



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**STUDY FIELD of Management**  
at Marijampolės kolegija

**Expert panel:**

1. Prof. Dr. Steffen Roth (panel chairperson), *academic member*;
2. Prof. Dr. Christian Schachtner, *academic member*;
3. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adam Jabłoński, *academic member*;
4. Assoc. Prof. Dmitrijs Kravčenko, *academic member*;
5. Prof. Dr. Tadas Gudaitis, *representative of social partners*;
6. Ms Ieva Porutytė, *students' representative*.

**Evaluation coordinator – Ms Austėja Pliupelytė**

Report language – English

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## Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<b><i>Transport Logistics</i></b>	<b><i>Sustainable Business Management<sup>1</sup></i></b>
State code	6531LX123	6531LX072
Type of studies	Professional bachelor college studies	Professional bachelor college studies
Cycle of studies	First	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)	Full-time (3 years)
Credit volume	180	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Business Management	Professional Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	5 October 2020	18 September 2012 30 March 2022

Title of the study programme	<b><i>International Business Management<sup>2</sup></i></b>	<b><i>Management of Culture and Sports Industries<sup>3</sup></i></b>
State code	6531LX068	6531LX069
Type of studies	Professional bachelor college studies	Professional bachelor college studies
Cycle of studies	First	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Part-time (4 years)	Full-time (3 years)
Credit volume	180	180

<sup>1</sup> From 2012-09-18 - Business Management, from 2020-03-30 - Sustainable Business Management;

<sup>2</sup> From 2010-04-08 - Business and Institutional Administration, from 2020-06-02 - International Business Management;

<sup>3</sup> From 2012-04-05 - Management of Culture and Sport, from 2018-11-29 - Management of Culture and Sport Industries.

Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Business Management	Professional Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	8 April 2010 2 June 2020	25 April 2012 29 November 2018

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluations of study fields in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are based on the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport on 17 July 2019, Order No. V-835, and are carried out according to the procedure outlined in the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) on 31 December 2019, Order [No. V-149](#).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions 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 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 the 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 SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on 8 May 2023.

1. Prof. Dr. Steffen Roth (Germany-France), panel chair - academic member, Professor of Management at Excelia Business School La Rochelle, President of the Senate at Kazimieras Simonavicius University;
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adam Jabłoński (Poland), panel member – academic member, Professor and director of the Institute of Management and Quality Sciences at the WSB University in Poznań, expert of the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA);
3. Prof. Dr. Christian Schachtner (Germany), panel member – academic member, Professor and Head of Public Management at IU University of Applied Sciences;
4. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dmitrijs Kravčenko (Latvia), panel member – academic member, Professor and Director of Entrepreneurship at Stockholm School of Economics in Riga;
5. Prof. Dr. Tadas Gudaitis (Lithuania), representative of social partners, CEO of Swedbank Asset Management, Chairman of the Board at Lithuanian Investment and Pension Funds' Association; Professor at Vilnius University Business School;
6. Ms Ieva Porutyte (Lithuania), students' representative, third-year Professional Bachelor's student of study programme Creativity and Business Innovations at Vilnius University of Applied Sciences.

## 1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of document
1.	Examples of final theses (from other study programmes) and coursework.
2.	Course descriptions of Innovation and Project Management; Management and Entrepreneurship; Sustainable Leadership.

#### **1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT MARIJAMPOLĖS KOLEGIJA**

Marijampole College (hereafter, MC, the College or HEI) is a state-owned public institution of higher education in accordance with the status of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Science and Studies and can provide a professional bachelor's degree attesting to higher education Diploma. The College's vision is to be an educational institution open to advanced technologies and higher education achievements linking its activities to the needs of the labour market.

It is governed by a College Board comprising nine members selected for five-year terms. Academic matters are the responsibility of the Academic Council which has 15 members each serving five-year terms. MC has Faculty Councils and a Students' Union. The last amendment to the governance structure of MC was made on 17 March 2021 by the CMC Resolution (CMC Resolution No KT-1).

The College has two faculties, Business and Technology and Education Studies and Social Work. The programmes being evaluated are located in the Department of Business and Management.

In 2013, a Quality Management System (QMS) was implemented in accordance with the ISO 9001:2008 international management system standard and in 2016, MC became the first Lithuanian college to recertify its quality management system in accordance with the new ISO 9001:2015 international management system standard.

The current evaluation was conducted in May 2023 by a panel of experts from Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, including a student representative. While conducting the evaluation, the expert panel met senior management staff, SER Administrative staff, teaching staff, current students, graduates and social partners.

The study programme Transport Logistics was evaluated in 2020. The other programmes were never reviewed before. In 2012, Office Management (accredited by the order of the Rector of SQAC on 28-03-2013, SV6-24) and in 2016 Culture and Sports Management were the only ones, which were accredited before. From 2020 onwards, no students are no longer enrolled in the Management of Culture and Sports Industries study programme, thus it was not part of the study field in Management analysis.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the *Management* study field at Marijampolės 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	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	2
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	3
<b>Total:</b>		21

\*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

##### *3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of society and/or the labour market*

(1) Factual situation:

According to the SER, there are three programmes in the field of management offered to students: Sustainable Business Management, International Business Management, and Transport Logistics. Formerly, Management of Culture and Sports Industries was also offered but has since been discontinued and parts of it were absorbed into the Sustainable Business Management programme. The rationale and need for these programmes are clearly articulated and rooted in data on employment trends and research of business needs in the region. There are opportunities for exchange and internships (available as both domestic and international) which are required parts of the programmes and are executed in close cooperation with the social partners. During the sessions with teachers, students, alumni and social partners, the expert committee witnessed long-standing, strong, two-way working bonds between the study programmes and the local economy. As a result, graduates of the management programmes are highly valued and readily employed by local public and private organisations.

Sustainable Business Management programme aims to educate and develop generalist managers with relevant knowledge of social and environmental sustainability in business. MC claims to pay attention to United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and to draw on this framework, as well as on dialogue with external partners from the public and private sectors, to train capable business management professionals. The programme is taught in Lithuanian and corresponds to the principles outlined in the 'Lithuania 2030' State Progress Strategy. This considered, the expert committee considers a load of sustainability-related subjects as unjustifiably light. Only 9 credits (~10% of the curriculum) are allocated to explicit sustainability subjects (6 for Sustainable Development and 3 for Sustainable Leadership). There are no dedicated modules to develop skills in areas such as (but not limited to): creative problem solving/design thinking, management of nonprofits and/or social enterprises, ESG accounting. Furthermore, there has been no intake into the programme in 2021 and 2022, which raises concerns about MC's commitment to this programme of study, especially taking into account that a highly valued programme on Culture and Sports Management (now discontinued) has been absorbed into the Sustainable Business Management programme. The committee finds this to be an area of minor concern.

International Business Management programme aims to educate and develop managers with relevant skills and knowledge of operating in an international business environment. The programme is taught in Lithuanian but with a range of modules geared towards developing specialist English language competencies (writing, negotiation, business English). The programme is well-aligned with the contemporary needs of international business and mainly corresponds to the principles outlined in the 'Lithuania 2030' State Progress Strategy. The

expert committee acknowledges that English remains the primary language of communication in international business but also notes that, according to the Lithuanian State Data Agency, Sweden and Germany are major sources of foreign direct investment into the Nordic-Baltic region in general and into the Marijampolė region specifically. Offering some training in these languages and cultures, or establishing links with social partners across the border in Poland could enhance the programme further. That being said, the expert committee found the international aspect of the international business programme severely lacking both in terms of English language curriculum and actual exposure to international people. This was confirmed during the sessions with teachers and students. The committee considers this to be a flaw of this programme, in need of improvement.

The Transport Logistics programme aims to educate and develop specialists with relevant skills and knowledge of logistics and supply chain management. The programme is well-aligned with the contemporary needs of the logistics management profession and corresponds to the principles outlined in the 'Lithuania 2030' State Progress Strategy. Given the location of the HEI close to the border with Poland and on the route of Rail Baltica, there is an obvious need to transport logistics professionals in the region now and in the future, as was also confirmed by social partners.

(2) Expert judgement:

Programmes in the study field comply with the needs of society and the regional labour market.

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

(1) Factual situation:

MC's mission, vision and strategy focus on the development of locally relevant but internationally competitive professionals aware of the needs of lifelong learning, the latest state of knowledge and practice.

Management study field programmes broadly align with the mission, objectives and strategy of the HEI, although there is room for improvement. Sessions with social partners confirmed that graduates of the HEI are in high demand and are held in high esteem by local public and private employees. Sessions with the SER team and students confirmed HEI's commitment to lifelong learning. The expert committee does not, however, believe that management study field programmes are tailored to develop internationally competitive professionals. This is due to: 1. limitations of current internationalisation activities (as outlined in section 3.1.1) and 2. lack of meaningful differentiation between graduates of the HEI and graduates from similar programmes elsewhere in the immediate region. The latter point was confirmed during the session with senior managers and once again during the session with alumni and social partners. The expert committee concludes that the HEI is well positioned to tailor to the needs of the local job market, but falls short of its own mission, vision and strategy to develop internationally competitive graduates.

(2) Expert judgement:

Programmes in the study field do not fully comply with MC's mission, vision and strategy.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The three active programmes (Transport Logistics, Sustainable Business, and International Business) are compliant with the legal requirements.

(2) Expert judgement:

Programmes in the field of study comply with the legal requirements.

**Table No. 1** Study programmes' Transport Logistics, Sustainable Business, and International Business compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes of College level (professional bachelor)*

Criteria	General legal requirements	Transport Logistics	Sustainable Business	International Business Management
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180	180	180
ECTS for the study field	Not less than 120 ECTS	153	123	156
ECTS for internship	Not less than 30 ECTS	30	30	30
ECTS for final thesis (project)	Not less than 9 ECTS	9	9	9
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	Not more than 120 ECTS	9	42	9
Contact hours	Not less than 20 %	47,2 %	47,7 %	46,9 %
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one-third of the programme	31.6 %	31.6 %	31.6 %

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

#### (1) Factual situation:

The compatibility is achieved by fulfilling the requirements of the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Five categories of aims and learning outcomes at the programme level are defined: Knowledge and its application, Research skills, Special abilities, Social abilities, and Personal abilities. Each category has specific learning objectives which are related to individual modules of the study programmes. The expert committee finds that the learning objectives used to describe each category of aims and learning outcomes properly reflect essential elements of knowledge, skills, and abilities expected from the graduates of first cycle study programmes in management.

A range of teaching and assessment methods is used to facilitate more interactive teaching, including, but not limited to, oral presentations, group work, practical presentations and demonstrations. The expert committee found the use of case studies drawn from social partners commendable but identified a gap in the use of professionally prepared case studies (and the associated use of the case study teaching method) that are normally used in the management field study programmes to develop strategic thinking. The expert committee finds this to be an area of minor concern generally and another limitation of the International Business Management programme specifically.

#### (2) Expert judgement:

Aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the study programmes are in line with generally accepted practices in the study field.

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

#### (1) Factual situation:

Programmes in the study field display a coherent structure typical of similar programmes elsewhere in the region. Sustainable Business Management programme is distinct in that it offers further specialisation tracks for students to select in semesters 4-7. The expert committee considers this to be a welcome innovation.

Sessions with the SER team and with teachers confirmed that there is good dialogue between the conveners of individual modules to ensure internal coherence of the study programmes and consistent development of competencies of students.

During sessions with employers and social partners, the following weaknesses among the skill profile of graduates were identified: foreign language skills, knowledge of IT systems and processes, document management, risk management, finance, knowledge of public procurement procedures, and soft skills related to communication and presentation. Having reviewed the study plan, the expert committee concurs that the aforementioned topics are

either absent or under-represented in the three study programmes. Furthermore, a lackadaisical attitude towards exposing students to studies in a foreign language (English, specifically) was evident throughout all sessions. The expert committee considers this to be a limitation in need of addressing.

The expert committee requested module outlines for a selection of modules from across the three study programmes. The modules requested were Innovation and Project Management, Management and Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Leadership. The learning objectives of all modules are defined and complement the learning outcomes on the overall programme level. Module descriptions were requested in order to gain a close insight into the topics taught and the intensity of focus per topic. In this respect, the expert committee found significant variation in the design of the modules in the requested sample. Based on the information received, the expert committee evaluated Management and Entrepreneurship module to be generic and very introductory as it attempts to cover many complex topics in very few hours, Project Management module to likely be fit for purpose, and the Sustainable Leadership module to likely be of high quality as it does not overstretch the topics covered and allocates what appears to be sufficient hours for development of student competencies in this topic area. The expert committee notes that limitations identified in the Management and Entrepreneurship module are very common in the management study field programmes also elsewhere, but still considers this to be a minor area of concern given the fundamental nature of that module to the study programme and relative to the Management Study Field Descriptor. The expert committee commends the design of the Sustainable Leadership module.

(2) Expert judgement:

Programmes in the field of study are broadly acceptable to ensure consistent development of competencies of students, although there are moderate limitations with regard to the design of certain modules (outdated/not fit for purpose) and gaps in skills trained.

Moreover, the possibility in 2029 of providing Applied Master programmes is given by the government and should be prepared with sharpened profiles and target groups. Also, the existing collaboration with Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius for MC graduates interested in pursuing scientific Master's degrees should be promoted more straightforwardly, including information on the career opportunities in a scientific career. The current guest lectures might also build a bridge to show these opportunities as a role model to become a docent or professor. Formal agreements with guest lectures are already existing quite frequently.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Sustainable Business Management programme offers greatest opportunities for students to personalise the structure of their studies. The programme is unique for the HEI in the management field of study as it offers four specialisation pathways in addition to 9 ECTS of elective modules. While opportunities are more restricted in the other two programmes, the

HEI also offers students in Transport Logistics and International Business Management the option to choose 9 ECTS of elective modules. The expert committee considers this to be in line with accepted practice elsewhere and there were no issues raised with this format during sessions with teachers and students. That being said, the Sustainable Business programme is considered by the expert committee to be significantly ahead of the other programmes in the field of study in terms of study process customisation and is regarded as innovative.

(2) Expert judgement:

Opportunities for students to personalise their studies are, overall, moderate. Sustainable Business Management offers significantly more personalisation opportunities than the other two programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The procedure that regulates the final thesis covers all necessary aspects (guidelines for the topic selection, writing issues, ethical conduct, mentoring process, defence, and grading criteria). The thesis is written in the final semester, although this is done in parallel with other modules. Social partners are involved in the assessment of the final thesis.

Theses are written in Lithuanian and appear to focus on either societal issues or challenges of local businesses. It should be noted that because the HEI is yet to graduate the first cohort of students from the study programmes within the management field of study, it was not possible for the expert committee to appraise the quality of theses of students from current programmes of study. The expert committee did appraise theses from prior programmes in the field of study.

(2) Expert judgement:

Final theses are compliant with the field requirements.

### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. Sustainable Business programme structure is innovative and offers students flexibility in customising their studies.
2. Close dialogue with, and involvement of, social partners in the study programmes.
3. Student, alumni and social partner satisfaction with the field of study.

#### *(2) Weaknesses:*

1. International Business Programme is poorly fit for purpose because of very limited efforts at internationalisation and almost non-existent opportunities for students to undertake studies in English (or other language that may be aligned with the Internationalisation focus (eg., Polish)).
2. Foreign language skills, knowledge of IT systems and processes, document management, risk management, finance, knowledge of public procurement procedures, and soft skills related to communication and presentation are perceived by employers and social

partners as lacking among graduates of the HEI and should be further developed/better integrated into the field of study programmes.

3. Contemporarily relevant topics in the field of Management should be better represented in the study field programmes (refer to section 3.1.1. for some examples relevant to the Sustainable Business Management 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*

##### (1) Factual situation:

In line with its Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025, MC aims to “develop scientific application” in cooperation with partners from regional, national, and international contexts. As per the self-evaluation report and on-site visit, these “developments” pertain to applied scientific research and research-based consulting activities as well as to academic publication activities, including those in or related to MC’s own scientific journal *Homo-Societas- Technologiae*. Researchers are encouraged to draw up an annual plan for applied research, and research performance is evaluated annually.

Despite the ambition to engage in research projects in all contexts ranging from regional to international levels, most of the few research projects listed in the report or mentioned during the on-site visit are situated in local or regional contexts. International research activities remain the exception rather than the rule and result from individual faculty members’ efforts and ambitions rather than being the outcome of a systematic research strategy and policy.

Starting from an amount of EUR 1000 annually in 2020, the MC’s budget for research in the Management Sciences has grown fivefold in 2022, thus remaining at a rather modest level. It is noteworthy that this budget is earmarked for supporting research production in terms of participation in research conferences or the payment of publication fees. By contrast, there is no evidence of a research incentive scheme actively rewarding successful research activities.

During the on-site visit, MC faculty members confirmed the top management team’s claim of increasing research orientation and expressed their satisfaction with the amount of time they can devote to research. There even seems to be an option to work up to 150% of a standard FTE if additional research funding is available, which seems, however, not very often to be the case.

##### (2) Expert judgement



There is an emerging awareness of the need for and ambition to publish in higher-level (e.g., SSCI-indexed) journals and more international contexts, however, the number and quality of research outcomes remain marginal as even MC's own self-evaluation report could refer to only "(a) few of the scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals by MC lecturers could be mentioned, which are directly related to the field of study of Management" (SER, p. 23). The amount of third-party funding raised by MC faculty members is also marginal.

In the context of the on-site visit, it was verified that research activities are an integral part of each MC faculty member's workload. Attempts to systematically manage this workload, which seems to range from one to two days per week, both at individual and institutional levels, however, remain rudimentary.

The bulk of research activities is benchmarked to the needs of the local and smaller regional demands of MC's social partners rather than the standards of national or international scientific communities. The expert panel, therefore, recommends a stronger national and international orientation of MC's research activities, whereby this internationalisation may well focus on partnerships with institutions on the other side of the nearby border to Poland.

A dedicated research strategy and policy are yet to be developed. The implementation of a research policy that not only supports the production of solid-quality and internationally oriented research outcomes (e.g., in terms of covering conference travel expenses or publication fees) but also rewards successful researchers (e.g., in terms of financial bonuses or sabbatical opportunities) is strongly recommended.

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

#### (1) Factual situation:

In MC's self-evaluation report, the link between teaching content and the state-of-arts in the field of Management Research remains unclear. In the report, the expert panel finds hardly more generic references to MC's library resources and claims that MC's faculty members base their teaching on "new sources of literature" and encourage students to use MC's library resources. The overall description of the link between study content and the latest developments in science, art, and technology is very short and, again, generic.

#### (2) Expert judgement:

Against the above backdrop, the link between the content of the study programme and state-of-the-art of academic research in the fields of business and management must definitely be strengthened and made much clearer in the future.

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

#### (1) Factual situation:



MC clearly has the ambition to involve students in applied research activities and thus to train management specialists with at least basic academic skills. The study programmes includes two research-focused modules, namely a first-semester course “Introduction to Studies and Professional Ethics” and a second-semester course “Social Research Methodology”. During the meeting with student representatives, it was verified that the latter course had been moved to the third semester without the students knowing why.

MC is organising scientific conferences on which students can present the results of their applied research. In cooperation with its social partners, MC is also active in organising student entrepreneurship events where students can apply academic knowledge to address practical business and management challenges. Overall, MC’s self-evaluation report states that a little more than 10% of its management students are actively involved in scientific activities.

(2) Expert judgement:

The general scope of student-focused research activities at and by MC is adequate for an institution of its kind, yet the ratio of students actually participating in these activities must be increased considerably. As a module like “Social Research Methodology” is foundational for the students’ understanding of the Do’s and Don’ts of applied science and thus an important basis for their active involvement as applied researchers, it would be advisable to move this module back to the second semester or even more forward to the first semester.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Increasing awareness of the importance of academic research among the faculty members.
2. Basically adequate scope of initiatives aimed at student involvement in research activities.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Lack of an overall institutional research strategy.
2. Lack of a research incentive system aimed at rewarding faculty members who publish in well-ranked/SSCI-indexed journals.
3. Research activities are limited mainly to the local and regional context. This weakness must be urgently addressed to ensure that MC meets the academic standards of a European academic title-granting institution of higher education in the near future.

### **3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT**

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

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

(1) Factual situation:

The requirements for candidates, the conditions of admission to studies and the qualification criteria for candidates at the level of studies are properly described and presented.

(2) Expert judgement:

The conditions of admission to the studies, qualification criteria and recruitment procedures are transparent and selective and enable the selection of candidates with initial knowledge and skills at the level necessary to achieve learning outcomes, are impartial and provide candidates with equal opportunities to study in the field of study. They include information about the expected digital competencies of candidates, equipment requirements related to education using distance learning methods and techniques, and the College's support in providing access to this equipment.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The formally adopted and published, coherent and transparent conditions for the admission of candidates to studies are applied, enabling the proper selection of candidates, the rules of student progression and crediting individual semesters and years of study, including diplomas, recognition of learning outcomes and periods as well as qualifications obtained in higher education, and also confirming the learning outcomes achieved in the learning process outside the system of studies.

(2) Expert judgement:

The conditions and procedures for confirming learning outcomes obtained outside the system of studies ensure the possibility of identifying learning outcomes and assessing their adequacy to the extent corresponding to the learning outcomes specified in the study programme.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Students have the opportunity to complete part of their studies and internships at foreign HEIs as part of the Erasmus+ programme, and the learning outcomes obtained are included in the learning outcomes implemented at the home institution. For this purpose, the College concluded agreements with partner universities on international exchange.

(2) Expert judgement:

While the College has possible options for student mobility, the number of students and staff that participate remains low and could benefit from more effort to send off their students and staff for temporary time elsewhere or otherwise bring teaching staff and students from other institutions and locations to their College.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The SER (p. 34-36) describes the comprehensive support services provided to students at MC, including academic, psychological, financial, and social support. The institution aims to cater to the diverse needs of its students, offering flexible study options, recognition of non-formal achievements, and opportunities for participation in mobility programmes. The Students' Representative Body addresses both academic and social concerns, ensuring student input in decision-making processes. Additionally, there are provisions for missed examinations and rescheduling, as well as individual timetables for valid reasons. Career planning support, scholarships, and financial assistance, psychological support, support for disabled students, and social assistance initiatives are also available.

(2) Expert judgement:

it appears that MC is dedicated to offering student support addressing academic, psychological, financial, and social needs to ensure their academic performance. MC emphasises flexibility in study options, engagement with students through the Students' Representative Office, and offers career planning assistance.

### *3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling*

(1) Factual situation:

Information about studies is publicly available to the widest possible audience, in a way that guarantees easy access to it, without restrictions related to the place, time, hardware and software used by the recipients, in a way that enables unrestricted use by people with disabilities.

It includes the purpose of education, competencies expected from candidates, conditions for admission to studies and qualification criteria for candidates, schedule of the admission process, information about the study programmes, including learning outcomes, description of the teaching and learning process and its organisation, characteristics of the system for verifying and evaluating learning outcomes including the recognition of learning outcomes achieved in the higher education system and the rules for diplomas, qualifications and professional titles awarded, characteristics of study conditions and support in the learning process.

It includes information on education conducted with the use of distance learning methods and techniques, substantive and technical support in this area and basic indicators regarding the effectiveness of this education.

Counselling for students in the learning process is carried out systematically, is permanent and comprehensive and takes various forms, using modern technologies, adequately to the educational goals and needs resulting from the implementation of the study programme and the achievement of learning outcomes by students, as well as preparation for entering the labour market.

(2) Expert judgement:

Information about studies at MC is provided sufficiently and counselling encompasses diverse support for students, covering academic, organisational, and material assistance for scientific and extracurricular activities. It caters to various student groups, including part-time, working, and international students, as well as those with specific needs, such as students with disabilities. Additionally, it outlines clear procedures for addressing student complaints, promoting safety, and combating discrimination and violence.

Moreover, the College has a high level of community sense with most students and staff feeling united in their appreciation for their shared community and desire to stay in the city which motivates the students to stay within the city to participate in its development and life. However, it was identified that consistent access to instructors and their post-lecture support may not always be readily available, including online communication and the timeliness of responding to students' lecture-related matters.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. The College has an easy-to-follow admission process with all necessary study material available upon application and acceptance for the students.
2. The College has a high level of community sense with most students and staff feeling united in their appreciation for their shared community and desire to stay in the city which motivates the students to stay within the city to participate in its development and life.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. While the College has possible options for student mobility, the number of students and staff that participate remains low and could benefit from more effort to send off their students and staff for temporary time elsewhere or otherwise bring teaching staff and students from other institutions and locations to their College.
2. Not always appropriate access to lecturers and their support after lectures and classes. This applies to online communication and the speed of response to the needs of students related to lectures.

### **3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT**

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

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

(1) Factual situation:

The teaching and learning process is the process is planned and implemented according to legislative requirements and internal procedures. The College offers four study programmes in the field of Management that are all delivered as full-time programmes. Students can choose to study either full-time, where direct contact with teaching staff takes place on weekdays or part-time where direct contact with teaching staff takes place during sessions. During the interview conducted by the expert panel, students expressed appreciation for this flexibility.

As listed in SER (p. 39), during the teaching and learning process different case studies and situation analyses are used. It allows students to have a study programme which is oriented to students' practical skills development, and it was appreciated by different counterparts, including students, employers, and social partners. However, during the meeting with the teaching staff, it was identified that it was difficult to clearly provide definitions and examples of case studies and situation analysis, which were used in the specific subjects.

Both in SER and during the on-site visit to the HEI, it was confirmed evidence that at the beginning of each course (module) students are introduced to the teaching and learning process, the evaluation system and learning outcomes of the course (module). The syllabus for each subject specifies the composition of the cumulative assessment of achievement (final grade). The subjects are constructed in such a way that students get a cumulative evaluation of study achievements. After each semester students have the opportunity to confidentially evaluate the course (teachers, teaching methods, evaluation principles and other material of the course), however, they are not receiving feedback on what and how was implemented from students' feedback in order to improve study and learning process.

(2) Expert judgement:

The assessment of the forms and methods of the study reveals their alignment with the students' requirements, a validation that emerged during the visit. The students have expressed high regard for the flexible schedule, indicating its positive impact. However, it is noteworthy that the study schedule's exceptional flexibility should not compromise the quality of the study process and must continue to meet the expectations of the teaching staff.

While the usage of case studies sourced from social partners is commendable, there exists a deficiency in professionally curated case studies, which merits attention.

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

(1) Factual situation:

MC ensures conditions to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. Neither in the SER nor during the site visit to HEI was it identified that students from socially vulnerable groups and/or students with special needs are studying currently or have studied during the last few years. The support framework is in place to assist students with special learning or other needs. The expert panel did not find any notable challenges in this area.

(2) Expert judgement:

The provisions for facilitating access to education for students with special needs demonstrate adequacy and careful consideration. MC offers opportunities to personalise the study process, catering to the unique requirements of each student. Additionally, the presence of specialised programmes and equipment within the library further enhances the inclusive learning environment, fostering an atmosphere of equal opportunities and support for all students, including those 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*

#### (1) Factual situation:

MC has developed and applied a systematic approach to the monitoring of the student study process. As it was identified both in SER and during the site visit to the school, the study process is evaluated collegially by the academic staff teaching the module. Additionally, study progress is monitored by the Curriculum Committee. The students' survey results are also evaluated once per semester by the Curriculum Committee. The Unit for Studies monitors the progress of all students in the Study Management System. It also monitors student turnover and records dropouts.

In the SER it was described how MC has developed and applied a systematic approach to providing feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress. Both in SER and during the site visit, it was identified that there is a process and system in place for students to provide feedback on the study process. However, during the visit to MC, it was not identified that there is a systematic nature in providing feedback to students about what was changed in studies or studies process, based on students' feedback. Additionally, the fact of providing feedback to students about the survey results are provided only very discreetly in SER (clause 182 p. 42).

#### (2) Expert judgement:

The evaluation of the systematic nature of monitoring student study progress and providing feedback to foster self-assessment and subsequent study planning appears in place and meets the requirements. Students have the opportunity to engage in self-assessment, which may contribute to their understanding of academic progress. The level of support for students in planning their future educational endeavours seems acceptable. During the meeting in MC, students expressed a reasonable level of satisfaction with the support and feedback received, indicating that it meets their needs during their academic journey. The MC shows a degree of commitment to fostering students' self-assessment skills.

Upon thorough evaluation of the materials presented by SER and the interactions at MC, it becomes evident that a systematic process for soliciting feedback to students about the implementation of their suggestions to enhance the learning and teaching is in place.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Employability of graduates is analysed by data provided by Lithuanian State institutions: Lithuanian Employment Services and Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA). The data provided in the SER (p. 43) shows that the level of graduates' employability fluctuated during the period 2020-2021. The results of 2020 are very low and less than half of the graduates (48%) were employed. In 2021, the employability of graduates became better and increased to a satisfactory level (85%). However, the analysis of qualified employment (e.g., high, medium, low) is not provided in SER.

Students usually enter the local (regional) labour market while studying and social partners/employers have confirmed during the meeting with the expert panel that they appreciate the qualifications possessed by graduates of the College. In employers' view, the graduates are employable. The main strengths of graduates, as seen by the employers, are the following: strong background knowledge and practical preparation, a good understanding of the workplace environment.

(2) Expert judgement:

The visit to MC provided valuable insights, particularly through the meeting with employers and social partners. It became evident that both graduates and MC display a strong orientation towards meeting the demands of the local labour market in Marijampolė region, aligning well with the needs of employers in the area.

It is noteworthy to highlight that MC has effectively established robust and enduring partnerships with local social partners and employers. During the meeting with these stakeholders, strong endorsement and support for MC and the study programmes they offer was evident. The institution's efforts in nurturing such relationships have proven fruitful, contributing to the overall effectiveness and relevance of MC as an institution in response to the needs of the local community and labour market.

However, it was noted a potential limitation in the absence of a more comprehensive approach to preparing graduates for the international business environment beyond the confines of Marijampolė region and/or Lithuania. A broader perspective on equipping graduates to thrive in the international business landscape seems to be lacking.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The SER provides the framework and means of assurance of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination (SER, p. 44). The College's Code of Academic Ethics, The Code of Academic Conduct, and the Study Procedures are key documents guiding the principles of ethics. Every member of the academic community is asked to sign a declaration of integrity. During the period under review, there were no violations of principles of academic integrity, tolerance or non-discrimination.



(2) Expert judgement:

The academic community places significant emphasis on upholding ethical and honest conduct among all its members.

During the meeting with the panel of experts, students reiterated their awareness of the expectations regarding academic ethics, as they receive regular reminders about the zero-tolerance policy towards plagiarism and the paramount importance of maintaining honest and ethical behaviour.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The MC has clearly described the procedure for assessing learning achievements. During the visit to MC, it was identified that students understand the process of providing appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the Management field studies. Neither in the SER nor during the site visit to MC there were identified cases where students have provided appeals and/or complaints during the last few years.

(2) Expert judgement:

The documentation concerning the appeal procedure regarding the study process is available, and students are duly informed about their right to appeal.

#### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

##### *(1) Strengths:*

1. Long developed and strong partnership with the social partners and employers.

##### *(2) Weaknesses:*

1. The information obtained during the meetings in HEI and presented in the SER differed and led to the conclusion that the process during which students receive feedback on whether their suggestions for improving the learning and teaching process are implemented is not organised in a systematic way.
2. The study process is oriented to the local regional labour market and opportunities for employability in international labour markets are not exploited.

### **3.5. TEACHING STAFF**

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



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

#### (1) Factual situation:

According to the SER, a faculty consisting of 35 teachers or 4.67 FTE, respectively, teach the close to 100 management students at MC. The student-faculty ratio indicated by MC is therefore 20.8. Most of these teachers are referred to as “trainee lecturers”. The report indicates a very low level of staff turnover, and there is some evidence of a systematic onboarding process as far as teaching matters are concerned. During the on-site meeting with the teachers, faculty members confirmed that the proportion of teaching staff with a PhD degree or higher is about 10%. Faculty also confirmed they may use up to 40% of their workload for research, yet this maximum typically applies only to the small proportion of faculty members holding a PhD degree or the title of Associate Professor.

#### (2) Expert judgement:

The fact that the above 4.67 FTE are covered by a total of 35 teachers implies that, on average, each teacher devotes less than 15% of their time to management-related teaching. Against this backdrop, the numbers provided in the evaluation report suggest that the bulk of modules taught at MC are taught either by practitioners or by teachers with main expertise in fields other than management. The MC leadership team together with the faculty members are strongly advised to perform an in-depth analysis of this situation and report on it in detail in a future self-evaluation report. Moreover, it is strongly advisable to increase the number of faculty members with a PhD qualification within the next few years, e.g., by investing in and further qualifying the current workforce.

### *3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staff's academic mobility*

#### (1) Factual situation:

The SER is successful in conveying the message that the teaching staff's mobility is on MC's strategic agenda. Several pertinent projects have been implemented. There is less evidence of international research-oriented initiatives and activities.

#### (2) Expert judgement:

Whereas international mobility clearly is one of MC's strategic goals, the actual internationalisation resulting from the implemented initiatives is more successful in the domain of teaching than in the domain of research. It is therefore advisable that MC complement its solid level of more teaching-oriented international mobility initiatives with efforts at stimulating faculty-driven international research expatriation and activities.

### *3.5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competencies of the teaching staff*

#### (1) Factual situation:

According to the SER, MC allocates dedicated funds for teaching staff training and further education. MC also complies with the obligation to benchmark, across a five-year period, the individual academic output of its faculty members against the performance requirements set by the Lithuanian government. An Academic Council oversees the further development of the faculty's teaching and research competencies. Pertinent workshops are organised and English-language training is provided by the institution.

(2) Expert judgement:

The above scope of initiatives aimed at improving the competencies of the teaching staff are, in principle, adequate. A question that needs to be addressed though is why this commendable set of initiatives has been more successful in improving teaching rather than research outcomes.

The academic career path holds the possibility also for young colleagues to reach the status of a dean or head of programme very quickly. There seems to be the idea to bind high potentials to the institution and expand their competencies in taking responsible positions and finding solutions with different stakeholders. Additionally, an onboarding and mentoring programme for young docents could help standardise the expected competencies required for these positions. Currently, the process of lecturing depends on individual support and participation in didactic learning programmes. These are currently designed by external docents from Mykolas Romeris University, yet the expert committee found that MC has sufficient in-house competencies and capacities to organise such programmes themselves (notably by experienced faculty members).

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Little staff turnover and generally very good organisational culture.
2. Loyal faculty.
3. Successful first steps towards increased teaching staff mobility.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Research competence of teaching staff is not yet up to international standards.
2. Research incentive system and research culture are yet to be developed.
3. Faculty currently without core competencies in the fields of business and management research.

## **3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

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

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

(1) Factual situation:

The total area of the premises is 6857,15 m<sup>2</sup> and the area of the teaching premises is 4317,21 m<sup>2</sup>. As of May 2023, the total floor area per student is 11,1 m<sup>2</sup>. The building includes 4 lecture halls including interactive SMART screens, which support interactive sessions for activating students in different didactic scenarios.

To provide a room for experimental small-group seminars in quantitative and qualitative research the Social Research Centre provides space for up to 20 students in individual academic groups. There is software for statistical analysis in both research domains on tablets for group working processes in social science, but also to train soft skills in team interaction.

For Management Studies the HEI provides one of Lithuanian most modern specialised laboratories for Creativity and Media in the academic sector. It includes an interactive glass wall with touch applications and recording studio equipment. The laboratory contains 3D modelling software Autodesk 123 Design, image processing software Audacity, a VideoPad for digital designs, graphic image creation and processing software SmoothDraw. For creating content outside a drone with a 360-degree video camera is available. Additionally, there is a separate room for 3D printing and designing products to discuss creative ways to solve customers' requirements.

For earning practical skills in logistics or warehouse management the "Marko Mantingėlė" imitation company as a company simulation space is equipped with 4 departments: personnel, supply-manufacturing, sales-marketing, and finance-accounting. In cooperation with social partners national and international cases get simulated as a complex system of processes working together in a whole workflow.

The Information and Study Resource Centre includes the library and a general reading room with a total of 38 workstations, which are accessible via an RFID-card system consisting of an automated access gate. In the library, you find subscriptions to the EBSCOhost database, several open-source databases, and interactive licences for the INFOLEX legal system and the Lithuanian Academic Libraries Network. The number of publications for management studies is about 9500 pieces online and on-site. The opening hours of the Centre are from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., extending to 7.00 p.m. during sessions.

The stock of physical and electronic resources of the library gets systematically and consistently completed and updated according to the fields of study and research by considering the suggestions and requests of the heads of departments, chairpersons of curriculum committees, lecturers, and students. Additionally, publications of teachers and graduates are publishable to the international Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations. In addition, a local publishing line for the institution's articles is established.

In addition to the onsite infrastructure, a Moodle platform as a virtual learning environment is established. Via the international roaming service eduroam, even cloud-based services like the suite Windows Live@edu are available.

The number of indexed databases should continuously rise, as well as local publications should contain listings of scientifically indexed articles from the teachers. Because of goals in internationalisation, the percentage of English-language publications should rise.

Because of some limitations of space for groups of students in laboratories, a new allocation of group work should be taken into consideration.

(2) Expert judgement:

The institution's facilities and resources have ample teaching and research space, including modern technology like interactive screens and specialised labs. The Information and Study Resource Centre is well-equipped with databases and publications, continually updated to support research. Virtual learning platforms like Moodle and access to cloud-based services are available.

However, there are some space limitations for group work in labs, which may need addressing and also, the resources of the library could be extended with some more research-oriented databases like Springer Nature, ScienceDirect, Routledge, Scopus etc. Maybe also cooperation with Mykolas Romeris University in developing a research strategy would be an option.

Overall, the institution is well-equipped and resourceful, making it highly suitable for students.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Because of Project 09.1.1-CPVA-V-720-14-0002 "Improvement of the study environment and infrastructure through the implementation of the regional college model", co-financed by the EU Structural Funds, the Study Resource Centre (Library) during the time period 2020-2022 has been modernised. The modernisation of the equipment should reach systematic monitoring and evaluation to create a regional college model and support more internationality by the total value of EUR 689,442.

Besides the modernisation of infrastructure, the laboratories, and the implementation of student suggestions such as a healthy food store, the new stocking plan is discussed at a Directorate meeting. As a result, EUR 4375 has been allocated for the renewal of the library collections.

(2) Expert judgement:

There is a clear institution's engagement in carrying out the planning and upgrading of resources. Depending on the number of students, a second location of departments should be considered, even if the parking situation and accessibility to the campus are good. Also, some construction work to renovate the MC building on the outside, in relation to energy efficiency and an update on sanitary conditions, should be realised. Additionally, provisions for people with disabilities should be included.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Wireless internet service is provided; classrooms are equipped with modern study equipment; Moodle platforms are used for distance learning.
2. Subscription to the EBSCOhost full-text scientific article database package.
3. Upgrading of study infrastructure because of the implementation of the EU Structural Funds co-financed project 09.1.1-CPVA-V-720-14-0002 "Improvement of Study Environment and Infrastructure through the Implementation of the Regional College Model."

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Room sizes should be adapted for group work in laboratories due to tight facility conditions.
2. A need for renovation (construction) of the MC building with a focus on energy efficiency and accessibility of all main areas for people with disabilities.

## **3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION**

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

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

##### **(1) Factual situation:**

The College operates a QMS which aligned with ISO 9001:2015 standards and European quality assurance guidelines to ensure the quality of its study programmes. The system encompasses various processes, including curriculum development, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms. Oversight is provided by the Academic Council, while academic and research activities are coordinated by the Deputy Director for Academic and Research Activities and Science and Faculty Deans. Study programme committees and departments collaborate to maintain programme quality, utilising student feedback and surveys. The institution has also established an Innovation and Study Quality Council to promote innovation and enhance the quality assurance system. Additionally, the Centre for Information Technologies and Electronic Studies supports management and improvement of management studies through IT systems (SER, p. 57-59).

##### **(2) Expert judgement:**

The College's QMS facilitates the tracking of student learning progress and provides a dependable and trustworthy way to assess how well students are achieving their learning outcomes. The assessment methods employed are designed with students in mind, providing them with feedback on their progress and encouraging active engagement in the learning

process. These methods also ensure that all learning outcomes can be thoroughly evaluated and assessed.

In order to empower faculty management, centralised governance and structural reform in relation to internal overarching departments like quality management unit, alumni service centre, entrepreneurship centre etc. could be implemented, and the popularity of the Student Association and graduate activities should be increased actively.

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

#### (1) Factual situation:

The type, scope and scope of activities of socio-economic environment institutions, including employers, with whom the College cooperates in the design and implementation of the study programmes have been defined. It is consistent with the disciplines to which the field of study is assigned as well as the concept and objectives of education as well as the challenges of the professional labour market relevant to the field of study.

There are regular meetings of the main stakeholders of the College who are involved in mutual cooperation. Periodic reviews of cooperation with the socio-economic environment in relation to the study programmes are carried out, including the assessment of the correct selection of cooperating institutions, the effectiveness of forms of cooperation and the impact of its results on the study programmes and improvement of its implementation, the achievement of learning outcomes by students and the fate of graduates, and the results of these reviews are used to develop and improve cooperation and, consequently, the programmes of study.

#### (2) Expert judgement:

Based on the evidence presented in both the SER and during the meetings, it can be asserted that stakeholders are actively integrated into the internal quality assurance process. This inclusion is notably evident through the engagement of regional social partners and employers in various aspects of the study process, such as their role in the study programme committee, accepting students for practical training, proposing topics for students' final bachelor thesis, participating in thesis defence committees, and contributing to round table discussions.

However, the evaluation also reveals a notable absence concerning the attraction and engagement of international social partners and employers in the quality assurance process. To bolster the College's ambition to become an internationally acclaimed educational institution, it is advisable to recommend defining clear objectives to be achieved and the formulation of a well-structured action plan that encompasses the inclusion of international stakeholders in the study process and internal quality assurance.

Additionally, an area of potential improvement lies in the more effective utilisation of the expertise possessed by the College's alumni. A more proactive approach involving regular and robust communication with alumni, such as organising annual meetings, could provide valuable

insights from graduates who have gained practical experience. These insights would contribute to enhancing the study process and ensuring internal quality assurance standards. The expert judgement is based on the evidence presented in both the SER and during direct conversations with students.

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

#### (1) Factual situation:

The College publishes survey results from students, lecturers, graduates, and social partners on its website. Graduates are surveyed 12 months after completing their studies to assess their employment outcomes and academic continuation, with data included in the Annual Activity Report. Information about management study programmes, admission rules, survey outcomes, study programme evaluations, and more is available on the College's website and the Open Information, Consultation, and Guidance System (AIKOS) website. Internal communication utilises the *marko.lt* website, bulletin boards, and information monitor, while marketing efforts extend to regional and national media channels, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. In response to feedback and requests, the College has introduced new subjects, expanded subject descriptions, and incorporated modern educational methods and technology into the study process (SER, p. 59-60).

#### (2) Expert judgement:

The publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes is at a good level.

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

#### (1) Factual situation:

According to surveys conducted from 2020 to 2022, the majority of students hold a positive view of the quality of the study content and methods. They highlight the opportunities for independent and group work, the practical application of theoretical material, clear course organisation, cumulative assessment, attentiveness to student opinions, and smooth study processes. Students find the study programmes appealing, as they allow them to study locally, benefit from a vast pool of literature, have access to the EBSCOhost database, and utilise modern classrooms SER (p. 60-61).

#### (2) Expert judgement:

Students express positive opinions about the study conditions and the climate of studying at the College. They are rather satisfied and see support from the administration and lecturers. Mutual relations between lecturers and students are very positive and focused on the exchange of information and data, which results in the development of these relations in both directions. Students feel that they graduate prepared for the labour market.

***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

***(1) Strengths:***

1. Positive organisational culture of the College and the atmosphere of studying in the opinion of students.
2. In the students' opinion, good professional preparation for work, taking into account the needs of the labour market.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. MC has made commendable progress in engaging regional stakeholders in its quality assurance activities. Nonetheless, the absence of international stakeholders' involvement represents an important area for enhancement.



## IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

***Core definition:*** Excellence means exhibiting exceptional characteristics that are, implicitly, not achievable by all.

Excellent organisational culture and excellent level of local embeddedness and contact with social partners. Both faculty members and social partners are very loyal and committed to “their” institution of higher education. The expert committee, therefore, recommends an extension of this tightly-knit network to the other side of the nearby Polish border.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
<p style="color: #008080;">Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum</p>	<p>Strengthen the management curriculum with: a) topics identified as lacking by social partners and employers (see section 3.1.4) and, b) topics at the forefront of debates within the management field of study (see section 3.1.1. for some examples). Existing modules should be reviewed to ensure that the study load per topic is commensurate with the complexity of the topic and stated learning objectives (see section 3.1.5.).</p> <p>Focus on implementing measures that create a clear distinction between its graduates and those from similar regional programmes to enhance the value of the degrees.</p> <p>Align efforts more closely with its mission, vision, and strategy to develop graduates who can compete internationally while still catering to local job market needs.</p> <p>To further enrich the learning experience, incorporate professionally prepared case studies in addition to those from social partners.</p> <p>Proactively promote foreign language studies, particularly in English, to expose students to valuable language skills and global perspectives.</p> <p>Explore ways to provide students with more opportunities for personalised learning experiences.</p> <p>The College has only the right to educate at the Bachelor’s level, however, the panel would like to encourage the institution to execute a track for Master’s in the upcoming future, especially since most students supply the local labour market and, in this way, they would not have to choose another higher education institution. Modules of certification as an academy could also be offered to extend the interests of social partners in a deep dive into the specific knowledge of students.</p>
<p style="color: #008080;">Links between science (art) and studies</p>	<p>A dedicated research strategy must be implemented. Standards must be defined as to what research outcomes (journal publications, conference participations) are considered as sufficient, good, and excellent levels of scientific achievement. A fair and transparent</p>

	<p>research incentive system is likely to help with achieving the goals defined in this strategy.</p> <p>A clear-cut division of labour into different profiles of teaching staff into mainly research-focused, both research- and teaching-focused, and mainly teaching-focused might also be helpful.</p>
<p>Student admission and support</p>	<p>Enhance the efforts to increase student and staff mobility by exploring additional opportunities for sending students and staff abroad and hosting teaching staff and students from other institutions, ultimately fostering greater international exchange and collaboration within the academic community.</p> <p>Enhance and streamline communication channels between instructors and students to ensure more consistent and timely support.</p> <p>Evaluate the impact of irregular student intakes onto the quality and viability of affected study programmes and, if appraised as negative, review administrative processes and capabilities to remedy and improve.</p>
<p>Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment</p>	<p>The expert committee concludes that the HEI is well positioned to tailor to the needs of the local job market, but falls short of its own mission, vision and strategy to develop internationally competitive graduates.</p> <p>The expert committee found the use of case studies drawn from social partners commendable but identified a gap in the use of professionally prepared case studies.</p> <p>Furthermore, a lackadaisical attitude towards exposing students to studies in a foreign language (English, specifically) was evident throughout all sessions.</p> <p>The process during which the feedback for students on whether their suggestions for improving learning and teaching process should be created.</p> <p>The network of social partners should include more international companies as well as opportunities for employability in international labour markets shall be taken into account in the curriculum. Thus, it would be advisable that MC redefines the terms “local” and “regional” so as to include international partners from the other side</p>

	<p>of the nearby border to Poland into their network of social partners, stakeholders, and clients.</p>
Teaching staff	<p>International mobility and research internationalisation can be increased by cooperation with “next door neighbour” institutions across the border to Poland and Latvia.</p> <p>Research competence should be increased in the fields of business and management.</p> <p>Implement an onboarding and mentoring programme for young faculty members to foster their development and standardise the competencies needed for positions like dean or head of the programme, leveraging the institution’s in-house expertise to design didactic learning programmes.</p>
Learning facilities and resources	<p>The learning facilities are excellent and the laboratories in social media and co-creation are very useful. Further investments should be made to extend library resources with some more research-oriented databases like Springer Nature, ScienceDirect, Routledge, Scopus etc., as well as in the buildings to raise energy efficiency and renovate classroom areas as well as public areas.</p>
Study quality management and public information	<p>MC has made commendable progress in engaging regional stakeholders in its quality assurance activities. Nonetheless, the absence of international stakeholders’ involvement represents a crucial area for enhancement. Moreover, optimising the use of alumni expertise through consistent and proactive communication would significantly contribute to overall improvement and development in the pursuit of academic excellence and international recognition.</p> <p>Consider implementing centralised governance and structural reforms to empower the faculty management and to make the work of different departments more effective.</p>

## VI. SUMMARY

The management field at Marijampole College is a good example of how to serve local interests and requirements by implementing them into the curriculum of the study programmes. There is a very strong connection between faculty management and social partners in meeting the goals of local development. There is also a strong identity of students to their area, so most of the students are locals and have a clear mindset to take up an expert position in regional employment. Social partners' positions play a strong role in co-designing the curriculum, module descriptions and study outcomes. Students confirm that nearly nobody is worried about chances for employment.

What is lacking at MC is an internationalisation strategy, including a stable number of modules regularly taught in the English language (next to those modules that are taught exclusively in the Lithuanian language). This lack may be a reason why the number of Erasmus+ Students is still low. An opportunity to improve international cooperation would be to harness MC's geographical location in the south of Lithuania. Cross-border connections to Polish institutions of higher education, businesses, and social partners ought to be considered.

The possibility in 2029 of providing Applied Master programmes is given by the government and should be prepared with sharpened profiles and target groups. Also, the existing collaboration with Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius for MC graduates interested in pursuing scientific Master's degrees should be promoted more straightforwardly, including information on the career opportunities in a scientific career. The current guest lectures might also build a bridge to show these opportunities as a role model to become a docent or professor. Formal agreements with guest lectures are already existing quite frequently.

All lecturers have the possibility to publish their articles in local publishing series on different research areas in management and other disciplines but internationally indexed journal publications are quite rare. This may be an effect of missing quality criteria for research in the ranking of publishers, journals index rate, etc. Strategic quality checks of the outcome of the, on average 20-40%, workload dedicated to research should be established. A clear-cut division of labour into different profiles of teaching staff into mainly research-focused, both research- and teaching-focused, and mainly teaching-focused might also be helpful.

The academic career path holds the possibility also for young colleagues to reach the status of a dean or head of programme very quickly. There seems to be the idea to bind high potentials to the institution and expand their competencies in taking responsible positions and finding solutions with different stakeholders. Additionally, an onboarding and mentoring programme for young docents could help standardise the expected competencies required for these positions. Currently, the process of lecturing depends on individual support and participation in didactic learning programmes. These are currently designed by external docents from Mykolas Romeris University, yet the expert committee found that MC has sufficient in-house competencies and capacities to organise such programmes themselves (notably by experienced faculty members).

The investments in the infrastructure to modernise the facilities show a positive improvement due to learning equipment, especially the media equipment, being state of the art. Also, the resources of the library could be extended with some more research-oriented databases like Springer Nature, ScienceDirect, Routledge, Scopus etc. Maybe also cooperation with Mykolas Romeris University in developing a research strategy would be an option.

In order to empower the faculty management, centralised governance and structural reform in relation to internal overarching departments like quality management unit, alumni service centre, entrepreneurship centre etc. could be implemented. Especially, the popularity of the Student Association and graduate activities should be increased actively.

The management of the MC is not made of profiles with strong scientific backgrounds. Therefore, an additional benefit would be to create the position as a “vice-rector of science” with one representative of the research-oriented academic colleagues.

There seems to be in general a positive organisational culture and very loyal staff.

Social partners are systematically integrated into the annual meetings of quality evaluations. They mentioned during the onsite meeting that the amount of enrolled students is not enough for the labour market. The connection to companies should be considered in regard to the specific needs of changing requirements in specialist positions and further developments in soft skills like communication, self-confidence and creativity should be trained. Thus, an option would be to establish smaller certificate modules on special upskilling content such as an academy programme based on the already offered applied science subjects.

**Expert panel chairperson signature:**  
**Prof. Dr. Steffen Roth**