



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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

**Expert panel:**

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5. **Prof. Dr. Tadas Gudaitis**, *representative of social partners*;
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Report language – English

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## Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<b><i>Sports Management</i></b>	<b><i>Office Administration</i></b>
State code	6531LX088	6531LX089
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)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 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	12 July 2012	21 September 2000

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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 9 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.	Updated Annex 2 of self-evaluation report
2.	Examples of final theses and course descriptions

#### 1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT KAUNO KOLEGIJA

Kaunas College (hereafter, KK, the College, or the HEI) is a state multidisciplinary higher education institution established in 2000. It has the status of a public institution and grounds its performance on the Laws of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2005, KK was accredited as a non-university higher education institution. In 2014 and 2022, the institution was accredited by international external evaluators. Kaunas College is one of the largest higher education institutions in Lithuania, with a community of about 4,600 students, 800 employees, and 33,000 graduates.

The College is managed by the Director, the sole governing body. The collegial governing bodies include the Kaunas College Council (9 members) and the Academic Council (33 members).

In KK, studies are implemented in 4 faculties (the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Technologies, the Faculty of Medicine, and the Faculty of Arts and Education) in Kaunas and a regional division in Tauragė. KK academic divisions communicate and cooperate in implementing the KK Strategy and expanding applied science/art activities.

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 programmes of the study field of Management are implemented in two departments. The study programme of Office Administration is implemented by the Department of Management and Law, and the study programme of Sports Management is implemented by the Department of Tourism and Leisure Management. Until 2022, three study programmes were implemented in the field of study. Due to the insufficient number of applicants to the study programme of Culture and Leisure Management in 2020 and 2021, to optimise the study programme package a decision was taken to implement two study programmes from 2022. The external evaluation of these programmes took place in 2017. The study programme of Office Administration was accredited for 6 years, and the study programme of Sports Management was accredited for 3 years.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of *Management* study field at Kauno kolegija are 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	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
<b>Total:</b>		25

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

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

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

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

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

### III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

*Study aims, outcomes and content shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:*

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

(1) Factual situation:

According to the SER, there are two programmes in the field of management offered to students: Sports Management and Office Administration. 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) are required parts of the programmes and are executed in close cooperation with social partners. During the sessions with teachers, students, and alumni and social partners, the expert committee witnessed long-standing, strong, two-way working bonds between the study programmes and the local economy. The Sports Management programme was especially lauded by social partners.

Sports Management study programme aims to produce management specialists in the field of sports management, with relevant knowledge and skills to perform managerial duties in the context of the sports sector. The programme is taught in Lithuanian and corresponds to the principles outlined in the 'Lithuania 2030' State Progress Strategy. During sessions with employers and social partners, the expert committee confirmed that this programme is held in high regard by both groups and that there is a need for sports management professionals in the regional economy despite insufficient funding to hire them soon after graduation. Employers further stated that graduates of the Sports Management programme are better trained and more competitive in the job market when compared to graduates of other similar programmes in the region.

Office Administration study programme aims to produce management specialists in the field of office administration, with relevant knowledge and skills to ensure the successful operation of an office environment. The programme is taught in Lithuanian and corresponds to the principles outlined in the 'Lithuania 2030' State Progress Strategy. The SER makes a convincing and evidence-based case for the need for this programme; social partners and employers confirmed this.

(2) Expert judgement:

Programmes in the field of study conform to the needs of society and of the local 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:

KK Strategy 2025 states that strategic approach to delivery of programmes in the management field of study is, among other things, to be “based on the latest scientific and artistic results, knowledge and achievements” and “to provide practical and innovation-based higher education studies” (KK Strategy 2025 slide 25, SER p. 11). The SER states that this is achieved by involving social partners and other stakeholders in the design and delivery of programmes, as well as by leveraging digital technologies to support the study process.

The expert committee observed evidence to corroborate that the study field programmes do, indeed, mostly comply with the strategy of the HEI. The e-learning environment is, for instance, used actively and, in so far as was demonstrated to the expert committee by a member of teaching staff of the Office Administration programme, utilising a variety of different in-built capabilities. The Sports Management programme includes a component on e-sports management, developed in collaboration with the Lithuanian Football Federation. The expert committee considers the former example to be a case of good practice and the latter example to be a case of study field innovation.

While fully appreciating the role of colleges of applied science in the system of higher education, the expert committee is, nonetheless, sceptical about whether the stated ratio of theory-to-practice is sufficient to accommodate teaching informed by recent advances in the field of management as required in the Descriptor of the Study Field of Management. The expert committee appraises such a disproportionately low share of theoretical studies to be in contradiction to the stated strategy (specifically, the point about basing the study curriculum on the latest research and knowledge) and considers this to be a moderate limitation.

Another strategic priority of the HEI with respect to the management field of study is internationalisation (SER, point 30). During sessions with the SER team, teachers and students, the expert committee heard evidence of foreign guest lecturers delivering lectures in English. However, outside of language modules, there is not a single, fully English-language module available to the students of the HEI. While the expert committee noted that the first such module is planned to be introduced in 2024, the situation with respect to internationalisation activities in the management field of study programmes at the moment of evaluation is considered to be poor and in contradiction to the stated strategy. The expert committee considers this to be another moderate limitation.

(2) Expert judgement:

Programmes in the field of study mainly correspond to the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of KK, with some caveats relating to internationalisation and reported theory-to-practice ratio.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Both study programmes are compliant with legal requirements. The structure of the programme is based on the legal documents regulating the conduct of higher education in Lithuania. International frameworks on higher education and quality assurance requirements (ECTS Guide 2015 and the 2022 AACSB's business accreditation standards), as well as sessions with the SER team, teachers and students have been consulted by the expert committee to validate data presented in the SER.

(2) Expert judgement:

Study field programmes are compliant with the legal requirements (*see Table No. 1*).

**Table No. 1** Study programmes' Sports Management and Office Administration compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes of College level (professional bachelor)*

Criteria	General legal requirements	Sports Management	Office Administration
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180 ECTS	180 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	150 ECTS	150 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	30 ECTS	60 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	36 ECTS	36 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9 ECTS	9 ECTS
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	37%	37%
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	45%	40%

### *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 and are stipulated by following Bloom's Taxonomy. 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 the first cycle study programmes

in management. There are 13 learning outcomes in the Sports Management programme and 11 in the Office Administration Programme.

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. During the evaluation visit, students confirmed that they find teaching and assessment methods sufficiently diverse and stimulating, and that they are satisfied with the pedagogical methods employed on the study field programmes.

(2) Expert judgement:

Aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the study programmes are generally compliant with the expectations and practices of 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 and in accordance with international practices. The Sports Management programme has innovative elements in it (e.g., e-sports management) the potential of which is not yet fully developed/realised (although the programme design is certainly on the right track). One major limitation of the Sports Management programme is the absence of study modules on sports financing and/or fundraising. This is especially relevant given the pecuniary challenges faced by the industry in the region. Office Administration is a well-developed programme with no obvious fundamental limitations.

In order to gain better insight into what is being taught in the study programmes, the expert committee requested module outlines for a selection of modules from across the two study programmes. Outlines of modules requested were: Basics of Applied Research, Management, and Basics of Entrepreneurship. The expert committee considers these curricula to be adequate, fit for purpose and generally on par with similar, high-quality study programmes elsewhere.

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.

Sessions with students highlighted limited training on research methods and ethics within the curriculum. While the HEI's library offers such courses on an extracurricular basis, the expert committee considers the absence of such training from the curriculum unusual and as a minor limitation.

(2) Expert judgement:

Programmes in the field of study ensure consistent development of competencies in students. The Sports Management programme has some gaps in it, but also room for further innovation.

### *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:

Opportunities for students to personalise the structure of management field programmes are evaluated as limited. Students on both programmes have the opportunity to choose a single 15 ECTS elective module from a list of electives offered to them by the HEI. The expert committee considers this to be restrictive because: 1) 15 ECTS is a relatively large study load for a single elective and is, in fact, a block of around three modules grouped under a common topic; and 2) 15 ECTS of electives on a 180 ECTS programme of study offers students minimal opportunities to personalise their studies. The expert committee evaluates the practice of offering students a single 15 ECTS elective 'block' on both study programmes as sub-optimal and considers this to be a moderate limitation.

There are opportunities for students to receive individual study plans where circumstances necessitate so, and the HEI has a mechanism to recognise study credits acquired elsewhere and/or outside of the programme of study.

(2) Expert judgement:

Opportunities for students to personalise their studies are limited.

### *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 language and appear to focus on either societal issues or challenges of local businesses. Theses appear to comply with the requirements of the study field descriptor.

(2) Expert judgement:

Theses comply with the management field of study requirements and expectations.

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

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. Sports Management is a high-quality and regionally valued programme of study with potential for innovation and a strong network of social partners.

2. There is a generally high level of satisfaction with the study field programmes, teaching methods and faculty among students, alumni and social partners.
3. Integration of social partners into curriculum design and delivery is effective and is valued by all stakeholders concerned.

**(2) Weaknesses:**

1. Choice and structure of elective modules on both study programmes are very limiting.
2. Internationalisation efforts do not affect the study programmes in any meaningful way and fall short of the HEI's strategy.
3. Disproportionate emphasis on practice at the expense of theory may risk contravention of the study field descriptor.
4. Training on research ethics should be integrated into the curriculum.
5. Sports Management programme lacks study modules focused on sports financing and/or fundraising.

### **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:**

The scale, scope, and quality of academic research at the study field of Management at KK is systematically monitored by several levels of the KK senior management team and shaped by a dedicated Policy of studies and applied science and art activities. Research is clearly on the agenda of both the senior management team and the individual faculty members. There is evidence of healthy competition between KK and not only Vilnius College but also other Lithuanian state HEIs. The self-evaluation report provides evidence that KK strategically allocates financial resources in a bid to increase the quantity and quality of its research output. Faculty members have reported on a transparent and effective research incentive system. Interaction with faculty members during the on-site visit provided evidence of a straightforward and deeply rooted research culture at KK. Faculty members are also engaged in various externally funded projects whose budgets range from a few 1000 EUR to close to 100,000 EUR. Research at KK is organised in six research groups that correspond to some degree to the topical focus of its two-degree programmes.

**(2) Expert judgement:**

KK's research output compares positively not only to other Colleges but also to other institutions of higher education in Lithuania and abroad. Publication numbers of the past years support the idea that both research strategy and culture complement one another in a productive way.

On a general note, the expert panel suggests that KK abstain from reference to its position in dubious institutional ranking (such as that of the journal Reitingai) in future self-evaluation reports and rather benchmark itself against nationally and internationally more established, research-based rankings.

As a result of a discussion during the on-site meeting with teaching staff about the low employability levels of sport management students at KK, the expert panel suggests considering the establishment of a new teaching and research focus on sports fundraising module so that future graduates may draw on solid research-based teaching content to raise the funds required for the jobs they have been trained on.

To further increase its research output and international research competitiveness, KK might consider the allocation of dedicated individual and performance-based research budgets that may be spent (for research purposes) at the discretion of the individual researcher.

Overall, KK has been successful in creating and substantiating the impression of it being a highly ambitious and high-performing institution of not only higher education but also research.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Research at KK is organised into six groups: *Human Resource Management, Sports Industry Research, Business Innovation and Development, Sustainable Development, Human Rights and Labour Law Research, and Research on Financial Accounting in Business*. As evidenced by a newly developed module on E-Sports Management, KK aims to regularly integrate recent trends in the domains of both research and business into its study programmes. Vice versa, KK provides students with research tools required to systematically scan and make sense out of their respective business environments.

(2) Expert judgement:

KK's research activities are, at the level of individual researchers, well aligned with the topical foci of its teaching programmes, yet the coherence between the foci of KK's research groups and the teaching foci could be further increased. Whereas the complementarity between a Sports Management programme and a Sports Industry Research group is self-evident, the complementarity between the second teaching programme and the remaining five research groups is less evident.

### *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:

Over the past few years, KK has been successful in increasing student involvement in applied research. As stated in the self-evaluation report, the proportion of students writing academic articles has doubled while the proportion of students writing academic reports has quadrupled

in the past few years. Students have been leading or involved in a considerable number of applied research projects with business and social partners not only in Kaunas but also in other Lithuanian cities. KK runs a dedicated “Business Centre” for student applied research.

During the on-site meeting, students confirmed that research is at the heart of not only dedicated research training courses but also of most of their modules. Social partners, too, confirmed that students are actively integrated into applied research, some stating concrete examples of how they provide not only research-based internships but also paid research contracts to interested students.

(2) Expert judgement:

The degree of involvement of students in applied research at KK is commensurate with the expectations vis-à-vis an institution of higher education of its kind.

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

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

1. Strong research orientation.
2. Good coherence between ambitious research strategy and strongly research-oriented organisational culture.
3. Research output per faculty member is competitive with some Lithuanian research universities.
4. Research incentive system compares positively to that of many Lithuanian research universities.

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

1. Certain incoherences between the topical focus of research groups and the topical focus of study programmes.
2. Faculty would benefit from the implementation of so-far inexistent personal, performance-based research budgets.

## **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 student selection and admission criteria and process for Management field studies at the institution follow the principles of general admission and are administered by the Association of Lithuanian Higher Schools for General Admission (LAMA BPO). Applicants are admitted through a competition based on competitive entrance scores, with the rules defining the

structure and calculation methodology of the competitive score. The minimum competitive score for entrants is 4.3, meeting the requirements set by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of Lithuania. Information about the admission procedure is available on the institution's website, LAMA BPO, and various publications. Despite changes in admission phases and potential impacts on application numbers, the School of Management has consistently ranked second in field studies over the past three years, admitting students with competitive scores above the minimum requirement, with state-funded placements having higher average scores than non-state-funded ones (SER, p. 26-28).

(2) Expert judgement:

The conditions and details of the recruitment rules for studies, the eligibility criteria and the recruitment procedures in place are transparent and selective. KK guarantees the appropriate selection of candidates for studies with initial knowledge and skills at the level necessary to achieve learning outcomes. The admission rules are impartial and clear. They provide candidates for studies with equal opportunities to study in the field of study.

### *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:

There are procedures in place for recognising skills and qualifications for further education and training acquired through foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning

(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 programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Detailed academic exchange procedures have been developed. Opportunities are created for the development of the international activity of academic teachers and students related to education in the field of study, including conditions for the virtual mobility of academic teachers and students.

(2) Expert judgement:

The type and scope of internationalisation of the education process are consistent with the concept and objectives of education. However, while international mobility has been steadily growing after the Covid-19 fall, the College could still consider bringing more foreign students and lecturers to the institution and creating more opportunities for arrivals to blend with the local staff and students to allow even further internationalisation and exposure to the locals.



### *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 College ensures comprehensive academic and non-academic support for all students in the field of Management. This support encompasses various aspects, including academic guidance, international mobility opportunities, library services, career development, language support, financial aid, psychological assistance, and more. Information about these services is readily available through the College's website and other channels. First-year students receive special assistance, including tutors, lecturers, and senior students. Regular meetings, consultations, and training sessions are organised to help students navigate their academic journey. Additionally, KK offers scholarships, grants, accommodation, and psychological counselling to students. Plans are in place to further enhance student support services, emphasising integration and active learning opportunities (SER, p. 30-33).

#### (2) Expert judgement:

Support 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 programmes and the achievement of learning outcomes by students, as well as preparation for entering the labour market.

The College takes into account, in particular, various forms of substantive, material and organisational support for students in the field of preparation for conducting the scientific activity or participation in this activity, including support in the field of effective use of infrastructure and software used in education using distance learning methods and techniques.

Systemic support for outstanding students is developed and documented in appropriate procedures.

The College has a modern infrastructure, which it constantly develops and invests in. KK also has a modern building for the educational process. The facilities are designed to accommodate students with disabilities or any specific requirements, ensuring an inclusive learning environment. The College takes into account various forms of student activity, primarily with the use of its infrastructure. The support covers sports, artistic, organisational and entrepreneurship areas.

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

#### (1) Factual situation:

Information about studies is provided through various communication channels with a special focus on first-year students who receive academic guidance from tutors and are integrated into the College community. The College conducts regular meetings between faculty members and

students and administers surveys to gather feedback on the effectiveness of information availability and counselling (SER, p. 33-34).

(2) Expert judgement:

Students have a well-established set of resources to navigate with both administrative and teaching staff keeping a culture of “open doors” for students to approach in time of need. Students during interviews confirmed that they felt secure in the possibility of receiving personal and academic support, student medical and psychological needs can also be accommodated upon request.

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

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

1. The College has an easy-to-follow process for application with the possibility to transfer credentials and other accomplishments with them to this institution.
2. Facilities are modern and fit to fulfil any and all relevant student and staff needs for the best learning outcomes, additionally, all premises are made to fit students with disabilities or other needs to ensure equal learning opportunities for all enrolled students.

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

1. While international mobility has been steadily growing after the Covid-19 fall, the College could still consider bringing more foreign students and lecturers to the institution and creating more opportunities for arrivals to blend with the local staff and students to allow even further internationalisation and exposure to the locals.

## **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. During the COVID-19 teaching and learning process was transformed into distance (online) studies. In 2021-2022, studies were implemented in a blended and, if needed, hybrid mode. It seems that teaching staff has the freedom to decide which part of their study subject to teach in the selected teaching mode.

During the teaching and learning process different business software, case studies and situation analysis are used. It allows both study programmes to be oriented to students' practical skills development, and it was appreciated by different stakeholders, 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 the SER and during site visits 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 the learning outcomes of the course (module). After each semester students have the opportunity to confidentially evaluate the course (teachers, teaching methods, evaluation principles and other material of the course).

(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 and hybrid 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.

The observation presented highlights commendable practices at the institution. Both in SER and during site visits to the HEI, clear evidence was substantiated, affirming that students are well-informed and introduced to essential aspects of the teaching and learning process, the evaluation system, and the expected learning outcomes at the onset of each course or module. This proactive approach to familiarising students with the course structure and assessment criteria ensures that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge to navigate their academic journey successfully.

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:

The HEI ensures conditions to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. Neither in the SER nor during the site visit to the HEI it was 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 HEI meets the relevant criteria for students with special needs and has the appropriate infrastructure.

(2) Expert judgement:

The provisions for facilitating access to education for students with special needs demonstrate adequacy and careful consideration. KK 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:

The general principles of verifying and assessing the achievement of learning outcomes by students and progress in the learning process, including the methods used in the teaching and learning process using distance learning methods and techniques, enable equal treatment of students in the verification process of assessing learning outcomes, including the ability to adapt the methods and organisation of checking learning outcomes to the needs of students with disabilities. The College ensures impartiality, reliability and transparency of the verification process as well as credibility and comparability of grades. There are procedures for defining the principle of providing students with feedback on the degree of achievement of learning outcomes at each stage of studies and at their completion.

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

However, in the SER it was not described how the HEI has developed and applied a systematic approach to providing feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress. Both in the 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, it was not identified that there is a systematic nature in providing feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress.

#### (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 indicates a robust and well-defined process in place.

Students are afforded the opportunity to engage in self-assessment, facilitating a deeper understanding of their academic development. The established process ensures clear and comprehensive support for students in planning their future educational endeavours. During the meeting students expressed high satisfaction with the level of support and feedback received, attesting to its effectiveness in aiding their academic journey. Moreover, the provision of assistance from curators and mentors further enhances the support system, catering to

students' individual needs when necessary. This comprehensive approach underscores the institution's commitment to fostering students' self-assessment skills and empowering them to chart a successful study progression.

However, upon thorough evaluation of the materials presented by SER and the interactions at KK, it becomes evident that a systematic process for soliciting feedback to students about the implementation of their suggestions to enhance the learning and teaching experience is currently absent. This aspect warrants further consideration and improvement.

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

##### (1) Factual situation:

The objective of monitoring the professional careers of graduates is achieved by collecting and analysing information necessary to adjust the fields of study and study programmes to the needs of the labour market, obtained from the data determining the compliance of the job undertaken with the profile and level of education, as well as the assessment of satisfaction with the completed field of study and the assessment of the usefulness of knowledge, skills and social competencies acquired during studies.

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 (Table 13) shows that the level of graduates' employability is gradually increasing in the Office Administration study programme and slightly decreasing in the Sport Management study programme during the period 2019-2021. However, during the visit, from meetings with various counterparties (especially in the meeting with employers and social partners), the experts identified that graduates are oriented to the local labour market and the HEI is orientated towards the needs of the employers in the Kaunas region. However, the experts missed a broader approach to prepare graduates who would be ready to work in the international business environment outside the Kaunas region and/or Lithuania.

##### (2) Expert judgement:

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

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

Despite the expressed aspiration in the meetings with stakeholders of the "Sports Management" study programme to attain an international level of excellence and prepare specialists for the foreign sports market, there are notable shortcomings in providing concrete evidence to support this claim. Regrettably, the absence of compelling examples of successful graduates and international social partners raises concerns about the program's current capacity to truly achieve its envisioned international standing.

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 Kaunas 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 HEI implemented policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. Nor in SER nor during the site visit, it was identified that there were cases of breaching academic integrity, non-tolerant behaviour or cases of discrimination happening currently or have been identified during the last few years.

(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 HEI has clearly described the procedure for assessing learning achievements. During the visit to the HEI, it was identified that students understand the process of providing appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the Management studies. Neither in the SER nor during the site visit, there were identified cases in which 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. High level of employability of the Management study field compared with other study fields provided at the HEI.

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

1. There is no systematic process during which students receive feedback on whether their suggestions for improving the learning and teaching process are implemented.
2. Study process is oriented towards the local regional labour market and opportunities for employability in the international business market are not exploited.
3. Low employability levels of sport management students.

## **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:**

At KK, 46-47 teachers or 8-13 FTE have taught 220-340 students during the last years. The SER lists the publications of 33 research-active persons with an average contract of 0.945 FTE. This publication record lists each author's three most significant works in the last five years. A considerable share of the listed texts has been published in peer-reviewed and indexed journals. About 22% of KK's study field of Management faculty hold a doctorate.

Onboarding includes a dedicated 40-hour programme plus an additional 14-hour programme for staff lacking didactical competencies. Regular in-service training keeps staff members up-to-date about professional, didactic, and research developments. True to the KK's own report, research training is the least popular among these training. The vast majority of KK faculty members hold English-language certificates at the B2-level or above.

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

The provided list of publications authored by a total of 33 research-active KK faculty members compares positively to other Lithuanian institutions of higher education.

The fact that the above 8-13 FTE are covered by a total of 46-47 teachers implies that, on average, each teacher devotes 17-30% of their time to management-related teaching. Research amounts to a maximum of 40% of a faculty member's workload, yet only in the case of research-active profiles and typically those holding the title of Associate Professor. Against this backdrop, the above figures seem to suggest that a considerable share of modules at KK is either taught by practitioner guest lectures (according to the report 28-32% of the academic staff of the study

field of Management) or by teachers who mainly teach in fields other than management. Moreover, it remains unclear how the above numbers relate to a situation where KK lists the publications of 33 research-active faculty members whose workload amounts to about 31 FTE. At the end of the day, all this might point at a situation where the best-qualified management scholars mainly perform tasks other than teaching, such as research and administration, and leave the teaching of their field of expertise, management, to persons who are less scientifically qualified in the field of management. This potential situation might endanger the requested link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art, and technology (see 3.2.2).

The KK 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. Most notably, future reports should clearly flag out the degree to which a) the population of research-active faculty whose publications are listed; and b) the population of faculty who are actually teaching KK's students overlap.

Although the degree of 22% of teachers holding a PhD compares positively with other colleges, 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. This increase would be required not only in view of the changing landscape of higher education within Lithuania (keyword: applied master's degrees) but also to meet the ambitious strategic goals of KK, e.g., KK's anticipated integration into the European University (Alliance) System.

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

#### (1) Factual situation:

KK reports on faculty involvement in several international mobility schemes such as Erasmus+ and Nordplus (SER, p. 43). Internal eligibility criteria and selection procedures for participation in these programmes are transparent as are most faculty-related policies and procedures at KK. This claim was corroborated during the on-site conversation with faculty representatives. From 27% to 36% of KK's faculty have been participating in international mobility between 2020 and 2022. KK has also been hosting 3, 16, and 7 international guests in 2020, 2021, and 2022, respectively. Mobility partner institutions consist of mainly universities of applied science or similar institutions of higher education based in Baltic or Nordic Countries or Poland, yet, there are also links to a considerable scope of other (larger) European countries.

#### (2) Expert judgement:

The scope and intensity of academic mobility and other international activities at KK are commendable, yet given KK's strategic goal of achieving inclusion in the European University Alliance/System, the strategic focus of its international (mobility) activities might need to gradually be shifted from cooperation with universities of applied science to university-type institutions or those accredited by one or several of the EFMD, AACSB, or AMBA accreditation system.



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

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

At KK, faculty members produce annual self-evaluation reports, based on which potential needs for further development or training are identified. In-service training schemes are provided by KK without a fee, and feedback is sought by the institution regarding potential needs from revising existing or providing new training. Examples of training include introductions to research software such as MAXQDA or training in political correctness (“Correctness of educator’s professional language”) (SER, p. 45).

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

During the on-site visit, faculty representatives enthusiastically confirmed that the overall institutional approach to faculty is highly supportive. Faculty referred to its institutional environment as a “paradise island” and kept playing on this metaphor during much of the conversation with the expert panel. KK is experienced by its faculty as a both highly demanding and highly supportive work environment. The only request for further support, or rather an incentive, voiced by the faculty, has been a performance-based (rather than negotiated) individual research budget.

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

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

1. Institution referred to as “paradise island” by its teaching staff.
2. Well-established training and further-development infrastructure.
3. Research-active, -competent, and -dedicated faculty.
4. High level of international staff mobility and cooperation.

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

1. International mobility mainly with universities of applied sciences. The institution should increasingly seek to establish connections with “full” universities or internationally accredited institutions of higher education.
2. Whereas a ratio of 22% of faculty members with a PhD compares positively with other Lithuanian colleges, this ratio might still be way too low for KK’s anticipated admission to the European University Alliance.

## **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 & (2) Expert judgement:

The College provides seven lecture rooms with updated demonstration equipment and screens, two of them with a maximum capacity of 60 seats. Additionally, nine lecture theatres with 60 to 100 seats each and 13 lecture rooms with 30 to 50 seats. All lecture rooms have multimedia projectors, screens and computers for lecturers, speakers, and boards equipped. Additional computer rooms and the library with 52 computerised workstations are offering students working in group-based learning scenarios. Furthermore, student work can take place in 15 specialised classrooms providing specialised software and digital IT tools corresponding to the curriculum.

The main Academic Campus is accessible to people with disabilities on all floors with lifts. In addition, the facilities provide special accessible toilets and special signage in car parks. The Business Centre in the city centre is only partially accessible for people with disabilities via access ramps. This means that access to other floors is still limited.

Concerning the further infrastructure there is also a Centre for Cultural and Sports Activities. There is a sports hall for physical exercises for all the students, but especially for those who are studying Sports Management, two sports gyms, the Centre for Body Building and a multifunctional gym. The College also pays attention to the students' free time with the leisure clubs. In cooperation with the social partner "Lithuanian Football Federation" in 2019 an E-Sports Academy was installed at the main campus with spaces for games, sports tournaments, and virtual education.

New equipment was installed at a specific space with an auditorium and multimedia equipment for 1000 persons for organising national and international conferences. In general, the College seems to be well prepared for enrolling bigger numbers of students because the capacity of the infrastructure is modernised, spacious, and renovation is constantly going on to maintain the modern look throughout the campus.

The Library and Information Resource Centre consist of areas for 254 working places for self-studies, several consultation rooms for library training sessions and 37 computerised workstations. Additionally, there is software for students with hearing or visual impairments. Also, there are several interactive whiteboards, and equipment for digital reading. The library has opening hours from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., where remarks from a previous review team about the necessity to adjust the opening hours of the library were taken into consideration.

There is a stock of 32,000 printed titles and more than 313,000 electronic resources which is constantly enriched with around 1,200 new titles per year and subscriptions to around 70 printed periodicals. It is accessible via an RFID card access through self-service terminals. The library also selects 11 international databases (EBSCO Publishing, EBSCO Academic eBooks, Taylor & Francis, Springer Journals, Passport (Euromonitor International), e-textbooks published by Lithuanian higher education institutions, etc.) and offers the best Lithuanian and international open-access resources available through the Virtual Library (SER, p. 49). The head of the management department is called annually to name the requirements of literature in academia and the labour market for future specialists.

A former evaluation report has identified a certain lack of English-language library resources. The College took the chance to fulfil that recommendation by facing requirements to write the final thesis about the topics/problems offered by the companies or informed by international theories, where literature published only two years ago or younger is accepted by the professors. Thus, the amount of English-written literature has risen to 50% in the Management field. Especially, the articles and books in English-language from e-databases were used by students because of internal regulations of up-to-date literature.

Since Covid-19, the virtual learning environment Moodle for e-teaching and distance studies has become more important. It allows teachers and students to communicate, upload and download materials, submit home assignments, give feedback and many more. It became a constant add-on possibility to design lectures since before the pandemic the e-learning approaches were discussed but were not realised.

Even today, there seems to be unused potential for internationalisation via social media campaigns, paid online media channels and key communicative tools with online discussions, science blogs, reading newsletters or voting for e-resources, podcasts and so on. Potential distance learning capabilities in the College may attract teachers and students from abroad.

A point where digitalisation is already used as a common good is digital software solutions to reach learning progress. With empirical quantitative and qualitative tools like SPSS, MAXQDA, or SurveyMonkey general research competencies in statistics are supported. Stekas Plus software is used in accounting for company simulations as well as Visio for process management. Business management simulation is based on Kontora, a Pen Worldwide Marketplace. Additionally, web-content creation in social media management is freely usable with applications like Canva, Wix or Weebly. However, students voiced issues that they are being trained on outdated software (“management information systems”). One alumnus explained this issue by an institutional bias towards Lithuanian-origin software used almost exclusively by public sector organisations. A scan of the free market of MIS might be required.

In-house simulations, such as business games, take place in special classrooms to simulate the performance of real enterprises and the processes that take place in them. Afterwards, in internships, students are given the challenge of working in real companies for deepening their knowledge of specific business fields and branches for their personal careers by themselves, but the College helps to find appropriate places if it is necessary. A further step would be to implement start-up centres for bridging the gap between studies and the labour market.

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

(1) Factual situation & (2) Expert judgement:

At the College, there has been a significant investment in IT infrastructure as much as in other communication-related equipment (video conference, modern computer classes), which helps students in the learning processes. Behind it, each calendar year there is a systematic review of requirements for the study programmes in terms of IT equipment, furniture, and study

environment. Each year EUR 50,000 is foreseen for the purchase or subscription of print and e-resources of the library alone. This is made possible since approximately 70% of the additional funding comes from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of Lithuania, which is allocated for subscribing to databases through membership in the Lithuanian Association of Research Libraries (SER, p. 49). Single projects are also funded, e.g., the website is also accessible to disabled persons, where the European Social Fund supports financial investments (SER, p. 48).

The further strategy of the College is the digitalisation of services, e.g., using Artificial Intelligence in library services, creating a sharing platform for knowledge exchange on trends in digital competencies such as tackling big data with social partners or increasing distance learning through hybrid conferences. Such conditions appear to be sufficient to ensure an adequate environment and favourable conditions for the teaching process. This is more than sufficient, and the modernisation of facilities is very impressive. A further improvement would be to use business-related software via cooperation with social partners. Software solutions that are used in real existing industries improve the rate of transfer to the students.

Also, the College has made efforts to renovate the physical buildings to meet the nowadays requirements for the study environment corresponding to the aims and learning outcomes. Teaching equipment is continuously updated to meet the requirements and demands of the labour market and international partner cooperation, especially in the field of sports management.

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

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

1. Modern building with space for social activities for students and it-infrastructure by serving the needs of the academic community.
2. Good cooperation with social partners in Sports Management in experimental fields like e-sports.
3. Big resources in academic literature and databases and internal guidelines for international sources for the final thesis.

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

1. Limited students' exposure to more current industry standards in terms of Management Information Systems (MIS).
2. A specialisation of equipment in the management field in demands of infrastructure or digital methods should be taken into account, e.g., social media laboratories, virtual business start-up centres etc.

### 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:

KK has established an internal quality assurance system, outlined in the KK Quality Manual, which is built upon the College's quality assurance policy, strategy, and relevant regulations. The system encompasses the management of quality assurance, divisional and individual responsibilities for quality assurance, and stakeholder involvement in enhancing study programmes. Various documents and procedures govern this system, covering study processes, module descriptions, and more, ensuring adherence to quality standards and continuous improvement. The Committee of the Study Field of Management plays a key role in analysing quality indicators, gathering stakeholder feedback, developing plans for programme enhancement, and assessing the field's studies. Additionally, self-assessment reports and action plans are utilised at all levels to maintain and improve KK's quality standards (SER, p. 50-53).

(2) Expert judgement:

KK has implemented a robust internal quality assurance system that is well-documented and adheres to established policies and strategies, and operates at various levels within the institution. The use of self-assessment reports and action plans at all levels further supports the institution's dedication to maintaining and enhancing its quality standards. A set of criteria and guidelines has been established to outline the selection of assessment methods for evaluating students' attainment of learning outcomes and, skills throughout their education and upon completion of their diploma programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation:

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 results of these reviews are used to develop and improve cooperation and, consequently, the programme of study. Regular meetings with local entrepreneurs and officials are held. They give opinions on study programmes and also employ the best students. Cooperation and exchange of information about the current labour market and its needs is provided through regular meetings of working groups with representatives of the University.

(2) Expert judgement:

Based on the evidence presented in the SER and further 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 Committee of the Study Field, accepting students for practical training, proposing topics for students' final theses, 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. This holds significance for both examined study programmes, with particular emphasis on the Sport Management study programme.

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.

### *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 publication of information on studies and self-assessment of the Management field studies relies on the collection, systematic organisation, and analysis of various data, encompassing student admission and graduation results, learning outcomes, dropout rates, graduate employability, faculty involvement in training and projects, staff and student mobility indicators, research activities, and external institutional practices. Data on lecturer performance, student learning outcomes, and other annual metrics are stored in specific systems, ensuring the monitoring of the study process. Regular meetings use this data to evaluate performance, develop action plans, and enhance study programmes. This information is publicly accessible on the KK website, offering insights into programme descriptions, admission criteria, career prospects, external evaluations, student surveys, and graduate feedback (SER, p. 54).

#### (2) Expert judgement:

The results of self-assessment are used to improve the quality of education and the publication level is sufficient.

### *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:**

The College conducts surveys to assess the quality of teaching modules throughout the year, with students generally reporting clear module objectives, practical teaching methods, and accessible materials on the virtual learning environment (VLE). Students' opinions on the quality of education are rather positive. Students are satisfied with the education process and speak positively about the administration and lecturers.

**(2) Expert judgement:**

In direct conversations with the students it was confirmed that the acquired competencies are unique in the labour market. In the case of sport management students, the ability to understand the mechanisms of sports management and the principles of the functioning of the sector as well as the conditions of sport as a professional services sector is very important and understandable by students.

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

***(1) Strengths:***

1. Students confirm in direct conversations a positive atmosphere for studying.
2. Competencies acquired in the Sports Management programme are considered unique by the student populous.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Limited involvement of international social partners in quality assurance, potentially hindering the College's global recognition.
2. Underutilisation of the alumni expertise.

## IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

Very research-active faculty. Research outcomes are competitive at the national and, in parts, also at the international level. Excellent research infrastructure that must be maintained and further developed if the ambitious research goals set by the KK management team are to be achieved.

Sports Management is an innovative and valued programme, and the integration of e-sports in association with the Lithuanian Football Federation is an example of ongoing innovation and initiative on behalf of both students and the faculty.



## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<p>Some modules of the sports management programme appear to be under-theorised (in some cases theory ratio of only 5%). A systematic reappraisal of the theory-practice balance is required in this programme.</p> <p>More opportunities for students to customise their studies by means of elective modules should be introduced.</p> <p>Strengthen internationalisation initiatives in alignment with the institution's strategy to enhance the study programmes.</p> <p>Incorporate curriculum modules on research ethics to ensure students are well-prepared for this aspect of study.</p> <p>Consider introducing specialised modules related to sports financing and fundraising within the Sports Management programme.</p>
Links between science (art) and studies	<p>Overall, the science-study link is good not least because of the KK faculty's high degree of research orientation. KK is well on the way towards an internationally competitive research institution. The risk is to be strategically managed as the potential detachment between local/regional culture and international research standards is very likely to negatively impact the quality of the connection between science and study programmes.</p> <p>Align the research group focuses more closely with the topical content of the study programmes to enhance relevance and synergy.</p> <p>Consider introducing personal, performance-based research budgets for faculty members to promote and support individual research activities effectively.</p> <p>KK must stop benchmarking itself against participants in dubious rankings such as U-Multirank or Reitingai and start developing a strategy of how to successfully integrate established institutional ranking schemes.</p>
Student admission and support	<p>The College should proactively expand efforts to attract foreign students and lecturers, fostering greater internationalisation and interaction with the local community to enhance the academic environment.</p>

<p>Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment</p>	<p>Create a systematic process during which students would receive feedback on whether their suggestions for improving the learning and teaching process are implemented.</p> <p>Expand the network of social partners and potential employers, which would allow the use of possibilities of the international labour market and would create potential benefits for student employability in the international business market.</p> <p>Closely monitor the trends of problems associated with the rather low graduate employability in the case of the Sport Management programme.</p>
<p>Teaching staff</p>	<p>International mobility primarily involves partnerships with universities of applied sciences. The institution should actively strive to develop relationships with full universities or internationally recognised higher education institutions.</p> <p>It is recommended that KK increase the percentage of faculty members with a PhD in order to meet the requirements for admission to the European University Alliance, despite the positive comparison with other Lithuanian colleges.</p> <p>Faculty members will perform even better research-wise if provided with an individual, performance-based research budget.</p>
<p>Learning facilities and resources</p>	<p>Learning facilities and resources are good and investments in the learning infrastructure should continue.</p> <p>The next step could involve establishing startup centres to facilitate the ties between academic education and the job market, and utilising business-oriented software through collaborative efforts with industry partners.</p> <p>An examination of the market for Management Information Systems (MIS) in the private sector should be conducted to address concerns raised by students regarding outdated software, potentially involving broader software options beyond the institution's bias towards Lithuanian-origin software predominantly used in the public sector.</p>
<p>Study quality management and public information</p>	<p>KK 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</p>

	development in the pursuit of academic excellence and international recognition.
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## VI. SUMMARY

Based on the documents and discussions during the site visit, the expert team concludes that the aims, learning outcomes and curricula of the study programmes in the Management study field, the learning outcomes and the content of the study programmes are consistent with each other. The curricula allow students to deepen their knowledge and develop sport management or office administration skills. There is a generally high level of satisfaction with the study field programmes (and associated faculty) among students, alumni and social partners. The expert panel recommends increasing the number and potentially changing the content and structure of the elective modules in both study programmes. Moreover, disproportionate emphasis on practice at the expense of theory may risk contravention of the study field descriptor. Finally, in order to fully achieve the learning outcomes of the study programmes in the Management study field and considering the relevance of the English language in the field of management and business, the expert team recommends offering some courses in English.

Regarding the research activities, the expert team acknowledges the existence of an action plan for the applied science activities for the academic staff (period 2022-2024) to coordinate the research activities. The HEI has a strong research orientation. Together with good coherence between an ambitious research strategy and a strongly research-oriented organisational culture, the research output per faculty member is competitive with other Lithuanian HEIs. Research activities and possible higher results could be strengthened by eliminating incoherence between the topical focus of research groups and the topical focus of the study programmes. In addition, the College would potentially benefit from the implementation of so-far inexistent personal, performance-based research budgets. Finally, a clear up of the profiles of teaching staff with different focus, such as research, mix between didactics and research or only didactics with or without an additional role as practitioner potentially could help to increase high-level research activities in the Management study field.

HEI has demonstrated a commendable approach to the application process. The provision of a process for transferring credentials and accomplishments to this institution enables prospective students to easily join the academic community, fostering a smooth transition. Furthermore, the institution's commitment to providing modern facilities is evident, ensuring a conducive learning environment for both students and staff. It is heartening to note that the facilities have been thoughtfully designed to cater to the diverse needs of all enrolled students, including those with disabilities or special requirements. This commitment to inclusivity ensures that every student has an equal opportunity to access a high-quality education and thrive academically. However, despite observing a gradual growth in international mobility following the Covid-19 fall, the HEI efforts in attracting foreign students and lecturers to the institution appear limited. There is a notable scope for improvement in this area to foster greater internationalisation and cross-cultural exchange within the academic community. To achieve a more comprehensive internationalisation strategy, the College should actively seek opportunities to bring in a diverse pool of foreign students and faculty members. By doing so, the institution can create a more inclusive and globally-oriented learning environment, offering unique perspectives and experiences

The adoption of diverse management and document administration software, alongside the utilisation of case studies and situation analysis, has proved to be instrumental in shaping “Office Administration” study programme that prioritises practical skill development. An exemplary instance of practical transformation within the “Sports Management” programme can be found in the establishment of an e-sports auditorium and the deliberate orientation of studies towards the realm of e-sports. This progressive initiative showcases the institution's proactive approach in adapting the programme to contemporary trends and emerging fields, catering to the evolving demands of the sports industry. This strategic choice has garnered positive feedback from multiple stakeholders, including students, employers, and social partners, who recognize the value of emphasising practical competencies in the learning journey. However, it emerged during the meeting with the teaching staff that certain challenges exist in providing concrete examples of case studies and situation analysis utilised in specific subjects. This may necessitate further attention and refinement in articulating and illustrating these methodologies to ensure a consistent understanding and application throughout the study process. Addressing this concern would be instrumental in enhancing the effectiveness of these pedagogical approaches, ultimately reinforcing the institution’s commitment to practical skill development and fostering a robust and cohesive academic experience for all stakeholders involved.

Management study programmes in the College are a good example of how to serve local interests and requirements in 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 in the Kaunas region, so most of the students are locals and have a clear mindset to become an expert in regional employment. However, it also indicates, that the strategy of internationalisation is lacking and the number of subjects. It might create a background for further internationalisation steps – to attract more international students, to wider social partners network, including international companies, and to conduct more international level scientific research and to publish more international high-level publications.

The expert team wishes to thank the HEI, especially the team responsible for the SER for their efforts in preparing the self-evaluation report and organising the site visit. Furthermore, the expert team wishes to thank teachers, members of the administration, students, graduates and social partners for answering all of the questions. The discussions during our site visit were efficient and constructive.

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