



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of BUSINESS STUDIES

at Vilnius College of Technologies and Design

Expert panel:

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Transport Logistics</i>
State code	6531LX036
Type of studies	College studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years), part-time (4 years)
Credit volume	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Business and Public Administration
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	01/02/2012

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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 (SER) prepared by Higher Education Institution (HEI)*; 2) *site visit of the expert panel to the HEI*; 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 is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection 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 online on 27 April, 2022.

Prof. Dr. Eneken Titov (panel chairperson), *Professor of Management, Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, Estonia;*

Prof. Dr. Joanna Ejdys, *Head of International Department of Logistics and Service Engineering, Faculty of Engineering Management, Bialystok University of Technology, Poland;*

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rasa Balvočiūtė, *Associate Professor at the Department of Management and Communication, Faculty of Business and Technology, Šiauliai State University of Applied Sciences, Lithuania;*

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tomi Solakivi, *Associate Professor of Supply Chain Management and Maritime Business, Department of Marketing and International Business, Turku School of Economics at the University of Turku, Finland;*

Mr. Mantas Jonauskis (social partner), *CEO at “ProBaltic Consulting”, Lithuania;*

Mr. Simonas Radzevičius (student representative), *3rd year student of the first cycle study programme “Economics” at Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Quality survey examples (27/04/2022)

1.4. BACKGROUND OF BUSINESS FIELD STUDIES AT VILNIUS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGIES AND DESIGN

Vilnius College of Technologies and Design was established after reorganised Vilnius Technical College was merged with Vilnius Construction and Design College in 2008. The name of Vilnius College of Construction and Design was changed to Vilnius College of Technologies and Design (hereinafter referred to as the College). The College is a public legal entity operating as a public institution. The main field of activity of the College is education, and the main type of activity is higher education college studies. The College provides studies based on professional practical training and applied research, experimental development, provides higher education college studies and creates conditions for life-long learning.

The management structure of the College ensures a proper implementation of studies. The collegial governing bodies in the institution are the Council of the College and the Academic Council, while the sole governing body is the Director of the College. The interests of students are represented by the Students' Representation. Vilnius College of Technologies and Design has three Faculties: The Design Faculty, the Civil Engineering Faculty, and the Technical Faculty. Vilnius College of Technologies and Design offers 16 study programmes in 11 study fields. Two study programmes of these study fields are conducted at the Design Faculty (*Design; Media Art*), 3 study programmes of the study field are available at the Civil Engineering Faculty (*Civil Engineering; Measurement Engineering; Management*), and 6 study programmes of the study field (*Information Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Energy Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Electronics Engineering and Transport Engineering*) are provided at the Technical Faculty.

The study programme *Transport Logistics* has been implemented at the College since 2012. It was evaluated by the international group of experts in 2016 and accredited for a maximum period of six years.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Business studies study field and *first cycle* at Vilnius College of Technologies and Design 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	4
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	27

*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies.

2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, and there are fundamental shortcomings that need to be eliminated.

3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings.

4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings;

5 (excellent) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

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 aims and learning outcomes of the study programme *Transport Logistics* (state code 6531LX036) can be considered as conforming to the needs of society and the labour market. The aim of the study programme is to prepare a logistics specialist who is able to manage the activities of the logistics chain and cargo and passenger transportation processes, is able to organise the activities of transport logistics companies and operate independently and creatively under changing business market conditions.

The College's mission and strategic aims pursuing sustainable environment goals are well reflected in the programme in terms of learning outcomes and study subjects. The most impactful trends are properly addressed through ongoing programme quality improvements, including the inputs provided by the social partners. New subjects had been introduced like Green Supply Chain Management, Responsible Innovation, study subject *Logistics* was supplemented and expanded with the topics "Logistics of Secondary Raw Materials" and "Reverse Logistics" with a focus on environmental pollution reduction.

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

The main strategic priorities of the College are sustainable development (being a partner in creating a sustainable society) and partnership with the social partners. According to the learning outcomes of the *Transport Logistic* programme, the programme is oriented to sustainable development, bringing into the studies different issues reflecting the newest trends and activities in this area. Close cooperation with the social partners is visible from the practical approach in the studies and study organisation - social partners are involved to the programme development, internships are organised, final theses focus on solving the real companies challenges, etc. Teachers confirmed that they participate in different seminars provided by the umbrella organisation, they participate in thematic conferences to understand what happens in the area of sustainable development and transport logistics, and integrate the updates and new knowledge to their subjects.

Programme aim is "to prepare a logistics specialist who is able to manage the activities of the logistics chain and cargo and passenger transportation processes, is able to organise the activities of transport logistics companies and operate independently and creatively under changing business market conditions." This aim reflects the requirements of the EQF 6th level and for the 1st cycle higher education professional bachelor studies focusing on preparation of specialists ready to commit to the chosen specialisation in the world of work.

Although the business study field programme belongs to the Department of the Civil Engineering, the management of the department sees that the *Transport Logistics* programme complements other study programmes in the department, adding some important links to other programmes (management, economics, etc.) and bringing more variety. The opportunity to develop the programme together with other specialists in the area of Civil Engineering could add additional value and uniqueness for the study programme to be more competitive in the market.

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

The structure of the study programme complies with the requirements set by Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, the Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies, Descriptor of the Business Study Field and other legislation (see Table 1). The aims and learning outcomes of the study programme align with the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework level 6, and cover the levels of knowledge and its application and competencies (research skills, special, social, personal competences). Learning outcomes comply with legal and other regulatory documents that set academic and professional requirements for the qualification of trained specialists.

Table No. 1 Programme's Transport Logistic compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes of college level*

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	135
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	30
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	36%
Contact hours	No less than 20% of learning	50%

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

The focus of the studies is on practical approach, which is in coherence with the expectations based on EQF (CrQF) level 6 studies and is integrated into the different aspects of the study organisation (choice of the learning outcomes and competences, structure of the studies, etc.) and studies (applied study and assessment methods, etc.). Chosen study methods (online team work, Kahoot, open access programmes, films/videos + discussions, common creation

platforms, lectures, groupworks, individual work, mindmapping, company visits, competitions, business simulations, quests lectures, comparative analysis, etc.) and assessment methods (e.g., presentations, discussions, case-studies, (practical) quizzes (with mentimeter), roleplays/simulations, problem analysis, videos with discussions, individual homeworks, etc.) are supporting deep learning and prepare students for real work in the labour market.

Based on the information collected from the interviews, the variety of teaching and assessment methods is high, and different digital and active learning methods are used.

The learning outcomes in the College webpage (<https://vtdko.lt/statybos-fakulteto-studiju-programos/istojusiems-2022-m/transporto-logistika-2>) are slightly different than those provided for the experts in the SER and are focused to the core speciality competences with the integration of transferable skills. Despite the requirement that the learning outcomes of the programme must be presented for the target group in consistent manner and must remain the same notwithstanding the communication channel, the learning outcomes in the College webpage are giving better overview of the study programme, are more understandable and clearer than those “formal ones” (provided for the experts) and focus on the speciality as required in professional bachelor level.

Overall, the aims, learning outcomes, study and assessment methods of the *Transport Logistics* study programme are suitable for the professional bachelor studies and express the suitable focus for the practical approach.

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 study programme is divided between general, core and special courses. The traditional structure of the programme allows students to achieve both general and specific competences in a reasonable order.

Electives (optional modules) could bring necessary flexibility to the programme but are dedicated to the specific speciality (freight transport or warehouses) courses and do not reflect the latest trends in the field as they should. Although sustainability oriented topics are integrated into the special subjects, innovation is needed also in the other topics and courses.

The webpage and SER also present that the graduates of the *Transport Logistics* study programme are ready to create and develop their own transportation business, but there is no entrepreneurship-oriented course (or learning outcome) in the programme - it remains unclear how the students can gain these necessary competences.

Practical approach and internship are well integrated into the study programme, and internship forms a significant part (30 credits) of the entire programme. The internship is divided into four different parts which support the student to apply collected knowledge and skills in the working environment.

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

Students of the programme can individualise their studies and choose subjects that meet their needs and interests. The study programme is designed in such a way that during the entire study period a student can choose alternative and optional subjects, choosing a subject of the study field.

In order to further improve the individualisation of studies, students should be introduced in detail to the aims and learning outcomes of different internships (in internships students have the opportunity to acquire different skills depending on the nature of the internship - Introductory Practice, Logistics Skills Development Practice, Industrial practice) and their personal goals (gaining more skills in logistics in transport, other services or manufacturing, etc.). Interviews with students revealed that they do not distinguish between different internship goals, making it difficult for them to pursue their personal goals in relation to the opportunities for different internships, as all internships seem to be the same for them. This could facilitate the acquisition of the necessary practical skills.

In addition, according to the SER (p. 25), students who are unable to attend lectures according to the approved schedule are granted the right to study according to the individual one. In 2018–2021, such an opportunity was taken by 118 full-time students of the Business study field. Students can also take a study break due to health problems or for personal reasons (for a period that does not exceed one study year, without losing their student status and the right to continue their studies in a state-funded study place).

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

The department has identified some areas where the students' research is needed, teachers have their own research topics they work with and they recommend and involve students in their research if possible. Students can also find the ideas for the final thesis from the internship company, social partners have the possibility to recommend thesis topics (e.g., through study programme committee meetings or meetings with the teachers). The possible topics for the final thesis are discussed in the departmental meetings and then finally confirmed by the dean.

Social partners value the practical approach of the final works and appreciate that the paper works allow the students to focus on solving the real problem of the company and show their analytical and field specific skills and knowledge.

The list of the final thesis topics shows the variety of the topics and covers almost a full study programme. The structure and general level of theses meet the requirements of the first level higher education.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The College's mission and strategic aims pursuing sustainable environment goals are well integrated into the study programme.
2. The business studies field programme brings valuable innovation and "fresh blood" into the other study programmes of the Department of Civil Engineering.

3. A high variety of study and assessment methods shows the good level of teachers' pedagogical skills as well as helps students to be more motivated to study and achieve intended learning outcomes.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Students do not always know the goals of different internships and the opportunities to acquire practical skills in them.
2. The learning outcomes are different in different publishing channels.
3. Lack of entrepreneurship studies in the study programme.

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 staff of the College is active in research as the researchers and lecturers published (during the evaluation period) over 30 scientific articles, many of them in peer reviewed scientific publications or publications with a citation rate. Teachers are expected to conduct research and publish - teachers are rewarded financially for research. Teacher-student collaboration in research is emphasised, for example through Science Shops (*Science Shops are College's projects in which research is carried out free of charge for communities, non-governmental organisations and other public organisations in order to solve problems relevant to society*) and business projects.

The College has established a Science Foundation to encourage and support both the staff and the students of the College in carrying out and disseminating research and to participate in research conferences. This can be considered as a sign of commitment to enforcement of scientific activities. To engage the students better into scientific activities, the College integrated Science Shops into the study process.

In addition, the College co-operates both with Lithuanian and foreign companies as well as research institutions in research activities.

The College has listed focus areas for their future research efforts, including currently rising themes such as green logistics and sustainable development, but also more established themes like logistics management. There would also seem to be coordination on how the planned research focus areas would benefit the contents of the study programme.

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

The content of the study programme *Transport Logistics* is systematically updated taking into account the latest scientific and technological achievements, development trends in the transport logistics and forwarding sector, and the recommendations of social partners. The SER contains examples of incorporating the latest developments in science and technology

into the logistics curriculum. The exemplary references concern contemporary concepts related to green logistics, sustainable and environmentally friendly logistics. Lecturers (based on their practical experiences) introduce information about latest technological achievements (such as installation of an innovative warehouse lighting and heating system by UAB Vingès terminalas; trucks with semi-trailers; purchase of the latest vehicles, trucks with semi-trailers; stevedoring technologies) to the subject content. The SER shows how, for example, the study subject EU Transport Policy has been modified in terms of the new requirements relating to carbon dioxide reduction policy.

Another way of incorporating the latest developments in science and technology into the curriculum is through students' research. The research topics undertaken by students in projects and final theses concern contemporary concepts and new technologies. A good example of the link between content of the study and latest development of science and technology is the participation of a group of students of *Transport Logistics* in the project "Improvement of the Quality of Studies by Developing Students' Entrepreneurial Skills".

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

Students of the field are well involved in research and applied activities. Students are engaged in research during their studies both individually and together with lecturers. The students have been given possibilities to present and publish their work together with the lecturers in scientific conferences as well as their individual work in practical and scientific-practical conferences for students. As a point of development, the share of students participating in these activities should be improved, as currently less than 10 per cent are involved.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Strong and different links between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology (e.g. latest knowledge included in curriculums; research topics based on latest technology and knowledge development).
2. The College encourages applied research activities.

(2) Weaknesses:

Not identified.

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.

Student selection and admission criteria and process is suitable and public. Since 2009, the enrolment to the study programme has been organised by the Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions Association for Organizing Joint Admission (LAMA BPO). When determining the competitive score, the following additional criteria and scores are added: 1.5 scores for

participation in youth voluntary activities (at least 6 months); 1 score for those who have at least one year of work experience in the field they plan to study in; 1 score for graduates of a vocational training programme in the same field of education; 1 score for those who have submitted proof of participation in the creative workshops of the College. Additional criteria show the College's wish to attract students with a more entrepreneurial mindset.

Information about the admission to the study programme is published on the College's website, promoted during participation in the annual exhibition of learning, studies and career planning ("Studijos"), study fairs, specialised publications ("Kur stoti", "Kuo būti", "Reitingai"), and social networks (Facebook, Instagram). In order to increase the popularity of the programme *Transport Logistics*, it is advertised on social networks, communities, study fairs, public campaigns, during the Open-Door events and the Career Days. Moreover, the College is introduced in general education and vocational schools (SER, p. 21-22).

Despite the improved criteria and extensive marketing, the decreasing number of admitted students (from 166 in 2018 to 89 in 2020) should raise some alarms. Also, the percentage of students in the Business studies field (compared to the percentage of students of other study fields of the College) is decreasing, which could mean that College is losing its competitive advantages.

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

The College has the document regulating the recognition of prior learning - Procedure for Crediting Learning Outcomes, which regulates the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, part-time studies and recognition of previous non-formal and informal learning. During the last three study years, 15 students from the *Transport Logistics* study programme have used the possibility to transfer the credits.

The College also has the document dedicated to the description of recognition of non-formal education - Procedure for the Assessment and Recognition of Competences Acquired in the Non-formal Adult Education System. Since 2018/2019, there have been no applications in the Business studies field for recognition of competencies acquired non-formally. This was surprising for the panel, because there are plenty of part-time students who mostly work in the field already and probably have some competencies gained before.

Interview with the students confirmed that the students know about the possibility to recognise their prior studies, but not so much about the opportunities to transfer their previous practical experiences (non-formal education) into the formal credits.

Teachers confirmed that they are involved in the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process, but according to the above mentioned procedure they should not be. The Head of the Department is responsible for the assessment of applications for recognition and his/her decisions will be confirmed by the Dean of the Faculty. Based on the requirements, the prior formal learning can be recognised if (paragraph 11.1 from Procedure for Crediting Learning Outcomes) the already acquired skills form at least 2/3rd of the scope of the targeted subject and meet its essential objectives and main parts of the targeted subject content, etc. According to the European framework for the RPL (e.g. Enic-Naric recommendations and process), the

recognition decisions must be based on the comparative analysis of the learning outcomes of the prior and targeted studies. According to that, the recognition process and criteria must be updated and bring it into line with the requirements of learning outcome-based studies.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

Conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students are in good state. Despite the fact that in the evaluation period there was a global pandemic, the College had 26 students who participated in an exchange program. It is noteworthy that more students preferred internships abroad (17) than studies abroad (9). On the other hand, there were only 3 incoming students, which should be considered when talking about the College's image in the international community.

The internationality of studies in the Business studies field is developed by organising academic mobility through the Erasmus+ program, by inviting foreign lecturers to give lectures.

Information on the opportunities to participate in the mobility program is available on the College's website and is published in several ways, such as informational meetings with students and spreading information to all participants in mobility competition by e-mail. Meetings with students, who have participated in the exchange programme (for studies and practical training) are organised at least twice a year. In order to promote student mobility and increase their participation in the mobility programme, a series of articles ("Experiences of students who tried Erasmus+ studies" and "Experiences of students who tried Erasmus+ internships") are published on the College website and Facebook account, and events are organised to share student best practices with the academic community of the faculty (SER, p. 24).

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

Students of the field are provided with suitable, sufficient and timely academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support.

Students are consulted according to the consultation schedule approved by the Dean and published on the College website and in the electronic medium (Moodle and MS Teams environment). Students who face academic difficulties are given the opportunity to retake the examination.

Students have the opportunity to use state-supported loans and receive financial support. (e.g. social scholarships). During the assessed period, social scholarships were received by all *Transport Logistics* students who applied for it (10 in 2018, 11 in 2019, 6 in 2020, 7 in 2021). The best students studying in state-funded places receive incentive study scholarships for their learning outcomes. In 2018–2021, incentive study scholarships were paid to 328 full-time students in the study field of Business studies.

The College has the Centre for Studies and Career, the specialists of which give some good advice for students on job search issues, organise training and meetings with graduates and

social partners. An annual event “Green Street for Your Career” is organised for students of the study field, in which the representatives of transport logistics business companies actively participate and speak on various career opportunities. For example, 21 representatives of various companies participated in the event in 2018, and 24 in 2019. In 2020, the representatives of 10 companies participated remotely (SER, p. 25-26).

Since September 2021, the College has been providing psychological help for the students. Information on how to get free psychological help is published on the College’s website and on social networks.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Students are in good relationships with lecturers which helps to get information more quickly. Existing trust helps students to not be afraid of asking questions. Study information is presented on time and with proper explanations. Students can always discuss if something is not clear for them. All information about the study programmes is published on the College’s website in the section “For Students”. Relevant information is sent to students via group emails, and information is passed on during the ongoing meetings with faculty administration staff.

According to information given in the SER (p. 26), first-year students are given the lecture series “Introduction to Studies”. This event is dedicated for students’ introduction to the study programme, its structure, study process, optional subjects, organisation of the study process, study regulations, organisation of practical training. During these lectures, new students also meet the social partners who present the possibilities and perspectives of the chosen profession.

The library staff regularly informs students about the library resources and the possibilities of using databases. The lecturers acquaint students with the aims of the subject and learning outcomes, the syllabus of the subject taught, the assessment system and criteria, the form of assessment and the possibilities of consultations (SER, p. 26).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The set of the admission criteria are complemented by the institution and entrepreneurial mindset oriented criteria are added.
2. The number of outgoing students (Erasmus+ mobility) is high despite the period of pandemic.
3. The College offers a diverse set of different counselling and support services for the students.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. RPL process is not in full coherence with the principles of the learning outcome studies.
2. Despite the extensive marketing, the number of admitted students is decreasing heavily.
3. The number of incoming Erasmus+ students is really low and must be supported by systematic international collaboration.

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

The College carries out student-oriented studies. Description of Procedure for Assessment of Learning Outcomes express objective assessment of students' achievements and achievement levels. Reliability of the assessment of study achievements is ensured by the involvement of students and lecturers in the assessment process. Students confirmed during the visit that at the end of the course, the lecturer of the subject and the administration provide students with an opportunity to express their opinion about teaching and assessment of the subject.

The assessment system used in the College allows considering the needs of the students (College puts efforts to involve students in the assessment process), strengthening students' learning (lecturers direct students to analyse their own learning efforts; formative assessment approach), assessing students' progress (high variety of assessment methods which match with the expected learning outcomes; interim assessment and individual feedback for the students), forming the skills of academic integrity and taking into account students with special needs.

Programme administrators could consider expanding the practical components of the study programme by inviting more specialists as the guest lecturers in the field, and other means.

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

The College has created the suitable environment for the students with special needs and students from socially vulnerable groups and enables them to study at an individual pace, according to their capacities, needs and interests. The College's developments to use the virtual learning environment Moodle and MS Teams allow the aforementioned students to be more involved in the study process and study in more flexible and suitable modes. Students with special needs are supported by the possibility to have individual consultations with lecturers, and, if necessary, students are consulted both in the virtual environment and individually.

Although there are good conditions to study for students with special needs, more attention should be paid to socially vulnerable groups (single mothers or fathers with small children, low-income students, ethnic minorities etc). Such assistance was not highlighted in the report or stated during the site visit.

Both the students and staff confirmed during the online site visit that the study environment is friendly and ensures equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

The College premises have been renovated using universal design principles, and there are special parking spaces for the students with special needs. The digital accessibility of

websites, teaching materials and online materials have been ensured for people with disabilities, in particular: the visually impaired, people with cognitive problems and users of mobile devices.

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

Students' progress is planned and monitored in accordance with the provisions of the Description of the Procedure for Assessment of Learning Outcomes. An important phase in the monitoring of students' study progress is the monitoring and analysis of intermediate assessment results which is carried out after the completion of a certain part of the subject (SER 4.3). A student receives the final grade only after having received the grades of all interim evaluations. Based on the results of the monitoring of study progress, the necessary measures are envisaged to help solve the problematic aspects. For example, based on the results of student interim evaluations, additional consultations with lecturers can be provided.

Although the assessment measures are systematic and formalised (as confirmed in 3.4.1.), the main responsibility in student's assessment is still in lecturers, and students themselves do not always take active part in learning through the assessment process. Assessment should be an integral and important part of the studies to finalise the achievement of intended learning outcomes. Therefore, the students and lecturers should be further actively encouraged to use self-reflective and participative assessment methods.

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

The College organisational unit – the Centre for Studies and Career – plays a key role in monitoring employability of graduates and graduate careers in the study field, based on formal procedures for data collection. It also pursues career path selection and promotion activities. The data received is used for study programme improvements. Provided data supports the demand for knowledge and skills delivered by the Business study field programme Transport Logistics.

In support of the positive view of the study programme by the graduates, during the site visit, some current students mentioned they selected the study programme recommended by previous students as a right path to employability in the transport or logistics sector. The expectations of students are met through quality employment. Students stressed the very practical approach applied in the study programme, which ensures higher employability or value derived from the studies.

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

The policy of Vilnius College of Technology and Design to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination is set out in the following documents: Study Regulations, the Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius College of Technologies and Design, Regulations of the Ethics Committee, the Description of Procedure for Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment or

Persecution, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities Policy. The cited documents are available in Lithuanian version in the College's intranet. These documents describe the actions, principles and measures ensuring transparency, fairness, justice, equality of persons participating in the study process, non-discrimination, responsibility and impartiality during the evaluation of the study papers. Relations between the members of the academic community in the College are also based on the principles of respect, goodwill, impartiality and non-discrimination.

The journal "Technologies and Art. Research and Topicalities" published at the College has a set ethics policy. The Quality Assurance Policy of Vilnius College of Technology and Design also includes an ethical area relating to tolerance, respect, integrity and responsibility ([vtdk kokybes politika sN-3 1.pdf \(vtdko.lt\)](#)).

The set of preventive measures applied to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination resulted in no cases of violations of the Code of Academic Ethics in the study field during the evaluated period. Examples of preventive measures activities include: signing the declaration of honesty by students entering the College; signing of a declaration of no plagiarism by students preparing their final thesis, and independent preparation of the thesis.

It would be recommended to publish the main policy documents on ethics and equality on a dedicated website section for international students (in English language). In the document Internationalization Strategy 2020 - 2025 ([VTDK internationalization strategy 2025 EN 1-compressed.pdf \(vtdko.lt\)](#)), references to the policy of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination should be included (during document updating process).

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

The procedure for appeals regarding the study process, the grading of students' knowledge and procedural violations at the College is described in the Description of the Procedure for Submission and Examination of Student Appeals Regarding the Evaluation of Knowledge and Procedural Violations. The appeal against evaluation of the thesis may be filed only for procedural violations that occurred during defence of the thesis. During the evaluation period, there were no formal appeals regarding evaluation of students' knowledge and procedural violations in the study field.

During the online site visit, College representatives gave one example of an informal complaint made by a student against a teacher, questioning teaching methods. Actions taken included discussions to clarify the source of the problem. A student participating in the panel confirmed that the actions taken by the College definitely improved the quality of teaching.

Students also indicated that their most informal frequent complaints (if any) concerned teaching methods. They have pointed to a situation where, after complaints from students, the subject teacher was changed. Students are of the opinion that such situations are rare and most often teachers are skilled in imparting practical knowledge. The College takes immediate and effective action to eliminate dissatisfaction and complaints from students, looking for the source of the problem and attempting to resolve it amicably.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Well established policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.
2. An effective system for responding to student complaints regarding the study programme.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Student assessment could be even more focused on student-centred and participative assessment methods.

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

The academic staff of the study field of Business is suitable to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme and complies with the legal requirements set in the Law on Higher Education and Research, the Statute of the College and General Requirements for the Provision of Studies. Three lecturers of the study programme have obtained a doctoral degree (they make up 18.75 percent of all academic staff). Practical trainings are supervised by lecturers with at least a master's degree or equivalent higher education qualification and at least three years of experience in teaching or practical activities in the study field.

Even as the current teacher-student ratio is acceptable, this ratio should be considered critically, especially considering that the required ratio to successfully apply more advanced teaching methods is often dependent on sufficient teaching resources per student.

The quality of studies is guaranteed at the College, at the same time ensuring the dynamics of pedagogical activity through consistent and optimal changes in the shift of lecturers. The College has an established procedure for recruitment and securing the competence of recruited teachers. Recruited teachers are provided with a lecturer-mentor to ensure that the transition is smooth, as well as to provide advice on professional development. To enforce the competence development of the teaching staff, lecturers are provided with conditions to participate in doctoral studies.

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

The College emphasises the importance of internationality and academic mobility. Teaching staff is able to engage in international exchange through conferences, internships, seminars, among others.

The academic mobility is in line with the strategic goals of the College, as priority is given to such mobility activities during which new teaching materials are prepared, the relations between the Study Programme Committee and the Faculty are strengthened and expanded, and future cooperation projects are prepared.

The College has a procedure for securing the possibility for their staff for academic mobility. This includes both financial resources (conference fees, allowances, etc.) as well as other support such as organising replacement teachers, etc. Also the Vilnius College of Technology and Design is relying on Erasmus+ program on academic mobility. The College would benefit from seeking additional channels for international exchange. Overall, it would seem that the academic mobility of the College is improving, as the number of lecturers participating in exchange has been increasing, excluding the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

The College has a forward-looking approach to the competence development of their teaching staff. Professional development of study field lecturers is planned in advance. Based on the strategic aims of the College, the faculty provides for priority fields of professional development for the upcoming year.

The College creates conditions for every lecturer to study, improve their qualifications and develop professionally. Therefore, there are possibilities for teachers' self-development. In the form of annual improvement plans the teachers are encouraged to participate in seminars and conferences. In order to tackle the effects of Covid-19, the College has organised training for teaching staff to cope with changes in teaching - this shows the commitment to development of teaching.

Teachers are left a reasonable freedom to affect the content of their courses. The results of such an academic personnel management approach can be seen in the studies where a good variety of teaching and assessment methods – including online teaching, interactive tools, etc. – is implemented.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Forward-looking approach to staff competence development.
2. Teachers' freedom to design course contents.
3. Good selection of teaching and assessment methods.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The College would benefit from seeking additional channels (beyond Erasmus+) for teaching staff academic mobility.

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

The College has 22 well equipped auditoriums at the Civil Engineering Faculty (Antakalnio St. 54), in the Logistics Practical Training Centre and in 2 laboratories at the Technical Faculty (Olandų St. 16) to effectively implement study programme. Specialised software (e.g. AutoCad, Nano Warehouse, Customs, InfoTrans, etc.) is used to reflect the needs of potential employers while implementing the study programme. The resources are also adopted for the students with special needs. Close relationships with social partners ensure quality internships in selected logistics companies. Students have good access to scientific publications and other study materials through College library and subscribed databases. Moodle is used for the study process, including teaching materials for lectures and methodological documents.

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

College's Strategic Activity Plan includes the plans for the necessary resources. Annual investment and renewal plans of the study materials and equipment are drawn up based on the requirements and input of the academic staff. Since there is always some space for improvement, the College would benefit from exploring more potential partnerships with businesses to further develop access to transport and logistics' software and teaching materials.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The College has at its disposal well equipped facilities, with a practical skills' development base, and specialised software, also a resourceful library.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Some more opportunities for partnership with social partners to access transport and logistics' software and teaching materials could be explored.

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 quality of studies is ensured by applying The Internal Quality of Studies Assurance System. Responsibility for quality assurance is defined on 4 levels: college level (Academic Council, Studies and Career Centre), faculty level (Faculty Council), department level and Study Programme Committee level. The responsibility for quality assurance is defined in detail and precisely (SER, p. 44). The Study Programme Committee has the main responsibility for the quality assurance of the Transport Logistics programme. The committee is composed of representatives of all stakeholder groups. The quality assurance procedure also takes into account the need to adapt resources and facilities to the changes in the programmes.

Every lecturer of the Department coordinates the study process of the subjects of the study programme during the semester, annually reports on his/her work and the quality of teaching to the Head of the Department, and every five years presents his/her achievements and results to the Faculty Council (SER, p. 44).

The tools and indicators used for the analysis of study quality have been precisely defined and implemented. They include study quality surveys, annual evaluation of lecturers' activities, lecturer certification every five years, statistical data on graduates' employment, analysis of students' evaluations and study intensity.

The College actively contributes to the development of competent academic staff. Teachers are familiar with the procedure for submitting changes to subject content and curriculum. Up to 20% of syllabus changes are made without any formal requirements. When a teacher wants to change the content of the programme or propose a new subject for the study plan, he/she submits this proposal to the Study Programme Committee where it is discussed by all committee members.

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

The College closely follows a formal procedure for stakeholders' involvement and decision making, including students, the teaching staff, graduates, employers, aimed at improvement of the study curriculum and process. To this effect, it uses surveys, interviews, round table discussions, participation in the meetings of the Lithuanian National Association of Freight Forwarders and Logistics LINEKA.

Students express their opinion about the study programme, its implementation and updates through students' representation at the Study Programme Committee, the Faculty Council and the Academic Council. Student surveys are differentiated by level of study. Separate questionnaires are developed for students who are currently studying, final-year students preparing their thesis, and students who have just defended their final thesis. The student participation rate is relatively high after the first semester (at 70%, as it was stated during online site visit), and decreases in the following years. A summary report presenting the results of the student survey is available on the internal Intranet. The best-rated teachers are recognised and receive special thanks from the Faculty and College authorities. The results of the student survey are also an element of the teachers' self-assessment process.

However, during the expert panel meeting with students, they didn't confirm that there is any formal questionnaire used for teachers/subject evaluation. They stated that at the end of each semester they receive questions from the Head of the Department and the Dean about the study process. Some students confirmed that many teachers ask students about their well-being, satisfaction, not leaving them alone. Students can also comment directly on the study programme and teaching methods through their representatives on the Study Programme Committee. During the online site visit, College representatives gave examples of implementing students' feedback in the process of study programme improvement. At the students' request, two project courses were merged due to high study load.

Also, the quality improvement process takes into account the feedback from the social partners. The example given was a proposal from the social partners for a new area of research as part of the final work, which was accepted and implemented. Social partners also proposed many additional contents which should be included in the study programme (like innovative technology, customer operation, lean supply chain, responsible innovation, reverse logistics, environmental pollution). During the site visit, social partners provided examples of their commitment to improving the study programmes by discussing student placements and internships (scope, outcomes and time) and discussing the final theses.

Overall, the College pursued a systematic involvement of social partners, students, and made systemic analysis of results. The feedback system from students and lecturers could be improved by further boosting participation rates. Some additional opportunities for strengthening regular Alumni engagement through informal networking online or face to face activities could be explored, while providing more support for the Alumni community and network.

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

The Vilnius College of Technology and Design publicly provides information about its activities, study programmes and admission criteria, the expected learning outcomes of these programmes, qualifications awarded, assessment procedures and information about employment opportunities for the graduates. Data on the external assessment of the study programmes are published on the College's website. It would be very advisable to publicise this information in English as well.

The ways in which information on study programmes is made public include a variety of methods, channels and tools. The events which are permanently recorded in the College's calendar include Career Days, Open-Doors event, student national conferences. Good practices in this area include the report which presents data on student admission, number of graduates, the average grade for theses and employment results. The report also announces the most significant student achievements and significant completed projects. The report is published on the College's website and in the Register of Legal Entities (SER, p. 47).

The scope of the information about the study process disseminated to the VTDK society is very broad and sufficient.

Information about results of internal and external programme evaluations are available on College website (only in Lithuanian). Information is disseminated internally during internal Departments' and College meetings.

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

Big part of the data about students' opinions is collected through discussions in the classrooms. This is beneficial for speed of improvements but not for data collection for statistical review. Overall, students are happy about their choice to study in Vilnius College of Technology and Design. During the interview with the students, they mentioned that their

siblings or friends who study or previously studied in VTDK, greatly impacted their decision to enrol to the College. This shows that the College is recommendable by current students and alumni.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Strong involvement of social partners in study programme development.
2. A clearly defined procedure for teachers to propose and implement changes in the study programme.
3. The scope of the information on studies (study purposes, admission criteria, study programmes, outcomes, employment opportunities for the graduates, etc.) disseminated to the College society and public are relatively broad and sufficient.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Rather non-uniform and informal students' survey (based on students' face-to-face opinion).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<p>Harmonise the wording of learning outcomes in different documents.</p> <p>Think through and specify the goals and tasks of different internships to clarify the reason for the concrete internship for all the parties.</p> <p>Include the entrepreneurship competence studies to the study programme to enable students to achieve all intended learning outcomes.</p>
Links between science (art) and studies	-
Student admission and support	<p>To look for more opportunities apart from Erasmus+ to ensure students mobility.</p> <p>Improve the RPL documents/procedures according to the principles of the learning outcome based studies.</p> <p>Find new ways to raise the number and quality of admitted students, e.g. find the uniqueness/strengths of this study programme to be more attractive in the market and attract more high level students.</p>
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<p>Since the assessment is an integral part of the studies to finalise the achievement of intended learning outcomes, it could be even more focused on student-centred and participative assessment methods.</p> <p>Although there are good conditions to study for students with special needs, more attention should be paid to socially vulnerable groups (single mothers or fathers with small children, low-income students, ethnic minorities, etc.).</p>
Teaching staff	<p>Improve the study programme with the latest knowledge and skills, work out the comprehensive system to consistently collect and integrate latest knowledge to the study programme.</p>
Learning facilities and resources	<p>Continuous updating of the latest logistics software in relation to the dynamic development of the TSL sector by including/adding WMS, TMS, CRM software, IT platform for logistics processes.</p>

<p>Study quality management and public information</p>	<p>Selected and aggregated results from external and internal evaluations of study programmes should be publicly available as one element of continuous improvement.</p> <p>The teacher and curriculum evaluation process should be more formal based on a structured survey form. It is advisable to develop a tool which involves students to a greater extent in the evaluation process.</p> <p>It would be recommended to publish the main policy documents on ethics and equality on a dedicated website section for international students (in English language).</p> <p>In the College's Internationalization Strategy 2020-2025 update process, references to the policy of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination could be included.</p>
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V. SUMMARY

VDTK is a diverse higher education institution where the sustainable environment and partnership are highly valued and applied into the studies and study process. Although there is only one study programme in the Business study field, the Transport Logistics study programme is fully integrated to the College and contributes to the achievement of the College's strategic aims. Based on the stakeholders feedback, VDTK is a cosy and supportive place to work, study and collaborate. Students are feeling cared for and are involved in the inner processes of the College. They can recommend the changes in the study programme, participate in mobility and feel that they have the possibility to design their learning experience. All the stakeholders appreciated the College because of its good collaboration with the social partners and umbrella organisations in the transport and logistics field. The social partners are involved in the process of study programme improvements. Strong formal relationships with the social partners is one of the key characteristics of VDTK.

The academic staff of the College is competent and valued. The College has created opportunities for the teachers' self-development - participation in seminars and conferences, mobility and teaching excellence are encouraged. As a good practice, the College has organised training for teaching staff to cope with changes in teaching due to Covid-pandemic, which shows commitment to teaching development. Teachers are provided with reasonable freedom to design the content of their courses, and the results of such a positive academic personnel management approach can be seen in a good variety of teaching and assessment methods.

As well as the studies, the research area is valued in VDTK. The college creates possibilities to focus on new, emerging themes in research and studies. Teachers are expected to conduct research and publish together with the students and especially in the practical areas. Stakeholders commend the practical approach of the studies and encourage the College to continue with this. The expert panel found several examples of well described processes regulating the academic integrity, tolerance, non-discrimination, and students' complaints system.

Despite the efforts, the decreasing number of students should alarm the College to find the uniqueness/strengths of this study programme to be more attractive in the market and attract more high level students. Whether the Transport Logistics study programme belongs to the Civil Engineering department, it may cause additional opportunities to integrate the competences from the different disciplines among different study programmes. Although the social partners are rather well involved, the alumni engagement through informal networking online or face to face activities is still a challenge to solve. More support for the alumni community and network could be beneficial.

The College's quality management system is built up on the modern quality assurance principles. However, the system is not comprehensive and the quality loop is not closed when the stakeholders' feedback collection, analysis, results implementation and presentation is not

efficient and effective. The College has some challenges ahead due to the establishing of the comprehensive and integrated stakeholders feedback and satisfaction surveys system.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Prof. Dr. Eneken Titov