with functional diversity is an additional bonus for the curricula. There are clear and effective processes of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies. University also monitors the employment and career of VMU graduates. Involving stakeholders in quality management is working rather well, though there is not sufficient feedback from alumni.

Academic staff is producing relevant research output in the field of marketing. At the same time, a stronger focus on internationally renowned academic articles is desirable. Given the environment and infrastructure, the research outputs should be of higher quality. The school should establish the system on how to support excellent researchers who publish in top-tier journals. Carefully balancing the research and teaching component should enhance the academic depth both in institution and in its undergraduate and graduate study programmes in Marketing.

Resources provided by the University are impressive both in number and quality, and have all aspects to be highly commendable for other Universities. Distinguishable among VMU resources is the Laboratory of Neuromarketing, equipped for in-depth marketing field research. This Laboratory is attracting most ambitious students from the Marketing field, especially those who are looking for a research career.

Expert panel signatures:

1. **Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson (panel chairperson)**, academic
2. **Dr. Dario Miočević**, *academic*
3. **Dr. Ákos Varga**, *academic*
4. **Dr. Giedrius Romeika**, *academic*
5. **Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis**, *representative of social partners*
6. **Ms. Alicia Presencio Herrero**, *students' representative*