



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**

**STUDY FIELD of MEDICINE**

at LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY of HEALTH SCIENCES

**Expert panel:**

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4. **Ms Rasa Zurbaitė**, *representative of social partners;*
5. **Mr Matas Strumila**, *students' representative.*

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Report language – English

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## Study Field Data\*

Title of the study programme	<b>Medicine</b>	<b>Laboratory Medical Biology</b>
State code	601A30002	6211GX004
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	Integrated studies	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies, 6 years	Full-time studies, 2 years
Credit volume	360	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Master of health sciences. Medical doctor	Master of Health Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary or equivalent	Bachelor's or equivalent
Registration date of the study programme	17 August 2009	7 July 2012

*\* if there are **joint** / **two-fields** / **interdisciplinary** study programmes in the study field, please designate it in the foot-note*

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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 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 *Evaluation of Integrated Medical studies* was conducted by the expert panel on 15 and 16 of November 2022.

**Prof. dr. Józef Kobos (panel chairperson)**, *Head of the Department of Pathology of the Pediatric Center, at Medical University Lodz, also Head of the Department of Histology and Embriology at Medical University Lodz (Poland);*

**Prof. dr. Andrea Olschewski**, *Professor of Experimental Anaesthesiology at Medical University of Graz (Austria);*

**Prof. dr. Berent Prakken**, *Professor of Immunology and Pediatrics at the Utrecht Medical Center of Utrecht University, the Vice Dean of education of Utrecht University and Director of the biomedical education institute of Utrecht Medical Center of Utrecht University (The Netherlands);*

**Ms Rasa Zurbaitė**, *General physician at In Medica klinika JSV (Lithuania);*

**Mr Matas Strumila**, *Third year student in the Information Technology study programme at Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania).*

### 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.	FW Information from the University
2.	LSMU S Rep report 2017-2018(1)
3.	LSMU S Rep report 2017-2018(2)
4.	LSMU S Rep report 2017-2018(3)
5.	LSMU S Rep report 2017-2018(4)
6.	Overview of protocols_LSMU
7.	Quality thermometer and study programme surveys

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### 1.4. BACKGROUND OF MEDICINE FIELD STUDIES AT LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LSMU) is the largest higher education institution in the field of biomedical sciences in Lithuania and was established in 2010 through the merger of Kaunas University of Medicine (KMU) and Lithuanian Veterinary Academy (VA). LSMU is a public institution.

LSMU has three main areas of activity – studies, science and clinical activities. The mission, objectives, structure and management are defined in the LSMU Statute. LSMU is collegially governed by the Senate and the Council, and the single governing body – the Rector. The governance of the University is based on the principles of democracy, competence, self-government and efficiency.

LSMU has two main academies, the Medical Academy (MA) and the Veterinary Academy (VA). The MA comprises five faculties: the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Odontology, the Faculty of Pharmacy, the Faculty Public Health and the Faculty of Nursing with 19 study programmes in medicine, pharmacy, odontology, oral hygiene, nursing and obstetrics, rehabilitation, public health and psychology. In the field of medicine, there are two programmes implemented: the integrated study of Medicine and Laboratory Medical Biology (LMB second cycle).

#### ***Second cycle studies***

Graduates of LMB study programme receive a Master's degree in Health Sciences. The relevance of the LMB study programme is based on the fact that laboratory diagnostics is a rapidly developing field of medical diagnostics in which the number of laboratory diagnostic methods and the need for their application in clinical practise, as well as in scientific activity, are constantly increasing. An analogous study programme Medical Biology is offered at Vilnius University.

The last external evaluation of the LMB study programme was conducted in 2016.

### ***Medicine integrated studies***

The purposes of integrated studies is similar to that of Vilnius University, the two Universities are sufficient to meet the demand for doctors in Lithuania. In 2017, LSMU established an Evidence-Based Medicine Centre (EBMC) whose role is to participate in the study process, advise students on research, and develop their competence in evidence-based medicine. The MF participates in many projects that can have a significant impact on society and the economy.

The last external evaluation of the integrated study programme Medicine was carried out in 2013. The Medicine study program was evaluated for the accreditation of the study programme, positively assessed and subsequently accredited for 6 years in 2014. Following the switch from study program to field of study assessment in 2020, medicine studies were considered accredited until the nearest field of study assessment i.e. in 2022.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Medicine* study field and **second cycle** at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences 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	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	5
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	<b>Total:</b>	26

\*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.

Medicine study field and **integrated** studies at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences 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	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	5
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	<b>Total:</b>	27

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

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

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

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

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



## III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

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

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

*3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)*

In the field of medicine two programmes are implemented: Medicine (integrated studies) and Laboratory Medical Biology (LMB) (second cycle).

#### ***Second cycle studies***

The programme aims to train a professional who:

- 1) equipped with 21st century skills (such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication and the ability to work in interdisciplinary teams) as well as
- 2) is a specialist in laboratory medicine and, who can effectively translate knowledge, abilities and skills in clinical and laboratory diagnostics into clinical and laboratory practice;
- 3) is competent to undertake research, education and industry-related activities.

These three objectives are integrated into the study programme (see below). The programme is tailored to the needs of society. The field of laboratory diagnostics is developing rapidly and academic expertise is needed for the application of the rapidly growing number of tests in clinical practise. Societal and labour market needs for the LMB programme are supported by data from the Employment Service of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (ESUMSSL). Overall, the need for LMB professionals is convincingly demonstrated on SER. The relevance of the programme is based on a clear need in society for these academic laboratory professionals. The latter is underlined by the increasing number of vacancies for which these graduates can qualify. Moreover, this programme is considered unique, at least within LSMU. Teacher training is provided by the Centre for Innovative Education. This is done on a voluntary basis; there is currently no mandatory training for teachers.

#### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

The integrated medicine study programme aims at to prepare doctors with professional qualifications, knowledge and skills corresponding to meet the needs of the society.

Society's need for physicians and medical professionals in the labour market (and thus the study programme) is assessed annually by LSMU. LSMU Council annually approves the total number of students admitted, based on the recommendation of the Rector and the Senate. The number of doctors is monitored and planned in the Republic of Lithuania SAM (Ministry of Health), using the data of the Government Strategic Analysis Center (STRATA). This ensures

that the study programme meets the demand for doctors and medical professionals in the Republic of Lithuania.

### *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*

#### ***Second cycle and Medicine integrated studies***

The study programmes are in line with LSMU mission, in which important parts are related to spreading scientific knowledge and the latest achievements in science and studies, as well as to teaching and training a creative, honest, initiative, educated, healthy, independent and business-like personality.

Based on the data provided on SER and the discussions during the site visit, the expert panel concludes that the graduates both of the LMB programme and the integrated Medicine programme are sufficiently trained, and competitive on the (inter)national job market. They have a good command of the English language, both oral and written.

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

#### ***Second cycle studies***

The second cycle full-time LMB study programme consists of 120 ECTS credits over 4 semesters (ECTS credits per semester). The programme fulfils the requirements of the Bologna Qualifications Framework and the Dublin Qualifications Level 2 (cycle), the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework Level 7 (Government Resolution No. 535 of 4 May 2010) Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania, 2008 March 4 Order No. 169 Regarding the Lithuanian Medical Standard MN 68: 2018 “Medical Biologist” Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016 November 16 order no. V-1012; and the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM)<sup>12</sup> and subsequent amendments to these documents for the study structure for specialists in medical biology.

The study programme consists of compulsory study subjects (55 ECTS credits), general subjects of University studies (5 ECTS credits) and elective subjects (15 ECTS credits). A major part of 45 ECTS credits is reserved research work and preparation of master’s thesis. Biochemistry and Hematology studies (including general clinical testing, immunohematology and hemostasis) comprise 50 % (30 credits) of the total study program volume. The contact work envisaged in the program covers 50 percent of the study time, and about 40 percent of the contact hours are practical work.

#### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

As stated in SER, the aim of Medicine study programme is to prepare doctors with modern knowledge, practical skills and appropriate system of personal and professional values, ready

for independent work in the health-care system in accordance with legal requirements and for further specialist training and/or doctoral studies.

The following objectives of the study programmes are formulated to correspond to the Lithuanian qualification levels, to the general and specific learning outcomes specified in the description of the Medicine Study Field, approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania; knowledge, skills and values that fall within the competence of the “Medical Doctor” (Lithuanian Medical Standard MN7:1995 and MN 7:202222 iv); minimum requirements for the training of doctors established by Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications; order No ISAK-480/V-210 “On minimum standards for training medical doctors, dental practitioners, nurses that provide general care, midwives and pharmacists of 11 April 2003 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania and of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania. The general workload of student is 60 ECTS credits per year (30 credits per semester). The ratio of contact hours and individual work is similar in all years, except year 6, when individual work increases by 60 per cent.

For both study programmes the plans and curriculum design were presented and discussed during the site visit. This allowed the expert panel to conclude that both programmes comply with the legal requirements. Moreover, that the scope of both programmes is sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

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

##### ***Second cycle studies***

The LMB study programme prepares laboratory specialists (medical biologists) who can provide a between the laboratory and clinical practice based on these objectives, learning outcomes are defined (see Annex 1 of the SER) and teaching and learning methodology is developed based on them (See Annex 3). These outcomes are not only knowledge based but also skill – based including the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills mentioned earlier. After reviewing the materials and after the site visit the expert panel concludes that the chosen methodology (which uses different learning and teaching approaches) fits well with the intended learning outcomes.

##### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

The Medicine study programme at the LSMU aims to prepare of doctors according to the professional qualifications, knowledge and skills corresponding to the needs of the society. The international (English) program also hopes to meet the increasing demand for doctors in countries “unable to provide qualified medical education for all citizens willing and able to study medicine themselves”. The facilities for both students and teachers are improved significantly, and are in line with the intended outcomes of the curriculum. The expert panel notes that the learning methodology used (Mixed methods & problem based) is well chosen and in line with the intended learning outcomes.

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

#### ***Second cycle studies***

The Master of Health Medical Biology of LSMU aims to educate an academic professional in the field of laboratory medicine with complementary skills (such as critical thinking, communication, and interdisciplinary team skills) who is able to translate the acquired knowledge, abilities, and skills into practice in the area of clinical laboratory diagnostics and to carry out research, education, and industry-related activities. In the programme, the coherence of subjects taught and their correlations allow the students to acquire the knowledge and skills required to achieve the LMB study programme's aims.

The study programme takes into account the fact that students start their studies with different levels of undergraduate education – studies in Biology, Genetics, Microbiology, Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry, Chemistry, Medicine and Health, Public Health or Nursing. Based on the recommendations of the previous evaluation specific improvements in the curriculum were made to improve scientific research and independent work. These recommendations include (but are not limited to) a more consequent use of problem-based learning, improvement in evaluations, assessment, simulations and a higher scientific standard for the Master Thesis.

The expert panel has therefore assessed that the quality and coherence of the entire programme is ensured.

#### ***Medicine integrated studies***

The programme aims to train medical doctors that can handle the broad challenges from 21<sup>st</sup> century medicine. To ensure this a programme was set up that not only to transfer knowledge but also to develop additional competencies and skills that a modern medical doctor needs to be successful. The current programme is coherent in terms of achieving these intended learning outcomes. For example, the learning subjects are presented from simple to more complicated and the programme start with basic subjects in the first years followed later by more complex integrated problem-based learning. Similarly, learning of practical skills is implemented – from simulation to the real clinical environment, from simple actions to complicated manipulations and clinical situations. The facilities for both students and teachers are improved significantly, and are in line with the intended outcomes of the curriculum. Most impressive is the establishment of a simulation and training center with the newest up-to-date technologies. The expert panel was thus fully convinced of the quality and the coherence of the entire programme is guaranteed.

### *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*

#### ***Second cycle studies***

To ensure flexibility, LMB students are free to choose subjects from the list of elective subjects offered, and to choose the topic of the final thesis, and the location of the related research work. In addition, they can choose additional practical training, and thus individualise their studies. These opportunities are indeed available, but mostly only on paper, as most students combine their studies with a part-time job. The resulting combined workload (both studying and another day job) is a great burden for the students. Students express that they start studying with enthusiasm but quickly lose motivation due to the pressure and time constraints. The expert panel concludes that while the programme offers flexibility for students, factors outside the control of the programme prevent students from making the most of this flexibility.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

The program aims to prepare doctors with “modern knowledge, practical skills and developed appropriate system of personal and professional values”. Especially with regard to the latter, further improvements are still possible and necessary, although there are some notable positive initiatives. There is still a need for more structural training in complementary skills such as stress management, resilience, teamwork and feedback. The establishment of a simulation and training centre with the latest technologies is particularly impressive. Facilities for students and teachers have been significantly improved and are in line with the intended curriculum outcomes.

The previous 2014 evaluation recommended that the programme be expanded to include scientific research and independent work. It made specific recommendations to improve the quality of the programme and the curriculum. These recommendations included more consequent use of problem-based learning, improved evaluations, assessments, simulations and a higher scientific standard for the Master Thesis.

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

### ***Second cycle studies***

The final thesis aims to help students to develop their research skills during the full trajectory from starting a research project up to finally writing the thesis. The students can choose the department for their mandatory and additional practical trainings and final thesis preparation individually. The student can choose departments for practical training and final thesis preparation are the sufficiently equipped technical bases with all necessary equipment, devices, tools, and supplies to ensure achieving the intended LMB study outcomes. The expert panel notices that there is some room for improvement at two level; more time and effort for the implementation of the on paper already well-structured mentor programme and more truly independent research laboratory work.

Thus, as outlined in the SER and confirmed at the site visit students the set up and support for the final thesis is compliant with the field and study requirements.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

Students are guided in choosing a subject for their thesis and get guidance while performing their thesis. Though they are free in choosing a subject it needs to be in the field of biomedicine. Final thesis topics are proposed in May of each year by the departments participating in the programme. The compatibility of the topics with the medical field is assessed in the discussions at the department, which suggested them. The list of topics is announced for the 4th year students and at the beginning of the 9th semester, students choose the final thesis topic. The final thesis must have elements of practical scientific work, and reflect personal investigations by the student. There is an on paper a strong structured mentor programme, that however can be improved in the practical implementation, both in depth and time allocated for it. Consequently, in practice the students do not always feel that they are scientifically optimal challenged and supported to reach for a higher scientific level. Also, doing more practical lab work by themselves work could improve the scientific depth of the final thesis.

The expert panel concludes that the final theses are compliant with the field and cycle requirements.

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

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

1. Simulation and training center with the latest technologies (Integrated Medicine)
2. Excellent laboratory facilities (Second Cycle and Integrated Medicine)
3. Strong commitment of staff and leadership to training and education (Second Cycle and Integrated Medicine)

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

1. Limited opportunities to carry out research projects. There is still little time available for students to do truly "independent" laboratory work for their academic work, as the majority of students focus their research on analysing data. (Second Cycle and Integrated Medicine)
2. Implementation of the mentoring programme for final theses (Second Cycle and Integrated Medicine)
3. Students start their studies enthusiastically but quickly lose their motivation due to the pressure and time constraints (Second Cycle)
4. A serious problem is the combined workload (both studying and, often, another day job) (Second Cycle).

## **3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES**

***Links between science (art) and study activities shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:***

### ***3.2.1. Evaluation of the sufficiency of the science (applied science, art) activities implemented by the HEI for the field of research (art) related to the field of study***

The LSMU has made a strong concerted effort to develop and improve their scientific expertise in the field of Biomedicine. Also, they have reached out and established more relationships to collaborate with established national and international partners in science and research. This has led to noticeable improvement, for example in number and quality of publications in relevant scientific journals. Data that support this are extensively given in the SER.

The improvement of the scientific standing has positive effects on the quality of both Study Programmes, as can be seen for example in the academic quality of the Master thesis. The Master thesis is now being written in the format of a scientific paper with specific guidelines. Overall, the expert panel concludes that the scientific climate at LSMU meets the required standards.

### *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 content of the field study programme and the latest developments in science, arts and technology is substantiated by data given in the SER and through information provided during the site visit. There is more impactful research at LSMU. In order to improve quality and impact of their research students are encouraged to find topics that fit these research lines. There are also excellent laboratory and research facilities available to students at LSMU (for both integrated medicine and second cycle).

Improvements are still be made to increase the scientific depth of the program. LSMU is not yet involved in the new developments surrounding the international Open Science movement. Getting involved in this could be beneficial both for LSMU's scientific development and the scientific growth of the students.

For the next step in deepening the scientific grounding of the program more personal support and scientific challenges could be provided to students in structural support e.g. for how to define a valid research question, and more in depth support for scientific reasoning. This could for example be done in the form of the implementation of structured mentor/tutor system to support students in their scientific development.

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

With the improved (and still improving) scientific climate at LSMU offers students more and better opportunities for independent research. The methods and numbers of student involvement in scientific (applied research, art) activities are provided. As stated above a clear strength of the program is the excellent infrastructure with, new specialized laboratories and competent specialists in the study with the relevant expertise. Students are free to choose subjects from the list of elective subjects offered, freely and choose the topic of the final thesis, as well as the location for related research work. They can choose additional practical training on their will, and thus individualize their studies. For LMB students the combination with often another paid job next to their studies is limiting, and stressful. There is no structural training in the complementary (21<sup>st</sup> century) skills that are important for today's (bio) medical scientists and doctors.

Another strength of the programme is the excellent infrastructure with departments and clinics, as well as laboratories and competent teaching staff in various medical disciplines. There are meetings, social actions or workshops held each year on various topics.

Thus the conditions for students to get involved in scientific work are good, and could be improved ever further by adding a structured mentor system to guide the students in their scientific development.

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

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

1. The excellent infrastructure with, new specialized laboratories and competent specialists in the study with the relevant expertise.

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

1. Implementation and deepening of a strong and structured mentor/tutor system to support students in their scientific development and challenge them to take the next step to deepen their scientific grounding
2. Still the need remains for more structural training in complementary skills such as stress management, resilience, teamwork skills, feedback.

## **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***

#### ***Second cycle studies***

General admission is organized and coordinated by the Association of Lithuanian higher education institutions for general admission, which is authorized by the Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania after revision and approval by the Senate of the Lithuanian University of Health Science (LSMU). Selection and admission of the students is well organized on the basis of transparent legal and institutional guidelines. The admission rules are reviewed and improved annually and the competition is open to all entrants with the required documented education. The LSMU Council, at the proposal of the deans, annually approves the total number of students planned to be admitted to the LMB programme. As it was stated in the SER, the completion of undergraduate studies in biology, genetics, microbiology, molecular biology, biophysics and biochemistry, chemistry, medicine and health, public health (excluding food safety in veterinary medicine), or a bachelor's degree in nursing (or equivalent) is required for admission to this programme.

As it is given in the SER the competitive score is the main criterion for admission to the Laboratory Medical Biology programme. From 2018 to 2020y 82 students applied to LSMU Laboratory Medical Biology programme as their first priority and the total number of applicants accounts 94. The number of candidates applying for the second cycle study decreased from 41(2018) to 22(2019) and 25(2020). The highest entrance score of students of the Laboratory Medical Biology was 8.64(2018) SF (state funded place) students and the lowest 4.49(2019) SNF(not funded by the state place), average from 7.70(2020) to 7.54(2018).



At the FM, there is also a system for the recognition of foreign educational qualifications and a system for the assessment and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. However, there were no such cases under the LMB programme.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

Selection of the students takes place according to legal and institutional standards as described in the self-evaluation report. Also, the evaluation and the recognition of qualifications acquired at the universities abroad are performed in compliance with set legal and institutional regulations. The main selection criterion for admission to the Medicine programme is a competitive score, and the rules are published two years in advance. The competitive score is calculated on the basis of the scores awarded in maturity examinations or annual aggregate grades in biology, Lithuanian language and literature, chemistry or mathematics. The University has the right to set a higher minimum competitive score. As in the LMB, the competitive score is the main criterion for admission to the Medicine integrated programme.

From 2018 to 2020, 2656 students applied to LSMU Medicine integrated programme as their first priority and 3870 students as other priorities. Despite the fact that Medicine programme remains in the top ten of the most popular study programmes in Lithuania, the number of applicants decreased from 2694 in 2018 to 1706 in 2020. By the order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, the lowest competitive score is set annually (in 2018 it was 3,6, in 2020 and 2021 - 5.4). The competitive score for the Medical Programme was increased by the resolution of the LSMU Senate in 2018 - to 6.0 in 2019 and in 2020 - up to 7.0 points. The highest entrance score of students of the LSMU Medicine integrated programme was 12.26 (2019) and the lowest 7.06 (2019) SNF, average from 8.81 (2020) to 8.68 (2018).

Information about study programmes, their content, study plan, admission rules, tuition fees, competitive score calculations, competitive modules, admission results, the descriptions of the Faculty departments, and related contact information are posted on the website. The candidates may acquire this information at the LSMU Career Center by phone or e-mail. Information on the admission procedure is available under the "Admissions" section of the University website as is information on events organized at higher education fairs, via social networks as well as webinars by theme. In place at the FM is also a system for the recognition of foreign education for this programme.

Generally, the admission system for Medicine Integrated and Laboratory Medical Biology at the LSMU is transparent and clearly defined as well as it is in line with the University and State regulations.

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

#### ***Second cycle studies***

The evaluation and recognition of qualifications acquired at the Universities abroad are performed in compliance with set legal and institutional regulations. The evaluation and recognition of the qualifications and part-time studies acquired abroad are performed following the Provisions of the LSMU SR (2019) and the document on the Procedure for the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications and the Quality Assurance System for Decision-Making. The recognition of the study results of part-time students who have studied abroad through the international exchange programmes at the international HEIs is carried out in accordance with the LSMU SR (2019) provisions.

No applications for the assessment and recognition of students' training and qualifications acquired abroad have been submitted for the LMB study programme.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

The evaluation and the recognition of qualifications acquired at the Universities abroad are performed in compliance with the government order and the order of Minister of Education, Science and Sport of 14-03-2016 No V-185. The assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications is guided by the general principles and assessment and recognition criteria established by the LSMU. As it was stated in the SER, the credits for partial studies are awarded in accordance with the LSMU Study Regulations and the LSMU Procedure "Procedure for the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications and the Quality Assurance System for Decision-Making", prepared in accordance with the SQEC methodology. Thus, there is a procedure approved by the LSMU Senate for the assessment and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. There were no such cases at the Faculty of Medicine during the period under review.

In general, the review panel considers the assessment of the procedure for the recognition of foreign qualifications, partial degree programmes and previous non-formal and informal learning experiences and its application to be clear, but this procedure was not applied in the degree programmes evaluated.

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

#### ***Second cycle studies***

LSMU students have equal opportunities to participate in international mobility programs and projects (Erasmus+, etc.) and leave for 3-12 months during the study period to the HEIs, which have signed the inter-institutional agreements with LSMU, in Europe or worldwide, and/or for 2-12 months - for practical training at chosen foreign institutions.

Between 2018/2019 – 2020/2021, there was no LMB study programme in EN at LSMU and there were no *Erasmus+* partner and/or student exchange visits for partial studies, which are based on mutual exchange. The expert team stated that during the evaluation period, there were no LMB students who went abroad for partial studies and there were no international students who came for relevant partial or full-time studies at LSMU. Although student visits for

practical training are available under the Erasmus+ programme, no students of the LMB study programme were interested in such activity. The main reason for this situation is limited mobility of students as about 2/3 of them are already employed during their studies.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

Good conditions for the academic mobility of students are ensured. The information about mobility programmes is available in the LSMU weekly newspaper "Ave Vita". Moreover, a 2 day Erasmus Days information event is organised annually. LSMU students have equal opportunities to participate in international mobility programmes and projects (Erasmus+, etc.) and leave for 3-12 months during the study period to the HEIs, which have signed the inter-institutional agreements with LSMU, in Europe or worldwide, and/or for 2-12 months - for practical training at chosen foreign institutions. The international student organization IFSMA is involved, and, importantly the students feel supported by the LSMU as far as exchanges are concerned as they receive assistance from the vice dean. Medicine programme students comprised 50-58 per cent of all students who went for partial studies at foreign universities and the most popular countries for all Erasmus + part-time students were Turkey, the Czech Republic and Italy. Also, Erasmus + program plays an important role in exchanges with Israel in the 4-5th year. Students value Erasmus+ internships as a means to get to know the labor market, to plan study and recognize professional opportunities abroad. Medical students are interested to go for partial studies in other countries. The most popular duration is the minimum duration of the internship - 2 months. Most of the students went to Germany, which actively invites students, often providing them with additional funding. From 2018 to 2021y 117 student of the Medicine integrated went for partial studies abroad and 202 students went for practical training abroad under the Erasmus+ programme and above 523 students from foreign countries were admitted to the LSMU Medicine for the full medicine studies. The number of foreign students in Medicine in comparison to the total student's number of the study programme for particular years looks like: 2443/688 (2028), 2464/762(2019) and 2509/862(2020).

In conclusion, the academic mobility of LMB students is limited mainly because most of them are employed during their studies. The academic mobility of students in the integrated medicine programme is a strength of the programme and very effective.

### *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*

#### ***Second cycle studies***

LMB Study Programme Committee (SPC) and Study Information System (SIS) introduce to the study program, organize meetings with students (two times per year), conducts surveys, improve the LMB study program, and address other issues related to academic activities. LMB students can receive various types of financial support and scholarships given by the State as well as by the University, for example incentive scholarships, one-time incentive scholarships and nominal scholarships. Social support is provided for students with disabilities and special

needs. Moreover, it is possible to apply for financial aid for children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of migrant internationals and those with Lithuanian origin. Orphaned students from large and low-income families may be eligible for a tuition fee reduction and compensation. The LSMU students have an opportunity to receive psychological support from experienced psychologists. LSMU has also implemented the project Mentors, in which senior students of all study programmes help first-year students to cope with any arising academic and/or social problems, teach how to use information systems, and help with managing study time. The LSMU Sports Center is also open to all students.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

Excellent study facilities for the students are available and there is some recognition of the social pressure the students are coping with. In general, the relationship with the faculty is described as positive. The students of the Medical integrated programme have the same financial, social and psychological support as it was described for LMB students. As it is stated in the SER students usually receive a psychologist's consultation no later than 2 weeks after the application, and in urgent crisis cases - on the same day. During the evaluated three years incentive scholarship was awarded to 1241, onetime incentive scholarship to 618, reduction of the tuition to 233, financial support to participation in conferences, sort events and other to 60 students and also support for students with disabilities to 34 persons. Students may also apply for study loans which are administered by the State Study Fund in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Granting, Administration and Repayment of State-Supported Student Loans). As it was given in the SER students note that the *Erasmus+* scholarship covers about 70-80 percent of student's living and other additional costs incurred in a foreign country.

Students in this curriculum feel cared for through frequent informal contact with teachers. This is clearly a strength of the program. In general, students in both programmes receive academic, financial, social and psychological support from the university, but they do not feel entirely comfortable giving and receiving feedback.

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

### ***Second cycle studies***

Detailed information about the study aims and the objectives of subjects is provided in subject descriptions, published and periodically updated in the LSMU SIS. Students get information and support from the administration and teachers. During the site visit, the expert team stated that students profit from excellent research and study facilities at LSMU and get support from generally well-trained and encouraging faculty. However, stress levels among students are high and students are under a lot of pressure, including the financial constraints they face. As a result, students state that they start their studies well motivated and inspired, but quickly lose both inspiration and motivation due to this high pressure.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

Detailed information about the study aims and the objectives of subjects is provided in subject descriptions, published and periodically updated in the LSMU SIS as it was described for LMB programme. For incoming international exchange students before the beginning of the semester, International Relations and Study Centre (IRSC) together with a group of mentors organizes an introductory event explaining academic activities, social services as well as cultural, social and student-initiated activities. There is a special activity called “Introduction to the Profession” for first-year students designed to familiarize them with the structure of the university, information system, library and information search in databases. During the event, students perform practical tasks.

During the site visit, the expert team noticed that there is no structural tutoring system. Students indicated that there is also no structural training in soft skills such as communication (this is now mostly offered as an elective). Similarly, there is no structural training in the prevention of psychological problems such as a resilience training. Students can receive psychological support from experienced psychologists if needed.

In general, students feel supported by the teaching staff and are mostly free to express their worries and stress. However, there are still a (decreasing) number of senior teachers who say that they do not care about psychological/mental problems.

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

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

1. Students profit from excellent research and study facilities at LSMU
2. Students of Medicine integrated programme feel that they are mentored through frequent informal contact with the teachers.

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

1. Stress levels among students of the second cycle studies are high and the students are under high pressure.

## **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*

### ***Second cycle studies***

The LMB study programme is a full-time, face-to-face degree programme. From the autumn 2020, the studies are organized in a mixed way: remote theoretical distance lectures and

seminars and practical classes in direct contact. The subjects of the LMB program are continuously improved in accordance with the LMB programme development, improvement, and management procedure and the LSMU subject description procedure. Various learning methods are used in the LMB study programme: work in groups, individual work, discussion, seminar, practical work, presentations, traditional lecture, interactive lecture, laboratory work, demonstration, consulting, error analysis, etc. The assessment methods are effective and encourage the students to actively engage in the study process throughout the academic year, obtained grades during intermediate assessments form a cumulative/summative grade. Assessments of completed tasks have feedback: in the task assessment window (Moodle or MS Teams) student can see the lecturer's remarks/notes/comments, and the assessment/grade. If the students' individual work/assignment was assessed during the group class, he/she still can discuss mistakes and/or weak points individually with the lecturer. The LMS program's effective assessment methods are based on clear criteria and subject descriptions, with both summative and intermediate assessments, significant individual work, feedback, and opportunities for appeals. These encourage engagement, ensure learning outcomes, and support continuous improvement. In the study program, individual work constitutes a substantial portion, between 30 to 50 percent, of the study program's work volume. Contact work accounts for 50 percent, with practical work making up at least 40 percent of contact hours.

The LMB study programme complies with the Provisions of the Bologna Agreement; its implementation provides graduates with opportunities for further study, training, and professional advancement. Students who have completed the LMB study program have even the option of pursuing a third cycle education.

The teaching and learning process seems to be work well. Students, lecturers, and management staff are all involved in assessing study achievements.

### ***Medicine integrated studies***

Methods used to teach practical skills in the LMS programme include hands-on training in laboratory settings, case studies, and simulations. The programme also emphasises the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge.

Performance assessment methods in the LMS programme include both summative and formative assessments, with grades based on exams, assignments, projects, and individual work. Feedback is provided to students through individual comments and notes from lecturers, and students have the opportunity to discuss their mistakes and weaknesses with teachers.

The amount of independent work required in the programme is significant, with between 30-50% of a student's working time devoted to individual work. This work is assigned by teachers and can be completed individually or in groups. Evaluations of completed tasks include feedback from teachers and are accounted for in the cumulative/summative grade.

The LMS programme also offers internships that provide hands-on training in specific areas of laboratory medicine. These studies are assessed through practical assessments and examinations.

SER states that LSMU medical study programs are full-time and conducted in direct contact with students. Studies were transferred into a distant e-learning virtual environment during the quarantine in the spring semester of 2019. As a result of the pandemic, the university faced a challenge, making it more difficult to ensure practical skills are learned and assessments are conducted promptly. Lectures, seminars, and tutorials, innovative learning solutions were also developed for practical tasks, visual and audio training materials, virtual patients, and mobile applications (e.g. InSimu).

In LSMU, students are encouraged to participate actively in the study process from the beginning of their studies. A doctor's studies begin with the "Introduction to the Profession", during which the organization of studies is taught, learning methodologies, University resources, the system of study organization and regulation, and general skills required (leadership, teamwork, situational awareness, effective communication, etc.). Learning is problem-based, students apply logic, understanding, practical cognition, and independent research. At the fourth year, studies are structured by analysing the most common clinical cases and discussing solutions. The course on the organization of research work, which is offered in the third year of studies, provides students with the basic knowledge and skills required for the final research work in courses 4 and 5 (SER p. 31).

A previous evaluation pointed out that too little time was spend teaching clinical skills in medical simulations and that the infrastructure was inadequate. In view of this, LSMU has developed a stand-alone hybrid medical simulation program for students using a Hybrid Lab platform that can be supervised by a teacher/instructor remotely. Hybridlab simulation classes account for approximately 90,000 hours per year for students in the medicine program.

The program incorporates a variety of teaching and learning methods to engage all learners and keep them up to date. The needs of students are taken into account. With new equipment and a student-oriented environment, medical education facility offers excellent resources to support student learning.

Overall, it seems that the LMB and LMS programs are well-designed and provide students with a variety of learning opportunities. To achieve a perfect score, the university could continue to evaluate and improve upon areas where there may be room for growth, particularly in light of the past pandemic and changing educational landscape, it is suggested that the university evaluate whether virtual solutions are effective in providing students with necessary skills and knowledge.

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

## ***Second cycle studies***

LSMU has several general internal procedures that apply to all students, regardless of their field of study. These include regulations on the study process, assessment of student achievements, and academic integrity. The University also has policies in place for handling academic disputes and grievances.

In terms of ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs, LSMU has a dedicated Office for Social Affairs, which provides support and assistance to students who face social or economic difficulties. The office can help students with financial aid, finding housing, and accessing healthcare services.

LSMU also has a Center for Students with Disabilities, which provides support and assistance to students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities. The center works with students to develop individualized plans for accommodations, which may include adjustments to the physical environment, assistive technology, or modifications to the curriculum.

Overall, LSMU strives to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their background or abilities. The University is committed to ensuring that all students have access to the resources and support they need to succeed in their studies.

SER states that various assistance measures are provided for students belonging to socially vulnerable groups, which include alternative assessment methods, the adaptation of buildings and equipment, financial support, psychological assistance. For the disabled, there is facilitating moving/lifting equipment and special lifts in the University buildings and dormitories. Various compensatory measures available in libraries and several departments are for people with hearing impairments.

There are a variety of University facilities for students with disabilities. Psychological counselling is available for the emotional support of students with special needs.

## ***Medicine integrated studies***

For students with special educational needs, the LSMU Disability Student Coordination Commission oversees the study process. Students with special needs can be accommodated in adapted University dormitories. Psychological counselling is available if needed. Targeted benefits are paid to students with disabilities. A variety of compensatory technical measures are purchased for students with disabilities, including furniture and equipment to create specialized workstations. There are elevators and lifts in buildings for those with mobility impairments, compensatory equipment for the hearing impaired.

A big range of University facilities are available for students with disabilities. Psychological counselling is available to provide emotional support to students with special needs. In addition, it would be beneficial to find the ways to identify vulnerable groups and those with



special needs and more actively encourage the students from these groups to apply for the programs. Even search for possibilities to provide additional financial support for those in need (e.g., involving social partners).

Based on information provided in SER, it appears that the LSMU places a strong emphasis on providing support and resources to help students succeed in their studies and feel integrated into the academic community.

Regarding access to studies, detailed information about the aims and objectives of each study subject is provided in subject descriptions that are periodically updated in the LSMU Student Information System (SIS). Additionally, introductory seminars or lectures are included in the scope of each subject taught, and students have access to the virtual learning environment Moodle as well as collaboration and virtual meeting tools such as Microsoft Teams and Blue Button. This suggests that there are multiple avenues for students to access the necessary information to succeed in their studies.

Regarding individualised study processes, the Mentors project, which involves senior students volunteering to help first-year students with academic and social problems, is an example of the LSMU's efforts to provide individualized support to students. The mentors help ensure the smoother integration of first-year students into their studies, coordinate a consistent course of studies, and create conditions for students to develop and strengthen their abilities. This suggests that there are resources and programs in place to support students' individual needs and help them achieve their academic goals.

Regarding integration into the academic community, the Mentors project is also an example of the LSMU's efforts to involve students in University activities and develop their social and communication skills. In addition, the administrative team is divided into four working groups (attributes, training, acceptance, and promotion) to help promote student involvement in University life. Furthermore, the information obtained from various sources such as student meetings, surveys, and communication with lecturers is used to improve the study programs, which suggests that the LSMU is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Overall, the information provided suggests that the LSMU places a strong emphasis on providing support and resources to help students succeed in their studies and feel integrated into the academic community. There are multiple opportunities for students to obtain the information they need to be successful in their studies, resources and programmes to support students' individual needs, and efforts to engage students in University activities and develop their social and communication skills.

Based on the information available on the LSMU website, LSMU offers various scholarship programs to its students, including scholarships for studies and research abroad and scholarships for outstanding academic achievement. The University also provides financial assistance to students who face financial difficulties or have special needs. However, the

specific scholarship programs and eligibility criteria may vary depending on the student's field of study, level of study, and other factors.

Access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs is positively evaluated, but the university could improve by actively identifying vulnerable groups, providing additional financial support, and providing more detailed information on scholarship programs and eligibility criteria.

### *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*

#### ***Second cycle studies***

SER reports that students' achievements are assessed by the study programme in a practical and transparent manner, their progress in their studies is continuously monitored, and academic integrity is maintained. LSMU Study Regulation(s) (SR) (2019) and module assessment strategy can be revised or changed before the beginning of the subject study, based on the provisions of the SR. LSMU assesses and monitors students' learning outcomes and study progress at different levels: in the module coordinating department (continuously), at the LMB Study Program Committee (SPC) (twice annually), and at the annual meetings of the MF Dean, the MF Council, and the LSMU Rectorate.

A procedure has been established by LSMU for providing and evaluating feedback to its LMB students at various levels, including lecturer-student, student, and University levels. Several formative assessment methods are used to evaluate practical and social skills (problem-solving in problem-based learning studies, internships, etc.) in study programs that emphasize these skills. According to (LSMU SR (2019)).

During the site visit, students and staff mentioned that lecturers are always personally available to students with questions about their studies. Students expressed a desire to receive feedback after completing the written survey forms and giving their feedback on the subject.

#### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

SER reports that the LSMU Study Regulations ensure a practical and transparent system of assessing student achievements, monitoring student progress, and maintaining academic integrity. Directly or remotely, teachers provide feedback. Formative assessment is used in the study program, where practical and social skills (problem solving, practices, etc.) are important (teacher-group-person assessment, 360-degree assessment, etc.) to assess general skills. Feedback is also provided to students by the SPC, the Dean, coordinating lecturers as well as the delegated students at the annual meetings. The Dean's Office analyses reasons for students dropping out, and students respond to questionnaires regarding their reasons and future study intentions.

As far as monitoring of study progress is concerned, the system appears to be effective, and the problematic aspects are analysed.

For monitoring and feedback systems, the university is recommended to provide more detailed guidelines for lecturers on how to give effective feedback, further develop a system for anonymous feedback from students, and conduct more frequent evaluations of the effectiveness of the system.

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

##### ***Second cycle studies***

SER states that statistically, graduates of the LMB programme are highly sought after by society and the labour market, and the master's degree in health sciences and the medical biologist qualification obtained at the University guarantee employment in health care laboratories, as well as other broad professional opportunities in research, educational institutions, and industry.

Data of the HEI and the Government's Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA) on graduate employment 12 months after graduation are provided by the level of qualification attained: according to objective career monitoring, data are obtained from state information systems, state or departmental registers, the Centre for Strategic Analysis of the Government, and the Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania. Employment of medicine program graduates within 12 months after graduation is high according to the acquired qualification level.

Information on the opinion of the graduates and the employers on the vocational training of the graduates and the competences acquired following the studies. Of the 221 respondents who completed medical studies in 2020 and 2021, 83.7% indicated that the knowledge and skills acquired during studies are in demand in the labour market, and 71.9% assessed that the quality of teaching was of a high standard and were generally satisfied with the studies. LSMU Career Center conducts surveys of employers at least every 3 years, and in the 2018 survey, the readiness of the graduates of the medical study program to work independently was assessed at 6.44, the performance of work and the ability to organize work - 6.92 points.

In 2019, 9 Lithuanian graduates and 53 foreign graduates received certificates of compliance with Directive 2005/36/EC. In 2020, 15 graduates declared their departure abroad, and in 2019, 14 graduates did so. Some graduates work while studying in residency, and in some cases, graduates register with the employment service to receive social guarantees before leaving for work or study abroad.

Based on the information provided in SER, the employment rate of second cycle LSMU graduates 12 months after graduation is high, ranging from 90-100% depending on the acquired qualification level. A small percentage of graduates combined work with further studies. It is also worth noting that graduates from 2018-2020 were not registered in the ESUMSSL six months after graduation.

To improve University study programs and the employment opportunities for graduates, the LSMU Career Center conducted a survey of employers and graduates in Laboratory Medical Biology. The results showed that all employers surveyed were satisfied with the training provided, and graduates' knowledge and skills acquired during their studies were in demand in the labor market. However, both employers and graduates indicated that more internships could be included in the program.

Graduates and social partners are in close contact. Employers' interest in hiring graduates is high. Some of the students have permanent employment in labs and combine work and studies.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

Each graduate participates in four surveys as part of the Senate-approved Procedure for improving feedback studies. LSMU Career Center surveys employers every three years. The 2018 and 2021 surveys demonstrate that the preparation of graduates of the medicine study program is improving and meeting employers' expectations. The plan is to focus on the surveys for heads of residency programs - and assess the professional qualities of the graduates only during their first months at work.

In order to prepare for the future, it might be beneficial to emphasize cooperation not only with University clinics, but also with other public and private health care institutions. Their feedback and needs analysis could have a positive impact on the design of study programs and the required number of students.

Overall, it appears that graduates of LSMU's Medicine Integrated Studies and Second Cycle Studies are well-prepared for careers in their respective fields and have good employment prospects. The University's efforts to track the career outcomes of its graduates suggest a commitment to ensuring that its educational programs are relevant and effective in preparing students for their future careers.

Employability of graduates is generally positive, but it is suggested that the university provide more detailed information on the job placements and salaries of graduates beyond the 12-month mark, gather more feedback from graduates and employers on the quality of education and training provided, incorporate more internships into the program, and emphasize more cooperation with other healthcare institutions.

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

Based on the information provided in SER, both the **Medicine integrative** studies program and the **LMB program** at LSMU adhere to the principles of academic ethics, tolerance, and non-discrimination. The University has established policies and regulations to prevent harassment, discrimination, and violence and has implemented measures to ensure equal opportunities for all community members, including those with disabilities and special needs.

Students in both programs sign a pledge of academic honesty before each assessment, and teachers adhere to principles of maximum impartiality and privacy when assessing student work. In cases of academic dishonesty, the University has established procedures to investigate and impose penalties.

The University fosters a sense of community and mutual respect, and reports of ethical violations, intolerance, and discrimination can be submitted to the dean of the relevant faculty.

There have been cases of violation of teacher ethics and academic dishonesty, and the University has taken action in response to such cases. However, in the last three academic years, there have been no cases of students being expelled due to dishonest behaviour or breaches of academic integrity and principles of tolerance or non-discrimination in the LMB program.

### ***Second cycle studies***

Academic and support staff adhere to the LSMU Code of Academic Ethics. As stated in the LSMU SR (2019), lecturers follow maximum impartiality and privacy when assessing students' study results achievements. A detailed description of the procedures for academic dishonesty during an examination is also provided in the LSMU SR (2019).

LR Law on Equal Opportunity and Rules for Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Abuse, Persecutory Actions and Violence are followed by the department conducting the LMB studies. According to SER, there were no complaints pertaining to academic integrity, tolerance, or non-discrimination in the period of 2018/2019 - 2020/2021.

Policies that promote academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are likely to be successful.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

The principles of academic honesty, tolerance and non-discrimination are outlined in the LSMU Code of Academic Ethics, in the Rules for the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Persecution and Violence at LSMU, and in the Study Regulations. As part of the LSMU Rector's Order in 2021, the Equal Opportunities Policy Implementation and Enforcement Program and the Gender Equality Plan were approved. The University strives to foster a sense of community, respect, and tolerance among its members. Assessments, evaluations, evaluation observers, and other members of the University community may report ethical violations, intolerance, and discrimination to the dean of the MF. The Rules for the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Persecution and Violence at LSMU provide an option to submit an anonymous opinion on violations of teacher ethics, bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

The policy ensuring academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination is well-developed and regulated through University procedures.

Promotion of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination is evaluated positively, but it is recommended to provide regular training and education on these principles, conduct periodic assessments of the policies and procedures in place, implement a system for anonymous reporting of violations, and expand policies to include specific guidelines for addressing discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.

#### *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*

##### ***Second cycle studies***

According to SER, complete description of how appeals and complaints are handled during the study and case investigation processes can be found in the LSMU SR (2019) and the Regulations for the LMB MT.

As there have been no complaints or appeals from the LMB students in the last three years, it is difficult to judge efficiency. (SER p. 35)

##### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

Both the **Integrated Studies program** in LSMU and **LMB** have regulations for submitting appeals or complaints regarding the study process and assessments. The LSMU Study Regulations and Regulation for the LMB MT state the procedures for submitting appeals or complaints. In both programs, if students disagree with the assessment of their studies or the assessment procedures, they have the right to appeal.

There are some differences between the two programs regarding the process of appeals and complaints. In the Integrated Studies program in LSMU, students delegated by the Student Union always participate in the Board of Appeal, and decisions of the Board may be appealed to the LSMU Dispute Resolution Commission with administration and other staff. In 2018, Medicine students submitted 4 complaints about the study process. The complaints were considered by the SPC and the Dean's Office, and proposals for improving the quality of studies were given to the departments, changes were made in the study plan and course unit descriptions.

On the other hand, in the LMB program, there have been no complaints or appeals against the assessments of studies during the last three years. The Regulation for the LMB MT outlines the procedures for submitting appeals or complaints regarding the study process and case investigation.

Overall, both the Integrated Studies programme in LSMU and the LMB programme have regulations for lodging appeals or complaints regarding the course of study and assessments. However, the procedures for appeals and complaints as well as the number of complaints or appeals differ between the two degree programmes.

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

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

1. A big range of University facilities are available for students with disabilities.
2. Graduates and social partners closely communicate. There is a strong interest hiring graduates among employers

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

There are no weaknesses.

## **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*

#### ***Second cycle studies***

All the staff the visiting team met, whether academic, clinical or administrative, were motivated and committed to their tasks.

The composition of academic staff is well documented, regularly reviewed and meets the legal requirements in Lithuania in terms of qualifications and experience. The professional competences of teaching staff are based on school education, higher education (MD, MSc, PhD) and possible pedagogical studies. The recruitment procedure for teaching positions at the Faculty is regulated by the Law on Higher Education, and the pedagogical, scientific and practical professional experience of lecturers is evaluated every five years.

There are currently 30 staff members participating in the programme, most of whom are tenured or have long-term appointments. The staff consists of 11 professors and 10 associate professors, 5 assistants and 4 lecturers, which is a slight but significant increase since the last evaluation. Considering the number of students, the teaching staff is sufficient overall.

23 out of 30 teaching staff have at least 10 years of teaching experience. 50% of the teaching staff have at least 20 years of teaching experience or more. This fact is an advantage at the moment, but also requires strategic planning for the future, as some may retire in the next few years. At least 80 % of the staff have a research degree and are proficient in at least B2 language (English). Although the visiting team found that the majority of academic staff are actively engaged in scientific work, regularly participate in scientific conferences and have published a reasonable number of articles in the leading national and/or international journals in recent years, there is still considerable scope for a larger number of staff to participate more actively in research and thus publish more scientific articles. This is crucial for the programme to enable Master's theses with a significant practical experimental contribution from students and to secure funding for such work.

In summary, the staff have the high skills required to ensure the learning outcomes and their numbers are adequate.

### ***Medicine Integrated studies***

All the staff the visiting team met, whether academic, clinical or administrative, were motivated and committed to their tasks.

The composition of the academic staff of "LSMU integrated studies / MEDICINE" is well documented, regularly reviewed and meets the legal requirements in Lithuania in terms of qualifications and experience. The main criterion for the selection of teaching staff is competence in the relevant fields. Teaching staff are recruited on the basis of selection procedures for a five-year term in accordance with the requirements of legal acts: the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, the Procedure for the Organisation and Certification of Selection Procedures for LSMU Lecturers and Researchers, and the Principles for the Selection and Evaluation of LSMU Staff. The pedagogical, scientific and practical work experience of lecturers is assessed every five years (recertification). However, the results of the student evaluation are not included in the evaluation.

The total number of LSMU teaching staff varied between 810 and 853 during the evaluation period. About 45% have at least part-time (50%) employment at the University (it was clear to the visiting team that most of them work as doctors in the clinics the rest of the time). Their distribution is balanced: 19.5 % of the lecturers in the Medicine programme were professors, 19 % associate professors, 23 % lecturers and 18 % assistants. The ratio between the number of lecturers and the number of students is 0.3 on average. At least 66 % of the staff have a research degree and 80 % have at least B2 language skills (English). The composition of the teaching staff and the number of staff are adequate to ensure the proper implementation of the study programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The academic staff is active in research, regularly participates in scientific conferences and has published an adequate number of articles in good national and/or international journals in recent years. The research activities of the teaching staff are therefore adequate.

Unfortunately, there was no information in the SER, and it did not emerge from discussions with students or staff, how many students working on their theses are supervised at the same time by one academic supervisor.

In discussions with various groups during the site visit, the team identified some weaknesses that could be improved:

- The level of English proficiency seems to vary widely among the teaching staff. As the programme is offered in both Lithuanian and English, the level of English among teachers should be standardised and specific English courses (e.g. focusing on medical English) should be offered to teachers to improve their language skills.
- the effectiveness of interprofessional competences has not yet developed noticeably for the teaching staff. Since practically only mixed teams work today, the university should



try to make sure that the training effectively reaches the teaching staff. Finally, there are no mentoring programmes for (young) teachers. It is strongly recommended to create a tailor-made offer (e.g. for young female teachers, etc.) independent of the hierarchical relationships in the workplace.

In summary, teachers have the necessary skills to ensure learning outcomes and their numbers are adequate.

### *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 International Relations and Study Centre (IRSC) centrally organises the academic mobility of LSMU staff and ensures the transparency of the public selection procedures under the Erasmus+ staff mobility programmes in accordance with the Staff Mobility Procedure and the selection criteria approved by LSMU. University staff are routinely informed about calls for mobility grants, including ERASMUS and other European calls, and the University has more than 60 partner institutions for academic mobility. A list of international higher education institutions for academic staff exchanges LSMU LMB is publicly announced. The number and destinations of visits are well documented and regularly monitored. Academic mobility at LSMU is an integral part of the regular workload of staff and an essential part of the annual staff appraisal and certification procedures.

#### ***Second cycle studies***

Unfortunately, only one outgoing and one incoming visit was realised in the period from 2018 to 2020. The pandemic COVID -19 has limited the number of incoming and outgoing visits from 2020.

#### ***Integrated medicine studies***

Outgoing academic mobility funded by ERASMUS and other European calls is quite low and was only used by 1-5% of staff in the reporting period (before the pandemic). Most of the stays abroad are supported by undisclosed sources, which gives the impression that it is more of a conference visit. In the interviews with staff, it remained unclear whether academic mobility at LSMU is an integral part of staff's regular workload or the annual staff appraisal.

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

To develop and improve the pedagogical competence of lecturers, LSMU runs Study Center (SC) Innovative Education Department (IES). The improvement of the pedagogical competence of the teaching staff at LSMU is regularly monitored as one of the evaluation criteria for the certification of the teaching staff and is carried out according to the procedure for ensuring the pedagogical competence of the teaching staff at LSMU. Active participation in at least 30 teaching hours is compulsory for teaching staff.

The in-service training schedule, calendar and access to online registration are publicly available. The programmes are offered with different durations in the form of face-to-face, distance and blended learning and are tailored to new or experienced teachers.

The site visit confirmed that teachers are very interested in constantly improving their teaching skills and are encouraged by the University to participate in training to update their pedagogical and scientific qualifications.

However, teaching activities still need to be sufficiently recognised in terms of academic development and promotion compared to research activities.

In particular, protected time for skills training could be improved in the second cycle of studies. Consideration could be given to developing different career models for teachers: focus on research skills or focus on teaching skills.

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

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

1. Experienced and stable academic teaching staff.
2. Existing wide range of different training courses for teachers.

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

1. Teaching still seems to be under-recognised for academic development and promotion (of staff)
2. English language skills should be improved.
3. More efforts to increase the attractiveness of mobility on the part of HEI are desirable.

## **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*

### ***Second cycle studies***

LSMU is one of the largest training institutions for health professions in Lithuania. The conditions for classrooms, lecture halls and research facilities in the biomedical institutes and clinical-practical laboratories are excellent; there are enough rooms.

The clinical laboratories are well maintained and provide an excellent environment for the programme. Practical training takes place in well-equipped laboratories (e.g. clinical chemistry and genetics, haematology and general cytology, clinical microbiology) in a new building. The teaching staff provides sufficient supervision and is adequate for the number of students. Some research laboratories are still very empty.

The Library and Information Centre (BIC) is very impressive. It is well equipped and provides access to a wide range of pedagogical and methodological resources, including the main databases. The library's opening hours allow students to study independently.

Essential IT services (e.g. email service) are provided and high-speed and wireless internet access, including Eduroam, is available in all University buildings. Students have access to computers (along with internet service). There are reading rooms in the halls of residence and every room has internet access.

### ***Medicine integrated studies***

Medical studies take place in various departments of the University.

The clinical laboratories are well maintained and equipped and provide an excellent environment for study. Clinical practise of medicine (internship) is conducted in 30 hospitals accredited by the University and fulfils the requirements for practise in various locations in Lithuania. Foreign students do their clinical practise mainly at LSMU Kauno Clinic and Kaunas Hospital. The teaching staff provides sufficient supervision and is adequate for the number of students.

Some research laboratories are still empty.

The faculty has recently invested in the development and construction of a multifunctional medical simulation centre for teaching, examinations and training. The centre is impressive and equipped with hybrid laboratories for self-simulation and remote examinations. The teaching infrastructure is supported by extensive IT facilities to help teaching staff and students develop and apply their practical and theoretical skills.

The Library and Information Centre (BIC) is impressive. It is well equipped and provides access to a wide range of pedagogical and methodological resources, including the main databases. The library's opening hours allow students to study independently.

Essential IT services (e.g. email service) are provided and high-speed and wireless internet access, including Eduroam, is available in all University buildings. Students have access to computers (along with an internet service). There are reading rooms in the halls of residence and each room has internet access.

In summary, for both programmes, the University has the necessary infrastructural requirements to run the programmes and meet the outcome requirements, and the University is constantly improving its facilities and resources.

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

Equipment and tool needs are analysed each year, identifying priority areas whose material base needs updating, and the University is constantly improving its facilities and resources.

The diversity of research topics in the second cycle could be further increased. In particular, the topics for MSc theses, where students conduct their own experiments rather than just analysing previous studies, could be further expanded.

In summary, there is generally a high-quality, modern and accessible medical training infrastructure in the theoretical and preclinical training modules. The infrastructure and available resources thus meet the requirements of modern medical training at LSMU.

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

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

1. Sufficient resources for the successful implementation of the programmes.
2. The University is constantly improving its facilities and resources.
3. Library and Information Centre

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

1. Very limited number of research topics for MSc theses with experimental work (in the research lab).

### **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***

##### ***Second cycle and Medicine integrated studies***

The study quality assurance system at the University is in line with the following higher education national and international standards as well as internal strategic documents: LSMU Statute (2012), University Strategic Development Guidelines 2022-2026, LSMU Regulations of Studies and LSMU Study Quality Guide (2021).

LSMU established multi-level study quality assurance system that operates at the University, Faculty and individual clinics as well as departments levels. The most important part of the system is the Study Quality Monitoring and Assurance Commission (SKSUK). Information on such SKSUK features and activities as composition, functions, activities and resolutions are published on the University website in the section "Study Quality Assurance".

- At the University level, the study quality assurance system is approved by the University Senate and governed by the Rector and coordinated by the Commission for monitoring and study quality assurance, which consists of vice-rector for studies, representations from VMF, staff and students.
- At the Faculty level, the Study Programme Committee takes ongoing action to ensure the quality assessment and improvement of the Medicine integrated and Laboratory Medical Biology programmes and curricula.

The internal quality assurance system covers four areas: the study programme, the competencies of teaching staff, learning resources and student environment and needs. This system is implemented by measuring the opinion of students, lecturers, graduates as well as

employers. The main rationale behind having this system in place is to improve the quality of studies. The University and Medical Faculty carry out several surveys to this end, with the survey templates subject to prior approval by SKSUK. Subsequently, the data is analysed and adjustment is made to the content of particular subjects and programmes.

The authority of the LSMU introduced a new standardised instrument called “Quality Thermometer”. The idea was to centralize and reduce the number and length of different surveys and questionnaires. In 2021 spring semester, the “Quality Thermometer” was supplemented with two questionnaires: a student's own contribution evaluation questionnaire and a teaching quality evaluation questionnaire. But at the time of the site visit the expert team stated that students were not really interested in or informed about this new tool for study quality assurance. They were not keen to use it, either. Both systems: the “old” one with numerous surveys and the “new” one - were active at the same time. In the opinion of the expert team, it is necessary for the future to introduce only one such system at the level of the University. However, some specialized surveys for Medicine integrated as well as for Laboratory Medical Biology courses should be considered.

In summary, LSMU has introduced a multi-level system for quality assurance of studies at the University and faculty level, as well as at the level of individual clinics and departments. Students should be informed more effectively about the results of the surveys.

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

#### ***Second-cycle and Medicine integrated studies***

Student representatives have the opportunity to influence the study programme by participating in the governing bodies of the University such as the University Council, Senate and Medical Faculty Council, where they constitute 20% of the full bench. The study program committee consists of the chairman, four lecturers from the departments running the respective study programme, two student representatives assigned by the Student Union and one representative of the social partners. Despite the fact that SPC, at least once a semester, discusses the course of studies with the representatives of the Student Union and students studying in this programme, the real participation of the student in the process of evaluation of the quality assurance of the programme and quality of teaching is confined. It is important to stress that students have access to only limited information on the results of these surveys, but there are good conditions for informal exchange between the students and the teaching staff at the Faculty level, especially in the Medicine integrated programme.

As a result of feedback from the students, additional voluntary internships were organised in the various clinics.

Social stakeholders, for example, Lithuanian Medical Association, Association of Young Doctors and LSMU Residents' Council have some effect on the planned and realized content of the programme and intended outcomes as well as their achievement. The medical curricula are strictly related to the EU 36/2005 Directive and no major changes to the programme are

allowed. Advice received from practitioners and residency managers is also taken into consideration. SPC and the Dean's Office of Medical Faculty organize meeting with representatives of social stakeholders and program graduates at least once a year.

The University Career Center conducts a survey of employers and graduates in order to determine the need for the improvement of University study programs, employment opportunities for graduates and the satisfaction of graduates and employers.

In summary, based on SER and the evidence gathered during the site visit, the expert panel found that social interest groups and student representatives have the ability to influence the study programme.

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

#### ***Second-cycle and Medicine integrated studies***

The information about the study and particulars of the curricula concerning admission, curricula content, plans and summarized results of the surveys are shared with the community through meetings, e-mail and are posted on the University website.

Study Center and the Student Union initiated a series of conversations "Open at a cup of tea", but students of the evaluated curricula were not involved in this activity at the time of the site visit. During the meeting with the expert team, students expressed a very positive opinion on the University weekly newspaper entitled "Ave vita" where they found various interesting and useful information.

The reports by the SPC are posted on the LSMU website, included in the report of the Dean of the MF and presented at the Rectorate and the MF Council. Data on the composition, functions, activities and resolutions of SKSUK is also published on the University website under the section "Study Quality Assurance".

The members of the study program committee are approved by the Rector at the suggestion of the Dean of the Medical Faculty. The information about the activities of the Committee is published on the LSMU website. Upon the recommendation of the Dean, the members of the Committee may be paid a supplement or incentive scholarship from the general funds of the University for their activities in the Committee."

In summary, based on the website SER and the evidence gathered during the site visit, the expert panel found that LSMU and FM have implemented and managed a very efficient system for the collection and use of study information in both programmes evaluated.

### *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*

#### ***Second-cycle and Medicine integrated studies***

The authority of the LSMU introduced a new standardized instrument called "Quality Thermometer". The idea was to centralise and reduce the number and length of different

surveys and questionnaires. In 2021 spring semester, the “Quality Thermometer” was supplemented with two questionnaires: a student's own contribution evaluation questionnaire and a teaching quality evaluation questionnaire. But at the time of the site visit the expert team stated that students were not really interested in or informed about this new tool for study quality assurance. They were not keen to use it, either. The Study Center prepares annual reports at the end of each semester, which they publicize to community members.

The information from the SER showed that the evaluation of LMB students is higher than the total average of LSMU in assessing both individual subjects and the quality of studies on specific issues but a worrying sign is a decrease in the activity of students' participation in surveys. In the opinion of the expert panel, it might be caused by the loss of enthusiasm of the LMB student mentioned in Criterion 3.1.

As it was stated in the SER, the results of the evaluations of medical students' subjects showed that the assessments of the students of the Medicine study programme are improving every year and are similar to the general assessment indicators of the LSMU. It is interesting that assessments of the students taking English curricula were lower both in terms of individual subjects and the quality of studies as evaluated with respect to specific issues. The score for the survey for 2021/2022 amounted to 1.02 points, with 527 students of Lithuanian language curricula taking part, and 0.62 points with 208 students of English language curricula participating.

Both systems: the “old” one with numerous surveys and the “new” one - were active at the same time. In the opinion of the expert team, it is necessary for the future to introduce only one such system at the level of the University. However, some specialized surveys for Medicine integrated as well as for Laboratory Medical Biology courses should be considered.

Based on the website SER and the knowledge gained during the site visit, the expert team found that LSMU and FM have implemented and manage an efficient system for the collection and use of study information.

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

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

1. LSMU established multi-level study quality assurance system of the studies operating at the level of University, Faculty and on the particular clinics as well as departments.
2. The authority of the LSMU introduced new standardised instrument called “Quality Thermometer”.

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

1. Students have only limited information on the results of the surveys.
2. There are no specialized surveys for Medical integrated and Laboratory Medical Biology courses.

## IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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



## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<p>Improve training in complementary skills (21st century) throughout the programs. And also improve feedback (including vertical).</p> <p>To facilitate students to perform research projects that are more related to “real” laboratory work than to data analysis.</p> <p>Establish a structured thesis mentoring programme.</p> <p>Medical faculty should strive to overcome the pressure and time constraints on second cycle students.</p>
Links between science (art) and studies	<p>Increase the scientific training of teachers.</p> <p>Increase the quality of Master theses by providing more structured scientific training from the end of the first year and by providing independent tutors to support student’s scientific development.</p>
Student admission and support	<p>Create a structural program for training in transferable skills.</p> <p>Establish a structural tutoring system for all students.</p> <p>Promote the mental well-being of students by establishing a preventive program focusing on self-regulation of stress, resilience etc.</p>
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<p>Emphasise cooperation not only with University hospitals, but also with other public and private health care institutions.</p>
Teaching staff	<p>Develop long-term strategies focusing on different career paths for academic staff (research professorship or teaching professorship).</p> <p>Organise specialised courses for teachers to improve English language skills and interprofessional competences.</p> <p>Establish mentorships for staff (regardless of hierarchical relationships in the workplace).</p>
Learning facilities and resources	<p>Further develop digital and information technology systems for the teaching staff.</p>

Study quality management and public information	<p>Introduce a single system for assessing the quality of teaching at University level.</p> <p>The establishment of specialised surveys for the Medicine and Laboratory Medicine programme should be considered.</p>
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## VI. SUMMARY

### **Second cycle studies**

During the current evaluation, the team of experts noted that students should strive for a more reasonable balance between study and work and focus their attention on their own laboratory work and independent study, as some of them have permanent jobs in the laboratories and combine work and study.

It is noteworthy that the graduates and social partners communicate very closely and effectively with the staff and authorities responsible for the programme of evaluated curricula.

Students are selected in accordance with legal and institutional standards, and the evaluation and recognition of qualifications obtained at foreign higher education institutions is also carried out in accordance with legal and institutional provisions. Students have equal opportunities to participate in the international mobility programmes and projects. Although students benefit from LSMU's excellent research and study facilities and are supported by generally well-trained and encouraging faculty, the stress level among them is high and they are under a lot of pressure. As a result, students quickly lose both the inspiration and motivation they have at the beginning of their studies.

It is an advantage for the faculty to have experienced and stable academic teaching staff. The University offers a wide range of different training courses for teachers. The expert team also noted that teaching still seems to be under-recognised for academic development and promotion.

It is noteworthy that the University has sufficient resources for the successful implementation of the programme and is constantly improving its facilities and resources. The University library and information centre are also very useful and helpful to students.

The expert team strongly advises to increase the number of Master's theses with a high percentage of practical experiments carried out by the students.

The information about the studies and especially about the medical courses in terms of admission, course content, plans and summary results of the surveys are widely disseminated to the community.

There is a multi-level evaluation system for the quality of teaching at the University, but students have limited information about the results of the surveys conducted. It should also be decided which teaching quality assessment system (the "old" or the "thermometer") should be used at the University level.

### **Medicine integrated studies**

The selection of students is also carried out in accordance with legal and institutional standards, and the assessment and recognition of qualifications obtained at foreign higher education institutions is carried out in accordance with the established legal and institutional regulations.

Students have equal opportunities to participate in the international mobility programmes and projects. Students cope with social pressure and feel that there is a lack of structural training in soft skills, as well as structural training to prevent psychological problems.

During the current evaluation, the expert team found that there is a need to improve training in complementary skills as well as feedback.

More attention should be paid to science training for teachers and support for students' science development.

It is important to emphasise that the programme includes a variety of teaching and learning methods to engage all learners and keep them up to date. Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are also well developed and governed by University procedures.

The expert team also pointed out the need to emphasise cooperation with public and private health institutions.

It is an advantage for the medical faculty to have experienced and stable academic teaching staff. The University offers a wide range of continuing education courses for teaching staff. The expert team also noted that teaching is still under-recognised in terms of academic development and promotion.

It is noteworthy that the University has sufficient resources for the successful implementation of the programme and is constantly improving its facilities and resources. Students have very good conditions to train their skills in the multifunctional Medical Simulation Centre. The University library and information centre are also very useful and helpful for the students.

There is a multi-level evaluation system for the quality of teaching at the University, but students have limited information about the results of the surveys conducted. It should also be decided which teaching quality evaluation system (the "old" or the "thermometer") should be used at the University level.

To sum up, the study programme in Medicine and the study programme in Laboratory Medicine Biology, which is carried out at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, positively meets all the evaluation criteria and the recommendations implemented in the report can contribute to the further successful development of the study programme.

On behalf of the expert team, I would like to thank the authorities of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences for their efforts in preparing the self-evaluation report, organising a site visit and for the very productive discussions.

**Expert panel chairperson signature:**

**Prof. dr. Józef Kobos**

