SKVC

CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of MANAGEMENT

at Klaipėda University

Expert panel:

1. **Prof. dr. Teresa Paiva (panel chairperson),** *academic;*
2. **Prof. dr. Erik Reimer Larsen,** *academic;*
3. **Assoc. Prof. dr. Tomi Solakivi,** *academic;*
4. **Mrs. Dovilė Alijošiūtė,** *representative of social partners;*
5. **Ms. Joana Jailionytė,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator – *Mr. Gustas Straukas*

Report language – English

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	*Management*	*Business Management*	*Health Care Management*
State code	6121LX060	6211LX083	6211LX087
Type of studies	University	University	University
Cycle of studies	First	Second	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time and sessional (3,5 years)	Full-time (2 years)	Full-time and sessional (2 years)
Credit volume	210	120	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Business Management	Master of Business Management	Master of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian; English;	Lithuanian; English;	Lithuanian; English;
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree
Registration date of the study programme	25 05 2006	25 01 2006	20 07 2010

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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 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 HEI; 2) site visit of the expert panel to the HEI; 3) production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

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

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 3 years** if one of the evaluation areas is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

The study field and cycle are **not accredited** if at least one of 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 *22nd of May, 2023.*

> **Prof. dr. Teresa Paiva (panel chairperson)** *Professor of Management and Economics Department of Polytechnic University of Guarda, Portugal;*
> **Prof. dr. Erik Reimer Larsen,** *Professor of Management, Department of Management, Aarhus University;*
> **Assist.Prof. dr. Tomi Solakivi,** *Assistant Professor of Maritime Business and Policy, Department of Marketing and International Business, University of Turku, Finland;*
> **Mrs Dovile Alijosiute,** *Senior Project Manager, a/s Danske Bank, Lithuania;*
> **Ms Joana Jasilionytė,** *student at Vytautas Magnus University.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the SER 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.	Children and Teenage Health_document
2.	Course paper in Management_BA
4.	Methods of Strategic Management_MA
5.	Rašto darbų reikalavimai_EN_2020
6.	Strategic Marketing_MA
7.	Answers and clarifications from additional material

1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

Klaipeda University (hereinafter KU) is a state Higher Education Institution, since 1991, that has an organisation centred in its Council, Senate and Rector. In terms of administration KU has different offices: Study; Research and Innovation; Internal Audit; Organisation Service, a Communication and Marketing; Legal and Procurement; Coordinator for Disability Affairs; Strategic Development and Economics; Finance and Accounting. KU has 3 faculties: Social Sciences and Humanities, Marine Technology and Natural Sciences, and Health Sciences, with 17 departments. The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities offer the first-cycle study of Management and the second-cycle study of Business Management and, together with the Faculty of Health Sciences, offers the second-cycle study of Health Management.

KU's offer is integrated into a wider context of research and internationalisation. It offers 100 study programmes and has more than 60 projects (national and international) in a European and worldwide network of academic partners. Following the overall strategy, the management field of study seeks to contribute to economic, social and cultural sustainability and other regional development, publishing and fostering cooperation with external. In the last evaluation of KU, it was advised to improve the internationalisation of the study programmes, not only in terms of international exchange of knowledge, networking and mobility but also in terms of language skills and course subjects, which seems to be developed. Another important recommendation made was the promotion of new teaching/learning tools and new business entrepreneurial and innovative contexts. These recommendations seem to be still to be fully fulfilled.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Management study field and *first cycle* at Klaipėda University is given **positive** evaluation.
Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	**22**

*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.

Management study field and second cycle at Klaipeda University is given **positive** evaluation.
Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	**23**

*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)

The aim of the Management first-cycle degree is to graduate specialists to meet the needs of the labour market, as SER (page 8) describes, and to be prepared to start or develop their own business. The second cycle has the aim to prepare students that are able to be business consultants and experts in management (Business Management programme) or to work in the health economic sector (Healthcare Management programme). Despite the compliance of both degrees offered by KU in the field of management, there is a lack of formal integration of the social partner's feedback identified only from internships, and the final and master's thesis is noticeable. There is no clear path to social partners' contact and opinions collection and their after-integration into the study programmes. From the interviews taken during the visit, it was stated by the social partners that the graduates still must learn the practical approach to the work. It was possible to understand that they particularly need to explore entrepreneurship and business creation in a multidisciplinary approach. Therefore, although the study programmes answer the market needs, there is a need for a closer relationship with the social partners and the development of entrepreneurial skills.

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 KU mission is, as stated in SER (page 10), "A key institution for the sustainable social, cultural, and economic progress of the region, dedicated to the education of creative individuals and the development of the well-being of the society" and "to create new scientific knowledge and innovations, to educate specialists and personalities of the future, to develop humanistic and creative values (...) to prepare specialists of the highest qualification in various areas, including social areas, as well as researchers capable of intellectual and creative work, necessary for Lithuania". As such, both study programmes are commonly aligned with this mission, but there is a need to further develop entrepreneurial skills in a multidisciplinary approach, particularly in the first cycle Management offer, and consequently reach an innovative and creative path intended in the KU mission. This situation is more felt in the first cycle degree since it was found less evidence with the KU strategy compliance, namely in its "One of the objectives of the strategic plan was to improve the existing and develop new interdisciplinary and joint study programmes, while increasing the internationalisation of studies" or mission "to create new scientific knowledge and innovations, to educate specialists and personalities of the future, to develop humanistic and creative values", and "to prepare specialists of the highest qualification in various areas, including social areas, as well as

researchers capable of intellectual and creative work" (SER's page 10). The second cycle study field seem to be more in tune since it offers courses aligned with KU's mission.

The second degree cycle since it's a master is more adequate to the discussion and reflexion that characterises the studies.

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

There is an alignment with legal requirements, presented in SER, by listing all important rulings and regulations upon which the study programme rests. General requirements for the first-cycle study programmes are presented in Table No. 1 and in Tables No. 2 and No. 3 for the second-cycle study programmes, respectively, Business Management and Healthcare Management.

Table No. 1 Study programmes' *Management* compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes (bachelor)*

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	210 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	190 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	21 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	15 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 15 ECTS	15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	28%
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	72%

Table No. 2 Study programmes' **Business *Management*** compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes (master)*

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS

ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 60 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	18 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	16%
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	84%

Table No. 3 Study programmes' **Health Care Management** compliance to general requirements for *second cycle study programmes (master)*

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS
ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 60 ECTS	102 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	18 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	13%
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	84%

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

While it is possible to understand the good integration of the teaching/ learning process and assessment in some courses by analysing SER and Appendix 4, the expert panel does not observe enough evidence in other cases. Some of the courses have traditional /classic teaching and assessment methods, giving no space for student creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial skills development, particularly in courses like "Innovation Management", "Business Analytics", "e-Business", "Entrepreneurship", "Business Creation Principles", "Innovation Strategies", "e-Marketing", to identify a few. The pedagogical methods described do not allow the development

of critical thinking, entrepreneurial competencies, and practical approaches. This situation is more evident in the study methods of the first cycle of Management studies, but it can also be identified in some of the electives of the second cycle offer. Although it is said in SER (Page 16) that aims and the learning outcomes of the study programme are defined in cooperation with employers and other social partners, taking into account the needs of society and the market through their involvement in the Study Programme Committees (SPC) and cooperation between departments and faculties and business representatives and employer organisations, it was not possible to confirm this since neither social partner present in the meeting was a Study Programme Committee member, the University provided the panel with information that there was one social partner in the meeting with experts that was also a member of SPC. Nevertheless, the SPC should involve more social partners to ensure durable and compassionate cooperation (this is important in both types of learning offers). Also, the expert panel concludes that it is necessary that KU reinforce better teaching methods, as stated before.

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 principles of the credit structure are student-centred at KU, which is aligned with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, and the analysed study programmes are generally in line with the main and specific learning outcomes of the field of study and the general and specific requirements for the first and second-cycle studies in the Management field of study. It is said in SER that the "Management field of study programmes are structurally integral, with academic courses related through interdisciplinary, integrative links", which in its structure were not observed (Appendix 1). However, there is a positive sequence in the different courses defined and no duplication of content between the courses.

Still, it was observed by the external committee that there is a need for the student's learning outcomes to impact more in their ability of entrepreneurship and analytical skills. The entrepreneurship competencies must be developed within the courses by applying innovative pedagogical methods. The innovation courses could also develop more creativity and innovation management technological tools that are open and free to be used and speed up the process of bringing added value to the market. There must be a greater effort to include these tools as a pedagogical tool of these courses.

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

There is evidence given by Appendix 1 and 4 that students may individually find their path in the management field in both learning offers: an individual plan; the possibility of changing the timing of the examination session/defence of the final thesis; participation in exchange programmes; doing a traineeship or internship outside the curriculum. The external committee noted that some of the possibilities are not directly connected with the individual path choice. However, the list of specific course options is attractive and should be encouraged.

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

In SER (page 18), it is possible to understand that the principles of the final thesis preparation, composition of the defence committee, and the procedure of defence of the final thesis are defined by the document "Description of General Requirements for Independent Papers of KU Students". During the visit, the external Committee could assess that no social partners present were contacted to participate in the choice of the final documents of different degrees. No broad and formal link exists between the social partner's problems or research needs. It seems, and the expert panel recommends, that the link between the research and the social partners should be improved. It is necessary that the final theses of the different study programmes would incorporate empirical work that is more profound and technological to contribute to science and to management.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. There is general compliance of the studies programmes with the legal requirements
2. There is an individual path choice offered to students.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Spread the innovative pedagogies to the subject courses that imply a more interactive, creative, and innovative approach, particularly in the first cycle learning offer.
2. Reinforce the connection with the social partners in all types of study programmes to give formally and periodically receive feedback and challenges and to incorporate students in solving them.

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

KU has made significant progress within the area of publications over the last years. There is a growing number of publications from journals listed in, e.g., Scopus and Web of Science (Web of Science & Scopus: 2019: 0, 2020: 5; 2021: 8). There is a clear link to both the management as well as the health care management area in the publications. There seems to be a focus on the areas of sustainable development and entrepreneurship, but other areas are represented as well. Publications (as well as the different "level" of publications) is recognised as a significant part of the remuneration and promotion for the faculty providing incentives for publishing.

It is important that this positive trend continues and that the increase in internationally recognised journal publications is maintained. This also implies that there might be fewer publications, particularly in national and institutional journals. In other words, scientific works are published in higher-ranked journals and local outlets are used mainly to communicate

insights that might be useful for national stakeholders after the international publication. This will be a relatively slow process, as it takes significant time to shift focus. It is, however, necessary to raise the international profile of the research related to all the degrees.

It might be an advantage if international publications would cover an increasing number of topics compared to the current state. However, it should again be emphasised that this is not an easy or quick thing to change. The institution might want to think about how it can help researchers to achieve this, e.g., through research stages done abroad, visiting professors with a proven record of accomplishment in the targeted journals etc.

The department and institution has a good portfolio of projects, EU and others, with universities abroad.

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

The link between the courses taught within the evaluated degrees and the research, in general, can be deemed to be at a level comparable to most other schools in Europe within the management area. Only very large schools can cover all the research areas within a management degree, so comparing with the size of the University, the expert panel can conclude that the research developments are in line with the content of studies. Furthermore, the connection between the research areas, the taught subjects and the current state of the art within the management area are not only aligned but also seem to be at a good level.

Nevertheless, the expert panel suggests expanding research into some other topics related to management field - firstly leadership and marketing.

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

The students have the possibility to participate as well as initiate research within the degrees. They have the possibility, depending on the quality, to present papers at the student conference and have these taken into account in connection with grades as well as applications in the case of applying to the second cycle.

Overall, this criteria meets the requirements and only one suggestion from the expert panel is to continue the involvement of students in scientific activities, especially to find more active participation of master students.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Link between research performance, remuneration and promotion.
2. Growing number of international ranked publications.
3. Participation in international projects.

4. Students' engagement in research.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. While the trend is encouraging, there is a need to focus more on international publications.
2. Expand the area of research (publications) coverage of the core disciplines found in the programs, e.g., marketing and leadership.

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

First cycle studies

Students are admitted to the study field through joint admission to state-funded or state-non-funded places. The admission process for first-cycle study programs is carried out using LAMA BPO (Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for the Organization of General Admissions). Students are admitted to the study program based on their admission grades. Applicants for first-cycle studies at higher education institutions must meet the minimum learning result requirements set by the Republic of Lithuania Minister of Education, Science, and Sport, as determined through the evaluation of proposals from the Conference of Rectors of Lithuanian Universities. The competitive entrance score is calculated from the following state exam results: mathematics, history / IT/geography / foreign language, Lithuanian language and a third subject which does not coincide with other mentioned subjects.

Between 2019 and 2021, the number of applicants has increased (2019 - 111, 2020 - 146, 2021 - 163), and the number of signed agreements remains stable (2019 - 19, 2020 - 31, 2021 - 31). The maximum competitive score of the admitted students has been increasing every year. However, the average competitive score of the admitted students slightly dropped when comparing 2020 and 2021.

Second cycle studies

For admission to the second-cycle programs, the responsibility lies with the University, where an admission grade is determined based on a defined formula. Admission rules are proposed by the Faculty/Institute Council and approved by the Senate. The minimum competitive score for second-cycle admissions is 6. Between 2019 and 2021, the number of signed agreements decreased (2019 - 42, 2020 - 44, 2021 - 34).

The competition score of applicants for second-cycle admissions has been consistently high, averaging over 8 points between 2019 and 2021.

General:

- Information about the admission rules is publicly available on the websites of Klaipeda University and LAMA BPO.
- The majority of students in both first and second-cycle programs have signed study agreements for state-non-funded places.
- Admission of foreign nationals to first and second-cycle studies at KU follows the University's regulations, which are approved by the University Senate every two years and adjusted as needed.

The expert panel has recognized that KU follows a specific procedure for the selection and admission of students.

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

There are defined procedures for the evaluation of foreign qualifications and partial studies. There was a significant number of requests during the evaluation period. Annually, Klaipeda University recognises approximately 300 qualifications of foreign nationals for admission to first-cycle study programs and approximately 40-100 qualifications for admission to second-cycle study programs.

At Klaipeda University, the assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements are carried out. During the period being reviewed, three individuals applied for the assessment and recognition of competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

The expert panel group identified that KU has a defined procedure for recognizing foreign qualifications, study periods, and prior non-formal and informal learning.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

The institution has cooperation agreements with around 300 partner higher education institutions. These agreements have been initiated by faculties, departments, and heads of programs based on their needs, geographical distribution, and available contacts. There is a focus on partner universities participating in the EU-Conexus alliance.

Students show a preference for internships over studying abroad, which is attributed to the shorter duration of internships and the desire to gain practical experience. Partial studies abroad are particularly popular among foreign nationals studying at Klaipeda University. The field of Management accounts for a significant portion of students participating in both internships and studies abroad.

The number of Klaipeda University students (first and second cycles) going abroad to study actually increased in 2020 (7 students) compared to 2019 (0 students). (However, in 2021, there were none students from the first and second cycles who went to study abroad.) This increase can be attributed to students' eagerness to travel and study abroad after the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions.

Since 2021, first-cycle students have had the opportunity to pursue a specialism Minor in Blue Economy and Growth as part of the EU-CONEXUS program. The university organises information seminars in English and Lithuanian to provide students, academics, and non-academic staff with information about mobility opportunities. The Klaipeda University website offers detailed information, and the Mobility Guide provides interactive tools to help students prepare for Erasmus visits.

The university encourages students to share their experiences through workshops upon their return from partial studies and internships. However, students aren't motivated to participate in long-term mobility programs. The total number of first-cycle students participating in mobility programs is 31 (for practice, it is 28), and second-cycle students - 45 (for practice - 41). One of the main reasons is that students don't want to leave the job they have. Additionally, during the discussion with the expert panel, students didn't speak English well, which can be another reason why they didn't choose to participate in mobility programs. The expert panel recommends including courses in English or extracurricular activities in the study curriculum to help students with low proficiency in English.

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

Klaipeda University offers academic support to students, providing consultations on various issues related to their studies. Students have the option to study according to an individual schedule if needed, with permission from the Dean of the Faculty. The university also provides social and financial support, encouraging student involvement in community activities and offering scholarships for academic performance.

The university administers social support through the Study Office and Faculty staff. Incentive scholarships, such as the Senate Scholarship and Faculty Council Scholarship, are awarded to students with excellent academic performance who also participate in scientific, artistic, and social activities. One-off scholarships are available for various achievements, such as participation in scientific, artistic, and sports activities.

Students can apply for social grants and disability allowances based on specific criteria. Private organisations also offer scholarships and prizes for excellent academic performance. The university also offers reduced tuition fees for certain categories of students, such as those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds or who excel academically.

However, not all students are aware of the various possibilities to obtain scholarships or social grants. Additionally, the majority of the academic support is received from teachers rather than from the administration. Foreign students have fewer possibilities to receive financial or other support from the administration compared to Lithuanian students.

Klaipeda University provides personal support through the Student Union and self-governance bodies in student dormitories. Career counselling is available, and the university encourages student participation in scientific, cultural, and sporting events by providing financial support.

Psychological and pastoral counselling services are also offered to students and members of the university community.

The expert panel confirms that KU offers student support measures in various aspects. However, KU has to ensure that all students, both international and Lithuanian, can access the same support.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Klaipeda University provides comprehensive support and guidance to both Lithuanian and foreign students in various academic and administrative matters. Upon enrolment, students receive information regarding study organisation, fees, contracts, and accommodation from the university's academic staff. Faculty and department administrations hold meetings with first-year students to introduce them to the study program, lecture timetable, and important contacts.

The university employs a Senior Student Integration Specialist to assist foreign students, and academic advisors are available in the Dean's Offices, Departments, and through appointed curators. Teachers allocate a specific number of hours each semester to advise students on assignments and study-related inquiries, and consultation can be conducted in person, virtually, or via email.

The KU library provides guidance on information search, database usage, and library resources. First-year students receive information during their visit to the faculty library. Electronic services, such as the Academic Information System and Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle), are accessible through a personal account. Communication channels like the university's website, Facebook pages, newsletters, and alumni networks are used to disseminate information to students.

Career opportunities and employment guidance are provided through lectures, alumni meetings, thesis defences, and student conferences. The university has cooperation agreements with social partners, and faculty and staff inform students about job vacancies and opportunities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. The admission processes are clear and well communicated.
2. Teachers provide a high level of support for students.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Students lack the motivation to participate in long-term mobility programs.
2. Foreign students have fewer opportunities to obtain support compared to Lithuanian students.

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

There are 2 types of study in all programmes (Management studies (Bachelor's degree); Business Management (Master's), and Health Care Management (Master's): full-time and sessional (part-time). Also, with separate administration agreements, students can choose to get a university degree in a shorter period (crediting results from other universities' studies), get individual study schedules, or even have individual agreed assessment methods. Evening studies are mostly online (90 % online, 10 % on-site).

Teaching and learning outcomes achievement is based on teachers' and students' collaboration and ensuring necessary conditions for the learning environment. Students are seen as active partners in monitoring the teaching and learning process, teachers get support from administration staff on how to change traditional hierarchical relationships with students and use more innovative learning methods which are the best for students to achieve their learning outcomes. If there is a need, students can change their learning or assessment method, for example, they can choose to do coursework instead of the presentation if they feel uncomfortable doing presentations which is seen as a positive process point.

The teaching process includes lectures and practice (engaging/interactive lectures, visiting teacher lecture-discussion, literature analysis, individual and group projects, case study, group work, active discussion, idea mapping, small group consultation, reflection etc.) (SER p. 45). From a practical perspective, students do case studies, visit various organisations, meet with specialists, events, and participate in different projects. As traditional methods nowadays do not satisfy student's needs, KU also uses digital tools such as Microsoft Office package, Adobe Photoshop, Excel, Solver, Powerpoint, Power query, Padlet, Jam board, Socrative, Loom for recording, Mentimeter, virtual practice (similative enterprise), SPSS program. In the future additional tools will be purchased: Maxquida, Power Bi, and Tobi (for neuromarketing). Small student groups allow teachers to individualise tasks. Independent work consists of 26,7 credits in both cycle programs. However, when analysing Appendix 4 to assess the implementation of these pedagogies it is possible to observe that most of the courses have traditional pedagogies implemented. This is particularly noticed in some of the courses that should be more hands-on (e.g. entrepreneurship, business analytics).

Even if KU uses a lot of practical cases in their lectures, after a meeting with students and Alumni, an expert panel group recommends having more practical cases and problem-solving cases from their social partners, visits to Private hospitals (Health care students) and more foreign guest lectures.

After a meeting with students and social partners, the expert panel group recommends collaborating more with social partners in regard to their problems, gathering and using them as practical cases in lectures.

Regarding different assignment topics for the first cycle (bachelor), students' recommendation is to choose a topic based on where they work or intend to work. Regarding the second cycle (Master) students – assignments' topics are related to the master's final thesis topic. Bachelor students (1st cycle) final thesis topics usually are related to the Internship (practice) place, students start to gather needed practical data during practice and continue to work on this topic in their final thesis.

For the assessments, KU uses a 10-point grade system. Both The bachelor's and master's degree programmes include formative, intermediate, and final assessments of the course's learning outcomes. Used evaluation methods: written assignments, management processes analysis and evaluation, presentation, participation in group discussion, control tests and case studies. KU provides evaluation and feedback to studies via the IT system – AIS. All subjects consist of several assessment methods, the final assessment should be at least 50 % of the final grade.

After the bachelor's studies, students can continue their master's studies in management or other fields at KU or other Lithuanian or foreign universities. After their master's studies, they can continue further scientifically in getting a doctoral degree in Management in a joint program of KU, Vytautas Magnus and Mykolas Romeris universities.

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

The University has a Coordinator for Disability Services, which is responsible for a different kind of support for students with special needs. SER Report states that new campus buildings are fully accessible for students with special needs. The expert panel visited the Faculty of Humanities and Pedagogical Studies, which is based in S. Neries street 5 in Klaipeda and identified that particular the building is not adapted for students with special physical needs. Expert panel group was informed that if a student has a movement disability, they will rely on the student's community and their help. The university provided mixed information, the representatives of KU mentioned that they cannot adapt the premises as the building the expert panel visited is of historic heritage but then also informed that there is a plan to adapt premises for students with special needs in the future. However, the University must adapt their premises for people with special needs whichever need they would have - visually impaired, with limited mobility etc. The University provided the panel with extra information that the facilities has been improved since the expert panel visit but during the visit, facilities were not adapted, the expert group appreciates the swift response.

SER report states that required IT equipment, and special software is available in all library branches, but the way to reach the Faculty of Humanities and Pedagogical Studies library is not adapted for the students with special needs, so without community support, students with special needs, especially with movement disability, cannot get in (especially the library).

KU has additional help packages for students with special needs: the possibility to take exams individually and also financial assistance for students with special needs are also available.

Consultations with psychologists are also available for all students.

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

Student study and study planning and progresses are done systematically and monitored through the course, student group and study programme evaluations. KU uses the Moodle system for course materials upload, defining assessments and planning the studies.

The course evaluation is done by monitoring students' assessment results and students' feedback about teaching and assessment methods. Small groups allow teachers to provide feedback directly to the students about their assignments, improvement and focus areas. Also, after the course results and feedback, teachers are reviewing teaching methods and adjusting them or assessment methods in order to help students to achieve learning outcomes. KU uses the Moodle system for planning study progress, assessment methods assignment, and study progress tracking.

Students' progress is monitored and evaluated by the study administration staff. Students are ranked and rotated according to their results. The results are discussed with the administration and Programme Committee.

The Department is responsible for study field monitoring. This is done by gathering feedback from Internship (practices) places where students had their internships (practices) (first cycle), students' feedback about study field quality, informal social partners' feedback gathering, and students' final thesis evaluation.

Strong collaboration between students and teachers allows them to monitor the study progress of students systematically and quickly react to changes, but the expert panel group would suggest having formal collaboration and involving Alumni and social partners in planning and monitoring study progress.

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

The established Student Affairs and Careers Group at the KU Study Office is responsible for the evaluation of the employability of graduates and graduate career tracking. KU uses the Career Management Information System for graduates' carrier tracking. This tool interfaces with the student register, the population register and SODRA.

Students after Management and Business management work in various business sectors and different sizes of organisations. Students after Health care Management studies continue to work in the Wealth management sector (Hospitals, Medical Centres, public health Bureau, etc.). There are several success stories when students made a career after their Master's studies.

Statistical data shows that in 2021 only 52 % 1st cycle graduates were employed during 6 – 12 months after graduation. KU does not track foreign students' careers, this impacts total

employment data. The expert panel identified that missing foreign students' data about their employment could also be useful when there is a need to explain career possibilities after the studies.

During the site visit, both students and social partners confirmed that usually, students continue their careers in the same company where they had the Internship. Overall feedback about students from Internship places is positive, but students' feedback after the Internship is that they would like to have more practice knowledge skills about different business areas.

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

Academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination implementation ensure listed below KU documents: The Code of Academic Ethics of KU, the Code of Ethics for Teaching Staff and Researchers of Klaipeda University, The General Requirements for Independent Papers of KU Students, KU Study Regulations and national legal acts (for example GDPR). Listed documents include fundamental human rights and university values and process steps in case of principle breach.

Fundamental values of academic ethics are applicable to all academic communities equally (partners, listeners, teachers, students, and administration). The Ethic committee is established to process breaches.

During the reporting period, there were 5 cases when students were not permitted to defend their final thesis, but there is no data if one of them was plagiarism. As there were no breaches of the principles, there is no information about practical process application.

The expert panel group identified that even if the KU main procedures are in place, Students have a weak understanding of KU procedures, and they would mostly rely on strong collaboration with the teachers asking for their help.

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

All KU communities have to follow fundamental values: accountability, fairness, transparency, impartiality in the evaluation of academic freedom and studies, trust, and mutual respect.

Two separate procedures for different types of appeals are in place: for the course or subject assessment and final thesis. In both procedures, appeal should be reviewed, and appeal analysed by the assigned Commission, which ensures objective assessment and minimises the risk of impersonality.

The expert panel group again identifies that even if the KU main procedures are formally implemented, students have a weak understanding of KU procedures, and they would mostly rely on strong collaboration with the teachers asking for their help, this practice should be more known between students.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Innovative approach where students are seen as active partners in study planning and monitoring process, teachers learn from students' feedback and no hierarchical relationship.
2. Teaching and learning process is adopted based on the students' needs, using wide spectra of teaching and learning methods, and digital tools, students can work with different business processes in the course where a simulative enterprise is used as the main teaching method.
3. Close collaboration between students and teachers and small groups allows them to individualise tasks and adapt them based on individual students' needs.
4. Final bachelor's thesis is related to the students' Internship (practice) topic, and students can already apply theoretical and practical knowledge for their final thesis preparation. Master studies course works, and other independent work tasks are related to their final Master thesis topic.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Collaboration with social partners is mostly related to personalities and supported by personal relationships with teachers, which might impact that not all social partners' inputs and needs are collected and used in practical parts of studies to enable students to achieve their learning outcomes and satisfy social partner's needs.
2. Lack of information about foreign students' employment after graduation which impacts overall data and does not show full big pictures about possibilities areas to the students after their studies.
3. Lack of building of the Faculty of Humanities and Pedagogical Studies in S. Neries Street in Klaipeda adoption for students with special needs, the way to the library where additional IT equipment and software is available is not adopted for students with special needs. Students with special needs cannot autonomously move into university premises in the Faculty of Humanities and Pedagogical Studies in S. Neries Street in Klaipeda.
4. Even if academic integrity, tolerance, non-discrimination and appeal procedures are in place, Students have a weak understanding of KU procedures, and they would mostly rely on strong collaboration with the teachers asking for their help.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

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

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

The composition and qualification of the teaching staff correspond with the legal requirements. 62% of the courses in the first cycle study programme are taught by teachers with a research

degree. For the second cycle study programme, the corresponding share is 95%. Professors account for 19,05% of the staff. The share of associate professors is 38,1%, and the share of other lecturers with PhD degrees is 4,76%. Other lecturers without PhD form 38,1% of the staff. In addition, a significant share of the teaching staff also has practical work experience in their field, providing additional competences that can be considered valuable in teaching. The staff turnover is reported to be low. This is seen in the average teaching experience of the teachers, as almost half of them have more than 20 years of experience.

The selection criteria of the teaching staff (relevance of the research field to the courses taught, scientific publications, experience and competence in the field of the course taught, and motivation to develop and work with students) also supports the quality of teaching.

Depending on the program, the student-to-teacher ratio is 6,47-6,85 students per teacher. While the number does not directly indicate the ratio within individual courses, it can be concluded that the ratio is sufficient for high-quality teaching.

The majority of the staff in the Department of Management have an English proficiency level of at least B2, and the new members joining the staff have an English proficiency level B2. Only three staff members at the department do not teach in English.

The quality of the teaching would benefit from a more international approach, as the staff is local (Lithuanian).

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile)

The academic staff are required to develop professionally and may, at least once every five years, make use of one of the forms of professional development. The staff has multiple funding alternatives to utilise for professional development, including funds provided by the university, as well as national grants provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, and other national and international funds.

The university encourages the staff to participate in international mobility through the Erasmus+ programme. Moreover, the university has chosen a good strategy in prioritising staff members that have not previously participated in Erasmus+ mobility to increase the international experience within the staff.

The Covid-19 pandemic has naturally affected the number of outgoing and incoming teachers, as they have gone down from pre-pandemic levels. However, there is a constant imbalance between incoming and outgoing teachers, as way more teachers are going out (18 in 2022) than visiting the university from abroad (only 3 in 2022). To benefit more from international mobility, the university should pay more attention in attracting more international visitors from abroad.

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

The teachers are expected to develop their professional competences in different fields, including: the development and improvement of subject-specific competences; research competences, pedagogical competencies; and generic competences (digital, communicative, intercultural, managerial, etc.). In 2020, 85% of the academic staff and 36% of non-academic staff were in the process of upgrading their qualifications. Moreover, the university gives the possibilities for the teaching staff to pursue a doctoral degree by providing support, allocating time and through financial support, for example, by covering the cost of a long-term visit abroad.

The university is organising development training for their current teaching staff. The topics include research methodologies, recent teaching methodologies and techniques, academic writing, didactic skills, foreign language, and generic skills (including conflict management, personal effectiveness, etc.). The university interviews staff members to select the training topics according to the prevailing needs.

From 2020, a new system for calculating the variable part of the salary has been introduced at KU, with an annual performance appraisal of teacher performance (Description of the Procedure for Performance Appraisal and Remuneration of Employees of Klaipeda University, 2019). This way, teachers are rewarded for more active participation in scientific, project, or study promotion activities. This kind of incentive system is well in line with the competence development of the teaching staff.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:
(1) Strengths:
1. Teaching staff consists mainly of academics.
2. The professional development of teaching staff is supported systematically.
3. An incentive system for professional development and achievements supports the competence development of the staff.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Internationalisation of the staff and the degree programmes must be improved.
2. The ratio of outgoing and incoming teachers and staff in international mobility is not balanced. More international visitors would improve the quality of the programme.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

The physical and IT resources for teaching and research at the university seem to be sufficient. Only shortcoming of the premises as mentioned before is the accessibility to students or

teaching staff with special needs, especially if the needs are related to movement. The intangible resources are provided through the intranet, and the campus has wireless Internet access. For study purposes, the university provides, in addition, computer labs. The planning and monitoring of hardware and software is centralised, making it better coordinated. This, however, could also be considered less flexible. The university utilises the virtual learning environment Moodle.

Also, the literature resources can be considered sufficient. The library collections are partially open. Some documents are available for use in the reading room; textbooks and other educational literature are available for longer-term loans. However, there seems to be a lack of space for students to study and do their work assignments in groups.

The library's information resources fund is accumulated in close cooperation with the University's academics and researchers. Through the virtual library, the staff and the students have access to a good amount of academic literature and article databases, mainly centralised databases of the Lithuanian university libraries. For these reasons, the resources can be considered to be of good quality.

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

The resources to carry out the studies in the field at the university are analysed annually by collecting feedback from the staff and students of the study programme. The available resources are analysed against the current situation and future needs of the field of study in order to keep the quality of the studies and the resources up to date. The university accumulates an information resources fund in cooperation with the teachers and researchers.

The process of maintaining and improving the material resources can be considered adequate for the situation. The latest improvement was the renewal of the social sciences faculty building that is located in S. Neries street, Klaipėda.

The expert panel concludes that the improvements and upgrades are done gradually and is sufficient.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Planning and procurement of material resources is centralised, allowing for better coordination and competence in procurement decisions.
2. Literature and article database resources are sufficient and available for both staff and students.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Space for study and group work for students in the library.
2. Accessibility of premises.

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 expert panel finds that KU has a set of reliable processes in place, with sufficient overlap to ensure constant monitoring of quality. The internal quality assurance will be further strengthened with the introduction of the new plan introduced in 2022-2023 to ensure that required changes are implemented. This is supplemented with external evaluation such as, e.g., ISO.

Feedback is sought by the end of the semester, and the students' input from the survey is considered in designing the courses.

In terms of procedures, information and help, when asked, not all students and social partners understand where to seek the information needed. Particularly in the cases of research scholarships, research project calls, and University external services. It would be useful to have more research engagement and external services procedures that are more transparent, open, formal and available for all.

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

Social partners' input and feedback on the study programs are through a survey to ensure that the students have the relevant skills when they graduate. The social partners express their desire to support all the programs. The social partners acknowledged that there was a good platform for connecting and giving feedback, but it might not be used enough. This was partly the social partners' fault, as they themselves expressed in the meeting with social partners that they lack motivation to always participate in surveys. The social partners are invited to student conferences and to participate in thesis defences. The social partners felt that much of the connection with the institution was on a personal level rather than on an institutional level. While this seems to work, referring to 3.7.1 it might be useful to create a more transparent and institutional process, making it less depending on individuals (both in the social partners as well as at the institution)

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

The collection of data regarding the studies, evaluation and improvement, including the type of data and the frequency of these (semester and yearly, depending on the data), are systematic and sufficient as a basis for the quality processes and the general update of courses and information about the degrees. The public information about the degrees seems adequate. It might be beneficial if the students and social partners were more aware of how their input was helping to shape the future changes in the programs.

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

Overall, the collection of information seems to be satisfactory, using data from student surveys, student representatives at all levels of committees connected to the degree, and the involvement of the teaching faculty as well as the social partners.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Intern and external quality processes
2. The involvement of the students in the process of evaluating and designing the courses

(2) Weaknesses:
1. It would be beneficial if the social partners felt they were more involved, although progress has been made in this area, it still seems that they are not used to the full extent.
2. Research engagement and external services procedures that are more open, formal and available for all.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	1. The study programmes in question should be more entrepreneurial and engage more in an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem to promote behaviour and teaching and learning innovative methods within the different scientific areas.
Links between science (art) and studies	1. While the trend is encouraging, there is a need to focus more on international publications. 2. Expand the area of research (publications) coverage of the core disciplines found in the programs, e.g., marketing and leadership.
Student admission and support	1. To ensure the same support for foreign students as for Lithuanian students. 2. Make more effort to motivate students to participate in academic mobility programs.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	1. To establish formal collaboration with social partners where social partners can submit their business problems or cases for Students to work with and where Students can find practical topics for their independent work or assessments topics. 2. To have even more practical cases which could be solved with different digital tools, visits or foreign guest lectures for both cycle studies to ensure Students need to get more practical knowledge and social partners need to hire Students with more practical knowledge in different business areas. 3. To develop premises of the faculty of Humanities and Pedagogical Studies in S. Neries Street in Klaipeda adaptation for students with special needs plan and implement it so that students with special needs can autonomously move in the building premises (classrooms, meeting rooms) and especially library where additional IT equipment for students with special needs exists). 4. To strengthen Students' knowledge about academic integrity, tolerance, non-discrimination and appeal procedures.
Teaching staff	1. Continue improving access to innovative pedagogies in all subjects possible. 2. Improve the international balance, incoming and outgoing, for teachers.

Learning facilities and resources	1. Library should add more study space and group work. 2. Urgent improvement to premises, Klaipėda University should ensure that people with special needs, especially with movement disabilities could get into the University.
Study quality management and public information	1. It would be beneficial if the social partners felt they were more involved, although progress has been made in this area, it still seems that they are not used to the full extent. 2. Research engagement and external services procedures that would be more open, formal and available for all.

V. SUMMARY

Klaipeda University offers a bachelor's and two master's degrees studies in the Management field. It complies with the legal and organisational requirements and develops efforts to continuously improve its teaching and learning, and research activities. It is necessary to continue and spread this development to achieve an effective impact. It has a wide relationship with social partners and tries to engage them in university activities. Sometimes it can be improved since it is clear that they can positively contribute not only to the study programmes but also to the research and innovation goals and university work. The facilities of the University have been adapting to modern times, but more has to be done to comply with the special needs requirements and to ensure accessibility and inclusion of all. Overall, it is a positive overview of KU University with development towards a sustainable, innovative and entrepreneurial future.

Another point would be that the expert panel group had a very positive impression of how teaching and learning process is strongly adopted based on the students' needs, using wide spectra of teaching and learning methods, and digital tools, but would like highly to recommend reviewing Faculty of Humanities and Pedagogical Studies in S. Neries Street in Klaipeda adoption for students with special needs.

The expert panel appreciated the KU for the welcome received during the site visit and for always making available all supplementary information asked for.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

    Prof. Dr. Teresa Paiva   **(signature)**