



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of BUSINESS
at Alytaus kolegija

Expert panel:

1. Assoc. prof. Dr. Natalie Aleksandra Gurvitš-Suits(**panel chairperson**), *academic*;
2. Assoc. prof. Dr. Zarina M. Reinhard- Charlesworth, *academic*;
3. Prof. Dr. Iveta Ludviga, *academic*;
4. Mrs. Rita Karabanovienė, *academic*;
5. Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis, *representative of social partners*;
6. Miss Indrė Baltakytė, *students' representative*.

Evaluation coordinator – Mr. Gustas Straukas

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Transport and Logistics Business</i>
State code	6531LX003
Type of studies	Professional bachelor studies
Cycle of studies	First
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 in Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	2013-03-04

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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 the 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 on 13th of *May, 2022*.

Ass. Prof. dr. Natalie Aleksandra Gurviš-Suits, *Department of Business Administration, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia.*

Prof. dr. Iveta Ludviga, *Department of Business, RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, Latvia.*

Ass. Prof. dr. Zarina Reinhard-Charlesworth, *Haute Ecole de Gestion Arc, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Western Switzerland.*

Mrs. Rita Karabanovienė, *Socialinių mokslų kolegija (SMK), Lithuania.*

Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis, *“Gusania”, social partners’ representative, Lithuania.*

Ms Indrė Baltakytė, *Faculty of Economics & Management, 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.	-

1.4. BACKGROUND OF BUSINESS FIELD STUDIES AT ALYTAUS KOLEGIJA

Alytaus kolegija (hereinafter referred to as AK) is a state higher education institution offering Professional Bachelor's degrees. Its teaching and research activities are focused on business studies, social sciences, engineering and technological studies. AK currently has 2000 students and carries out 11 study programmes. The evaluated study programme of Transport and Logistics Business was launched in 2013 due to increasing demand for experienced professionals in the field of logistics and operations in the region and is carried out at the faculty of Health Sciences and Engineering. The content of the study programme has been updated regularly in line with the rapid changes in the logistics area and at the labour market. The evaluation of the programme was carried out in 2017 by an international group of experts and the institution received accreditation for the maximum available period.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Business study field and first cycle at Alytaus kolegija is given a **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	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	25

*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 (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)

According to SER the aim of the study programme is to provide the student with a higher education which together with practical experience forms the necessary basis for the professional activity clearly outlining the following features of the educated professional: “creation, development, management and implementation of business processes of transport and logistics business.” The evaluated programme is developed and regularly updated in line with the latest version of the AK Strategic Plan aiming to “carry out high quality studies that provide a person with higher college education, provide conditions for lifelong learning, increasing the internalisation of studies and developing applied research” (SER, p.9).

The programme is constantly updated taking into consideration latest changes in business environment, digitalization and the labour market environments. Long-term partnerships with the Logistics Association of Lithuania and tight cooperation with *Timocom* makes the programme considering the latest requirements of the industry. During the meetings, it was mentioned that in line with the high importance and fast development of the digitalization aspects the main priority goals were changed in 2021 and new courses of “Transport Innovation Solutions” and “Green Logistics” were introduced within the study programme as well as new subjects within Operation System topics and the new software (*Infotrans* – three versions, *Transporta*, Freight Exchange versions – *Cargo*), which is highly valued by students. All these developments add value to the programme making it correspond to the needs of the labour market and add value to the social development of the region.

The expert panel considers it useful to find truly unique things about the programme, not just geographical position of the AK itself, in order to attract potential students and actively promote them on the market. It is also necessary to pay more attention to marketing strategy in regard to the particular study programme. HEI should make sure that

the administration takes an active part in this process by spreading a good word of mouth, inviting marketing related social partners, alumni and current students and external advisers to guide the discussions, and look for ideas outside the category.

During the visit, it became obvious that certain actions need to be taken in regard to identifying the target market of the programme: it seems that AK is aware of channels and methods on how to attract students from Lithuania. However, more attention should be paid to social media where all current school children spend most of their time. Students can be attracted to assist to communicate via channels or at least – ask to audit AK’s plans or actions. Also it would be useful to choose certain countries (1-2 would be the best) to have a real breakthrough for targeting foreign students. It would be helpful to participate in local study fairs, exhibitions, etc. This cooperation would be successful for both sides as foreign students will be looking for truly international experience and at the same time bring it to AK.

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 aim of the study programme is in line with the mission of the Institution which according to SER website of AK is „to provide high quality higher education studies based on professional practice and applied research, experimental development and create conditions for lifelong learning“ (Alytaus kolegija website, 2021) and is based on the latest AK strategic plan aiming to carry out high quality studies that provide a person with higher college education, provide conditions for lifelong learning increasing the internalisation of studies and developing applied research. The aim of the study programme also aims to supply the region with highly educated professionals, which adds value to the development of the local community and society.

During the visit, it became evident that field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes are in line with the mission and strategic priorities of the AK. The structure of the evaluated study programme enables achievement of stipulated learning outcomes by preparing highly educated professionals equipped with all required knowledge, research and personal skills as well as social abilities to start their career in the field of logistics.

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

Learning outcomes identified for the programme are coherent with the aim of the programme, Description of the Requirements of Conducting General Studies approved by Order number No V-1168 of MES RL of 30-12-2016; Description of the Business Study Fields approved by order number No V-1664 of MES RL of 14-09-2021; the VI Qualification Level Description of National Lithuanian Qualifications Framework addressing all the main descriptions, are clearly formulated and divided into five groups: knowledge and abilities, abilities to carry out research, special skills, social and personal abilities. Complexity level of the learning outcomes corresponds to National Lithuanian Qualifications Framework qualification requirements and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Table 1 illustrates the compliance of the study programme to the first/cycle general requirements.

Table No. 1 Study Programme's Transport and Logistics Business compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes*

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	156
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	12
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	45
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	55
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	32%

Source: SER

During the course, students have several various practical training: Professional Cognitive Training, Training in Business, Professional Training I and II and Final Training, which enable students to get a full understanding of the selected profession and the real

business environment. The structure of the programme and the duration enables to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes of the evaluated study field. During the meeting, it was stated that students are satisfied with their study plan; they highly value the distance-learning option and the implementation of new contemporary courses as well as the study-friendly atmosphere in the AK.

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

The aim of the study programme is covered by 10 learning outcomes divided into five main groups in accordance with the VI Qualification Level Description of National Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and the Order of the Minister of Education. The stipulated learning outcomes are supported by the curriculum and the courses it contains. Teaching staff uses various modern teaching methods like situation analyses, team-work and case studies, joint projects, discussions. Student oriented learning is achieved by attracting several lecturers to teach different topics within the same course. Teaching staff understands that students have different backgrounds, therefore, enable them to choose practice tasks. During the visit, the expert panel noted quite low awareness of innovative teaching methods like flipped classroom and choice board among teaching staff and would recommend introducing workshops and trainings on the latest developments in this field.

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 programme is developed and structured in accordance with the general requirements for professional higher education studies leading to the Professional Bachelor's Degree, the modular structure of the studies and the ECTS credit system. Programme consists of 180 ECTS. The study plan consists of 35 subjects: the study field subjects – 29 (156 credits), 4 general subjects (18 credits), and 2 alternative subjects (6 credits). All study subjects in the semester are completed with an exam or evaluation of the student's independent work (project). The study programme consists of four practice internships with a total volume of 30 credits. Practical training equals 32% of the total programme. The study programme is completed by the successful defence of the final thesis (12 ECTS).

The curriculum of the study programme is developed in order to provide students with general knowledge, research and social skills as well as special skills and abilities.

The first year gives an overview of the business and management process in general supported by the courses of Economic Theory and Statistics, Management, Marketing and Accounting, then followed by the and provides an overview of the selected study field by introducing the subjects International Logistics, Transport Logistics, Supply Chain Management etc. These courses enable students to get a deep understanding of the logistics field and gain all necessary knowledge and skills. Recently in line with the latest development in the business area, a strong ESG impact was added to the program by introducing optional subjects of CSR and Green Logistics. During the meeting, it was mentioned that these changes were demanded and highly valued by students.

The programme also has a strong practical aspect achieved by four internships: Training in Business, Professional I and II and the Final Training. The modules are allocated in a reasonable sequence which represents a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and evaluation criteria following the “general to specific” rule. Each module has well-defined learning objectives followed by the learning objectives of each course included in a particular module. During the visit, it became evident that programme courses ensure consistent development of competences of students enabling them to reach the learning outcomes and the aim of the programme.

The expert panel can conclude that the programme has a well-defined module structure following the logic of study process aiming to deepen knowledge by obtaining general skills and competences first and logically followed by the ones aiming to develop the specific skills and abilities. The expert panel finds it useful to keep on working on the development of joint programmes with foreign universities to get international experience and make the programme more attractive to potential students.

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

Students are given a possibility to choose full-time and part-time study. All studies have a component of distance learning, enabling the creation of a personalised study plan. During the visit students mentioned that these options are highly valued by them and there is a tight cooperation with the teaching staff, who is always responsive and helpful.

Students can choose two elective subjects related to the selected specialisation, which reflect the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) component and contribute to social and environmental sustainability. Each particular specialisation is supported by the appropriate courses aiming to broaden obtained knowledge and skills in the particular area. Erasmus+ programme also gives students a perfect opportunity to personalise their studies by spending studying at other HEI, get valuable experience, obtain new knowledge and get intercultural social and personal skills.

There is also a possibility to pass in the well-known logistics companies like *Timocom* and get a valuable personal experience of international logistics operations, terms and conditions. At the end of the course students can choose the topic of their graduation paper in accordance to their interests and attach it to the needs of a particular company or logistics field in general.

Study programme is regularly updated following the requirements of social partners, recommendations of the alumni and the needs of the local region and labour market. Regular meetings with stakeholders are organised by the Institution to keep up to date with latest developments in the field of logistics. During the meeting with social partners, it was mentioned that they are constantly involved in these meetings and have a good overview of the study process and the qualification of the students and highly value the competences of graduates.

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

Final thesis preparation and defence procedure is regulated by Procedure for the Preparation, Submission, Defence and Assessment of the Graduation Thesis at Alytaus Kolegija.

Students have the right to defend a final thesis after the completion of the study programme and getting positively evaluated for all the courses. The final topic is chosen by the student in cooperation with supervisor and social partners representing a relevant problem of the selected company.

The Defence Committee always includes five members, including not less than two representatives from employers and one member of the teaching staff. Students should prepare their thesis in accordance with the Methodological Requirements for the Preparation of Independent Work and Graduation Theses of AK as well as the principles of academic honesty and integrity.

Expert panel confirms that graduation papers are of a good quality with the topics focusing on contemporary real-life problems. It can be concluded that during the studies students get all the necessary skills and knowledge to prepare and successfully defend graduation papers. The latter was confirmed during the visit by reviewing the selected theses by the expert panel. During the visit, an expert panel got confirmation from students that they highly appreciate cooperation with academic and social partners while writing their graduation papers.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Strong link with professional field, strong practical aspect of the programme;
2. Synergies between different study fields;
3. Programme structure and content considers adding social value to the region.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The uniqueness of the programme is not clearly defined.
2. The marketing and promoting of the programme lacks clear strategy and targets.

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 Institution has a strong focus on the applied research in accordance with Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council No. V3-19, 02.04.2021, The Regulations for Applied Research and Experimental Development, approved in 2021. March 25 by Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council No. V3-15, 25.03.2021. Special funding for research is allocated to AK in accordance with the Order of Minister of Education. Institution takes an active part in organising seminars, training workshops, and in-house training for companies ensuring continuous professional development of the region. Since 2015 there exists a pedagogical competence improvement centre providing training services teaching staff. The

AK takes an active part in various research projects related to the real business environment, organising research seminars and forums. Teaching staff actively present results of the research at conferences within Lithuania and abroad and publish them in scientific peer-reviewed journals. However, during the visit it was noted that publication activity of the teaching staff in international scientific journals with a high impact factor is quite low. Active participation in the Erasmus programme enables foreign cooperation in the research field as well as sharing best practices within the AK. The expert panel noted that teaching staff is highly interested in participation in various events and sharing best practices, however, the level of awareness about latest innovations in the field of the study programme remains modest. During the meeting, the representatives of the teaching staff confirmed that they actively use different opportunities: to attend conferences and seminars as well as participate in the Erasmus programme, publish their results and get financial support and remuneration for publications.

The expert panel acknowledges the efforts of the AK dedicated to research activities. However, the group would recommend ensuring a high level of commercialization of the research results.

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

During the visit, the expert panel got full evidence that teaching staff actively implements their own cases and real-life problems and tasks into the study process, which was also confirmed by students. Visits to companies are actively implemented in the study process enabling interlinkage between theory and practice. Transport and logistics innovations were introduced by social partners like *Vivatrans* and implemented in the study process. Experienced professionals from social partners are invited to give lectures as well as foreign guest lecturers.

AK teaching staff also actively participates in the Erasmus programme bringing new knowledge, skills and teaching techniques back home to disseminate among colleagues and students.

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

During the visit, the experts panel got full evidence that teaching staff actively cooperates with students in regard to research and various projects. Students and teaching staff together participate in various projects ordered by companies. They also share obtained results *via* scientific publications and during the period of 2018-2021 teachers and students of AK have published numerous articles in foreign and domestic journals and participated at several conferences in Lithuania and abroad.

Each year students participate in national entrepreneurship competitions and national examinations of the Economics and the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania “General Campaign for the Verification of Legal Knowledge”. During the visit, several students confirmed their participation in joint research activities with the representatives of the teaching staff.

Thesis topics are also closely related to the practical field and usually consist of analysis of the real-life problem in a certain company, followed by offering solutions and giving practical recommendations.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Numerous training and workshops organised for people outside the AK willing to improve their qualification or obtain new knowledge in skills in different fields;
2. Close cooperation between teaching staff and students in terms of research and joint projects.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low level of commercialization of research output;
2. Low awareness of teaching staff about the latest innovation developments in regard to the study programme;
3. Publication activity of the teaching staff in international scientific journals with a high impact factor is quite low.

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

Admission rules are provided on the website of the Alytaus Kolegija. Admission to the study programme takes place in accordance with the procedure prescribed by law, which is administered by LAMA BPO (Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions to organise general admission). There are no special requirements for admission to the study programme, but the competitive score of the candidates is the most important criterion. The competitive score is based on the minimum admission requirements for Alytaus Kolegija. The minimum requirements are established in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania. During the expert panel meeting, all of the students stated that they were satisfied with this criterion and found no problems with admissions.

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

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning at Alytaus Kolegija is applied in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Assessment of Learning Achievements and Recognition of 21 Competences Acquired in the Non-Formal Adult Education System approved by the Academic Board on 22 November 2012, minutes No V3-62. Any person has the right to claim the assessment and recognition of his or her learning achievements acquired through professional activities, voluntary activities, courses, seminars, internships, execution of projects, etc., and during leisure time. During the last 3 years, there have been no students in the Transport and Logistics Business study programme wishing to make recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

Students can take advantage of the opportunity for Erasmus+ studies and Erasmus+ internships. All students can participate in the selection. The list of foreign countries of ERASMUS+ partners is publicly available on the website of Alytaus Kolegija. Scholarships are given to exchange students. Students with special needs can apply for additional support. Since 2019, 1 student of the Transport and Logistics Business study programme has gone for a study period under the ERASMUS+ programme in Kanagawa University, Japan. Since 2020 when the world pandemic COVID-19 started, the students of the Transport and Logistics Business study programme could not participate in ERASMUS+

programme. Students have the possibility of international internships and if needed they can extend them to two weeks. This international internship programme was praised by students but it should be further motivated as not a lot of students use this possibility.

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 can receive a subsidised loan for tuition or part-time tuition or living expenses. The procedure for granting, administering, and repaying loans shall be established by the Government.

Since 2019 students of Alytaus Kolegija can seek psychological help when they experience emotional difficulties. As regards psychological consultations, students can apply not only for personal questions and issues related to psychological health but also related to studies: time planning, effective learning, lack of motivation and public speaking. For confidential free psychological consultations, students must register by e-mail or telephone.

In order to take care of students' leisure time and their health, sports events are organised by Alytaus kolegija, and in their leisure time, students can use the fitness complex, other sports equipment, and the gym. All kinds of support for students are effective. The conditions of students' rest and living areas are especially important at Alytaus kolegija. The living rooms of the Alytaus kolegija student hostel are equipped with new furniture; the kitchens have modern equipment and internet access. Study and relaxation areas are also included. All students of Alytaus kolegija who request it are provided with hostel rooms. Students have the opportunity to dine in the canteen and cafe of Alytaus kolegija, which is rated positively. In 2019–2021, 15 students of the Transport and Logistics Business study programme requested living spaces and were granted access to the dormitory.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Before the beginning of the studies, the faculty organises an integration week for students, during which they are provided with the most important information about the chosen study programme, study procedure, academic integrity, and other relevant topics. Students can always consult with the mentor services or senior students. Alytaus kolegija has a coordinator for students with special needs, an employee of the study centre, who provides comprehensive assistance and consultations. Students with special needs have the

opportunity to individualise the study process, which is defined by the Procedure for Students of Alytaus kolegija studying according to the Individual Study Plan.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Alytaus Kolegija provides complete, clear, and accessible information to the public;
2. Suitable living conditions at dormitories for students;
3. Good leisure and after class activity facilities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The number of students choosing Erasmus/ internship mobility is low.

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 aim of the TLB (Transport and Logistics Business) study programme is the training of transport and business logistics specialists and the development of associated professional and personal competences (SER pg 8). The teaching and learning processes at Alytaus kolegija are diverse and take place in a number of different settings both academic and professional in order to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

In order to address student needs on an individual level, Alytaus kolegija allows students to personalise their studies through the inclusion of optional study courses related to the professional study area that they want to consolidate (SER pg.10). It is also possible for a student to have an even more individualised study programme through the inclusion of study courses from another HEI which are deemed equivalent (SER pg.11). A blended learning approach also allows the students to better individualise the pace of their learning.

The meeting of the Expert Panel with the students confirmed their appreciation of the individual approach including the personal feedback that they receive all through the study programme.

The inclusion of practical seminars delivered by social partners ensures the acquisition of practical knowledge completing the theory learned in class. Students wishing to go further on the academic side have their needs met as they have the opportunity to be involved in applied research and publications.

Finally, student needs to expand their horizons can be met through Alytaus kolegija involvement with the Erasmus+ programme even if the pandemic has made student exchange difficult these past few years. From our discussions with the students (mentioned in the previous chapter) the Expert Panel was able to ascertain their interest in this programme and also an interest in international internships with a possibility to extend them to two weeks.

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

Not only does Alytaus kolegija have a Coordinator for students with special needs but, the importance of being inclusive and making the TLB study programme accessible to all is shown in the effort made to produce Official Guidelines for the Adaptation of Studies to Individual Needs.

It is worth mentioning that Alytaus kolegija has been working on ensuring access and providing optimal conditions for students with special needs since 2012 and its involvement in the State Studies Foundation project Ensuring the Accessibility of Studies for students with Special Needs.

In terms of admissions, there are various scholarships and financial aid options available for both socially vulnerable students and students with special needs.

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

In addition to their practice of cumulative evaluations during the semester where each lecturer monitors individual student progress and provides feedback, students are provided with individual consultations where needed. Special attention is paid to first-year students with an initial adaptation week which allows for the assessment of their needs and

allows for tutoring or mentoring to be put in place from the start thus allowing the students to start their studies under good conditions.

During the course of study, students are called upon to carry out independent projects culminating with the Graduation Thesis. To accompany them and support the development of their self-assessment skills Alytaus kolegija has prepared and published procedures and methodological instructions (SER p. 28).

The subsequent planning of the study progress relies on a quality management procedure which calls for the Study Programme Coordinator to monitor, analyse and assess students' study progress and, at the end of each session provide a report thereof to the Faculty Board.

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

Alytaus kolegija benefits from a career specialist who monitors graduate employment. Data on graduates is compiled 6-months, 12-months, and 3-years after graduation for graduates working in Lithuania.

Strong links with the social partners also allow Alytaus kolegija the possibility to update the programme in line with market demands although, as per the Expert Panel discussions, there is still work to be done in this area with the suggestion of reviewing the length of the internship and to make it longer, the inclusion of green logistics in the program and the inclusion of more innovative teaching methods.

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

Alytaus Kolegija is aware of the importance of academic integrity and has, since 2015, a Code of Academic Ethics (SER pg. 31). This lays the basis for integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. If a student feels that their rights have been violated there is a procedure in place to lodge a complaint which defines how it is to be filed and subsequently handled. Student services are in place to support students in such situations.

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 appeals process at Alytaus kolegija is defined in the Alytaus Study Regulations. The procedure to be followed and its description are easily accessible.

No appeals were lodged during the review period nor were any complaints concerning academic integrity, tolerance or discrimination. The process, however, appears to be robust and meets the expectations of the Expert Panel.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The thorough approach to standardising processes from students with special needs to the appeals process;
2. The individualisation of the study programme.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. A low level of international student exchange with no incoming Erasmus+ students due to the study language;
2. Limited inclusion of innovative teaching 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

Alytaus kolegija teachers' team consists of 17 teachers, and 18% of teachers teaching the courses in the programme have PhD degrees. All other teachers have at least a master's degree, Majority of the programme teachers (76%) have at least 3 years of practical experience in the subject they teach. The pedagogical work experience of the teachers ranges from 3 to 42 years. The student/teacher ratio throughout the years is on average 3 students per teacher (SER, p. 32) which allows realising an individualised attitude towards teaching. . Teaching staff understands that students have different backgrounds, therefore, enable them to choose practice tasks. During the study process, students are evaluated according to the accumulative system; any problematic issues are discussed with teachers. During the visit, the expert panel noted quite low awareness of innovative teaching methods like flipped

classroom and choice board among teaching staff and would recommend introducing workshops and training on the latest developments in this field.

The teachers are active in applied research and during the visit teachers confirmed that the research workload is a part of their job descriptions. Moreover, AK provides a good bonus for WOS indexed publications. However, in the SER only one such publication is mentioned.

This allows concluding that the number of the lectures in the Alytaus kolegija study field, their experience of pedagogical and practical work, and qualifications are sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes and comply with the requirements, established in the legislation.

AK also teaches incoming ERASMUS+ students, but during the visit, experts had some doubts about the language level of the teachers. They mentioned using phones as translators (google translate) during the classes, YouTube videos, and internet sources to communicate with foreign students. Moreover, foreign students do not attend some of the classes, but only receive some materials and tasks, because the lecturers do not speak the English language.

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

The mobility of teachers in the Business field of study at Alytaus kolegija programme takes place mainly as part of ERASMUS+ and is encouraged. During the visit, teachers confirmed that they regularly receive information about mobility opportunities and that all teachers have equal opportunities for academic mobility. The results of teachers' participation in academic mobility are analysed and recognised during the assessment of annual teachers' activities reports and teachers' certification.

Before Covid the number of teacher's engagement in mobility programmes was good – 18 mobility uses, however, the majority of them were related to a project. During Covid-19 the numbers dropped to zero, but teachers confirmed that they are satisfied with the conditions and will go for mobility in the future. AK has a good amount of signed documents for cooperation in the Business Studies field (39) for academic cooperation, students and teachers/staff mobility with HEIs in 9 foreign countries; still incoming mobility is very low. Still to fully exploit the opportunities, the language level of teachers should be significantly improved. Recommended English language level would be B2, this level would allow freely communicating with foreign students and partners from abroad.

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

The personal and professional development of AK teachers is ensured by mobility activities, by working in the international teams of higher education teachers, i.e. international expert assessment under Erasmus+ Programme project IESED, short term and long term courses organised by the Pedagogical competence improvement centre. This centre organises a wide range of courses and a 50% discount on the courses organised by the Centre is provided for the teachers.

Every year AK plans the need for teachers' competence improvement after the teachers express their preferences for participation in various seminars, courses, conferences, and other events. The head of the department prepares a plan of teacher's competence improvement needs which is discussed at directorate meetings and approved by the director.

During the visit, the teachers confirmed that they plan their professional development activities, for example, workshops with social partners, English language and computer courses, internships, pedagogical and psychological courses, etc. However, nothing was mentioned about any specific motivation to improve English language level.

During the period under consideration all the teachers of the study programme have improved their qualifications in different ways: carried out various applied research works, participated in project and research activities related to the TLB study programme, delivered courses and seminars, and participated in conferences, seminars, trainings, study visits, and exchange programmes. Teachers of the TLB study programme carried out applied research and/or improved competences in the projects implemented by AC.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Field teachers are provided with conditions for the development of competences including subject, didactic or general competences.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Academic mobility of field teachers could be livelier.
2. Low numbers of incoming mobility.
3. Although teachers were enthusiastic to teach foreign incoming students, their language level seems to be insufficient.

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

Students at Alytaus Kolegija benefit from very good physical resources going from well-equipped study classrooms through to access to drones and virtual equipment. This was confirmed during the Expert Panel online visit. Students with special needs benefit from specialised resources from ergonomic chairs, specialised desks, and a braille printer among other things. This investment goes beyond what one often finds and is to be commended.

Despite the excellent resources available, one thing that came up during the Expert Panel visit was a desire on the part of the students to have more innovative teaching methods. Some of these resources could be used in answer to this, for example the use of more hybrid-teaching or the inclusion of some of the virtual technology available in student projects.

Informational resources comprise hard copy publication, printed journals as well as a good selection of electronic resources and academic databases. In addition to the software that one would expect at this level of study there are a good variety of specialised programmes related to logistics available to the students. There was, however, no mention made of the use of Open Access databases such as Springer Open or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), a practice which is becoming increasingly commonplace.

The updating of resources is done regularly and, one must assume, within the budget allocated. Also as mentioned before in the 3.3 chapter, the informal spaces for leisure and sports are in a very good condition.

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

The planning and upgrading of resources is governed by the Infrastructure Management Process. A process approved by the Quality Management System prior to its implementation. It calls for an annual assessment of student and teaching needs by each department in order to put forth a request for the purchase and/or upgrading of equipment. These plans are then evaluated in light of the strategic activity plan of Alytaus kolegija before drawing up the

annual procurement plan. This allows for the input of all stakeholders and provides a well-rounded process for the planning and upgrading of resources.

The Expert Panel received confirmation during the online visit that this process works well, and that sufficient time is accorded to the gathering of wishes and desires.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Formal learning spaces are complemented by very nice informal spaces for leisure and sports activities;
2. Particular attention has been paid to special needs students over and above the basics with a focus on the creation of “optimal workspaces”.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The resources available could allow for innovation in teaching;
2. Open-access databases could be included in the informational resources.

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 Study Quality Management system of Alytaus kolegija meets the requirements of ESG and ISO 9001: 2015 standards. All structural units participate and take responsibility for the implementation of study quality improvement that is a great advantage and keeps study quality at the right level. Alytaus kolegija has the Committee that is responsible for the implementation of the study programme and quality assurance. Due to SER (p 45) “The Committee consists of at least 6 members: Coordinator (a lecturer of the department of the study programme) who is a Chairman of the Committee, the Dean of the Faculty, a student representative, an employer or other representative of social partners whose professional activities are related to this study programme and its goals. The Committee may invite other experts to work. Twice a year the Committee collects and analyses information about the study programme, its implementation and organisation of the study process, submits

proposals on the improvement and renewal of the study programme to the Faculty Council.” During the site visit, the expert panel were told that the Study programme Committee took a part in 2018 and 2021 for improvement in the business field study programme. The information in SER about committee meetings mentioned that they took place “twice a year”. Different meeting groups during the online-visit gave different information on how many meetings the committee has, and this concludes that the committee needs to have a schedule on how many times they meet. The expert panel concludes that the regularity of Committee meetings could be more concrete.

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

In SER it states: “The College conducts students, graduates and employers’ surveys according to the approved procedures”. As it is seen in the table (Table 15: *Feedback and periodicity*, p.44), there is an informative structure about the survey frequency (period from 1-4 times per year depending on the range of interviewees). It was well noticed that the feedback to all stakeholders is given constantly. Just during AK site-visit, the expert panel still had some doubts on the objectivity and quality of student surveys that are presented to all stakeholders as their feedback is presented after long periods of time. The expert panel suggests presenting the feedback faster after they are filled by the students. Group of experts also found that it is very important that the committee give personalised feedback to the teachers and have concrete plans about quality improvement in the teaching field with the help of teachers. Alytaus kolegija aims at attracting qualified teachers and constantly improving their competences every year, taking into account the Strategic Development Plan, the Staff Competence Improvement Plan is prepared and confirmed. Teachers submit activity reports twice a year, after spring semester and at the end of the year. After submission of the reports the heads of the departments conduct yearly discussions with teachers, every 5 years teachers’ certification is conducted as well.

Very good integration of alumni in this process also was noticed during the site-visit. Alumni are important in study quality improvement and involving them is a good practice. Also, the positive part could be mentioned that Alytaus kolegija has students’ career monitoring platform.

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

Alytaus kolegija has a very informative website where you can find all needed information about studies, quality improvement, survey results, etc. In SER “Information about the results of the study programme quality assessment and programme improvement is provided on the AK website” The stakeholders can any time fill a form about the quality improvement that could be analysed timely and react to the situation in time. There would be suggestions that all information in the website that is in Lithuanian language could also be in English language.

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

The student’s opinion about the quality of studies is markedly noticed in Alytaus kolegija; students have different options to inform the college about improvement fields and are welcome to do it. In SER “Also, having evaluated the students' suggestions and wishes regarding more possibilities to choose the subjects to be studied, the number of elective courses and their scope was increased”. During site-visit the group of experts noticed that students actively express their wishes on study facilities , study process and the college gives quickly a response.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There is a well-functioning and continuously improving Quality Management System;
2. Very informative website in Lithuanian language with possibility to fill in a survey anytime.
3. Alytaus kolegija has student’s career monitoring platform.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Untimely information on improvement of study programme or any changes for the social partners.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify truly unique things about the study programme. 2. Put a great emphasis on promoting the study programme and defining the target market.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the level of commercialization of research output. 2. Increase awareness of teaching staff about the latest innovation developments in regard to the study programme. 3. Increase publication activity of the teaching staff in international scientific journals with a high impact factor.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be clear about your target groups and develop a clear strategy in targeting foreign students. 2. Encourage students to take advantage of mobility opportunities.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased focus on the internationalisation of the study programme. 2. The continued development of Faculty language skills.
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the English language level of all teachers, but especially those who work with international students by ensuring at least a B2 level. 2. Find a way to vitalise the academic mobility of the teaching staff, including incoming mobility.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage the use of Open Access materials by faculty in their teaching as well as in the library. If necessary, include a workshop on Open Science to allow for a better understanding of this relatively new development in the academic world.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have regularly scheduled time for study committee meetings with full membership. 2. Provide information in English on the official website.

V. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field of *Business at Alytaus kolegija*:

The evaluated study programme is developed and regularly updated in accordance with the legal requirements as well as the needs of the labour market and the business environment. Program has a well-balanced module structure and all modules are compatible with each other. The aims, objectives and programme Learning Outcomes reflect the latest changes at the labour market and social and environmental developments by introducing courses of Green Logistics and Transport Innovation Solutions. Tight cooperation with social partners' especially well-known logistics companies adds value to the programme. However, it would be useful to identify really unique features of the programmes and to develop a clear market strategy in targeting potential students. It would also make sense to share modules with foreign HEIs to boost the number of students and the added value of the study programme.

There exists a strong link between arts and science with final theses aiming to provide solutions to real life problems. Teachers are participating in projects, conferences, a Transport Innovation Solutions act as experts of Erasmus programme and members of the editorial board in various scientific journals. They also actively involve students in different research projects and publish the results. However, the number of publications activity of the teaching staff in international scientific journals with a high impact factor is quite low.

Student support and admission process is well-organised and transparent. There is a developed and implemented procedure for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning results. After the admission students are introduced to the life of AK during the adaptation week. Students get all kinds of support including personal and psychological. There is also offered financial support in the form of loans. Additional support is also available for students with special needs. However, more actions should be taken in regard to attracting students to the AK and choosing a clear marketing strategy.

Study programme operates in a teaching and learning environment that is responsive and supportive to student needs. Various teaching methods used by teaching staff ensure the achievement of Learning Outcomes. However, more attention should be paid to the increased focus on the internationalisation of the study programme. There is also low awareness of

innovative teaching methods like flipped classroom and choice board among teaching staff, therefore, specialised training would be highly recommended.

The programme is delivered by an experienced and enthusiastic group of teachers, fully supportive to students, who are constantly improving their qualifications. Teachers are actively taking part in applied research, attending conferences, workshop seminars and seminars to keep up to date with their subject. However, academic mobility of teaching staff remains low which may be explained by low level of English language among teaching staff. Therefore, it is recommended to increase the English language level of all teachers and especially the ones involved in the activities with international students.

Learning resources and facilities are at a very good level, all auditoriums have the necessary equipment. Students have access to drones and virtual equipment. Students with special needs benefit from specialised resources from ergonomic chairs, specialised desks, and a braille printer to other things. It would be beneficial to use these benefits during the marketing campaign aiming to attract potential students to AK.

Management and Quality Assurance functions are in place and well managed, existing academic regulations are comprehensive and transparent. AK implements various measures to ensure internal quality by involving all stakeholders in the form of surveys and meetings roundtables. However, it would be beneficial to have regularly scheduled time for study committee meetings with full membership. In order to increase transparency and fair representation of information it would be useful to provide information in English on the official website.

Expert panel chairperson signature: