



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of Media Art
at Vilniaus dizaino kolegija

Expert panel:

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3. Ms Gerda Paliušytė, *representative of social partners*;
4. Ms Roberta Kirsnickaitė, *students' representative*.

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Report language – English

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Study Field Data

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Title of the study programme | <i>Applied Photography</i> |
| State code | 6531PX006 |
| Type of studies | Higher education college studies |
| Cycle of studies | First |
| Mode of study and duration (in years) | Full-time 3 years; Part-time 4 years |
| Credit volume | 180 ECTS |
| Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification | Professional Bachelor of Arts |
| Language of instruction | Lithuanian |
| Minimum education required | Secondary education |
| Registration date of the study programme | 19 March 2013 |

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions constantly improve their study process and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: *1) self-evaluation and self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by HEI; 2) site visit of the expert panel to the HEI; 3) production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

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

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

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

The study field and cycle are **not accredited** if at least one of the evaluation areas is evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on **14 November 2022**.

Mika Ritalahti (Finland), panel chair – practitioner; independent film producer; former Head of the department of Film and Scenography at School of Art and Design, Aalto University;

Joris Landman (The Netherlands), panel member – academic; designer; teacher at Gerrit Rietveld Academie, photography department; member of Advisory Committee Designat Creative Industries Fund (NL);

Ms. Gerda Paliušytė (Lithuania), representative of social partners; artist; curator; implementer of contemporary art projects;

Ms. Roberta Kirsnickaitė (Lithuania), students representative; third-year Bachelor's student of study programme *New Media Art* at Vytautas Magnus University.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

| No. | Name of the document |
|-----|---|
| 1. | Quality Manual (in English) |
| 2. | The English version of descriptions of several study subjects of the study programme Applied Photography: <i>Lighting in Photography; Audiovisual Expression; Pre-graduate Practice; Advertising Photography; Reportage Photography; Entrepreneurial Fundamentals</i> |
| 3. | Information on the international mobility of the academic staff teaching in the Media art study field |
| 4. | Clarification on the way the data of 2022 survey of the social partners is collected |
| 5. | Clarification on the way the Self-evaluation Report is prepared |

1.4. BACKGROUND OF MEDIA ART FIELD STUDIES AT VILNIAUS DIZAINO KOLEGIJA

The VDK is a private college, founded in 1997, and licensed for higher education in 2005. It is privately funded, through student contributions and additional non-formal educational activities. It currently offers 5 study programmes, all in the arts, including the Applied Photography programme in the Media Art study field, which is evaluated here. As described in the introduction of the SER, including in the illustration of the organisational structure, the HEI's governing system includes three advisory governing bodies in which persons from all layers of the organisation (students, teachers, staff, social partners, management) collaborate in various ways on the development of education, with the Director and Deputy Director responsible for their implementation.

The HEI only offers study programmes in art fields, with a focus on the development of artistic skills and knowledge and entrepreneurship. It aims to align its strategic partnerships and projects with this focus.

In 2008-2009 and 2013-2014, the HEI was accredited for the maximum period. The study programme of Applied Photography was granted three-year accreditation in 2010 and six-year accreditation in 2013.

The expert panel notes that no part-time students attended the site visit meetings, so no additional evidence concerning part-time studies could be gathered from them.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Media Art study field and *first cycle* at Vilniaus dizaino kolegija is given a **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

| No. | Evaluation Area | Evaluation of an Area in points* |
|---------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum | 4 |
| 2. | Links between science (art) and studies | 4 |
| 3. | Student admission and support | 4 |
| 4. | Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment | 3 |
| 5. | Teaching staff | 3 |
| 6. | Learning facilities and resources | 4 |
| 7. | Study quality management and public information | 3 |
| Total: | | 25 |

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

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

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

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

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

The HEI describes its art education as based around the needs of a current society—in which information is the most important factor—to successfully and diversely integrate young people into it, conserving both its social and economic needs. Within this, the HEI emphasises criticality and professionalism, as well as research, independent learning skills and adaptability to rapid technological change, as can be read on pages 7, 8, and 11 of the SER. Its only Media Art programme Applied Photography focuses on the current labour market, with an eye on international market conditions, and trains students for a full range of possible worker roles (employment, freelancing, business ownership). Its graduates work in various areas of audiovisual media, from photography and advertising to tv and art, primarily as independent practitioners, including as freelancers. The department meets the legal requirements under the Description of the Study Field of Media Art.

The HEI conducts annual in-house surveys among graduates, students, teachers and social partners concerning the relevance of its programme for society and the labour market. The quality of the study programme is also assessed by the magazine *Reitingai*.

In the SER, the HEI formulates its vision, mission, and values in a general but clear way, and transparently links these to national policies and society's needs, to a good extent. However, during the site visit, the relevance and uniqueness of learning outcomes were further evidenced to be actually very good, in some cases very directly so. For example, one social partner evidenced this very good relevance by describing how they were able to set up a project around one student's study focus, which helped the social partner's business development efforts and eventually even lead to an extension of this business, as well as to the creation of paid work for other students and graduates of the HEI, and additionally to educational contributions to the

study programme. During the site visit, the uniqueness of the learning outcomes was evidenced very convincingly by graduates' theses and graduation projects. The subject matters and outcomes, as well as their tailored presentation formats and locations, evidenced the presence of a consistent set and combination of skills and knowledge with the graduates, that the expert panel assesses as unique to the study field in the Lithuanian context, to a very good degree. During conversations, the focus of education on practical activities was also mentioned as a unique quality.

The expert panel values that the HEI describes its vision on society and the labour market—and the role and potential to contribute it sees for itself—in an integrated and coherent way, in the SER. While this information was not specifically provided as evidence for this indicator, the panel assesses that the effort to work from an integrated vision contributes positively to it.

The expert panel observes that the relatively small scale of the HEI and its focus on art studies appear to be key to the relevance and uniqueness of its learning outcomes. This can be seen in the attention the teachers and department heads pay to students' chosen subjects and methods, as evidenced in conversations and by the varied but consistent execution of graduation works, as well as in the quality and nature of the relations and collaborations the HEI is able to establish with teachers and social partners. Students, graduates, teachers, department heads, staff, and social partners support these observations in their descriptions of their experiences.

It would have also been very good if the SER had contained some more specific substantiation of the evidence provided for the relevance and uniqueness of learning outcomes, for instance by providing some more details about the in-house surveys and the assessment by the mentioned magazine which the SER puts forward as main evidences for this indicator (their general method, frequency, goals, outcomes, how outcomes are integrated, how the surveys and magazine assessment specifically support relevance and uniqueness).

The HEI's graduates work in various areas of audiovisual media, from photography and advertising to tv and art, primarily as independent practitioners, including freelancers.

Professional activity is not specified in the corresponding part of the SER but is generally indicated to a good extent in the SER's introduction. It was also very well indicated during the

site visit, by multiple persons from the various groups, who explained the professional activity in line with how it is described in the SER's introduction.

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

To ensure coherence of the study programme with the HEI's mission, objectives and strategy, strategic goals were set during the assessment period. These were/are focused on improvements in management, raising the quality of studies, staff and virtual as well as actual infrastructure, improving financial conditions and the continuity of artistic activity, and development of internationality.

The 7 points of the HEI form a complete and transparent strategy that is described in a somewhat general way, but that is coherent with the study programme to a good extent and indicates a proactive approach. However, again during the site visit, the coherence of the study programme aims and the intended learning outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI is presented to actually be very good. For example, management provided specific examples of obstacles (concerning facilities and curriculum) that were observed and removed via a structured approach which is based in strategy.

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

In formulating the programme's learning goals, the HEI followed national legal documents and European guidelines and policies, which are specified in a very good way; in detail and with clear references. Study plans are updated annually, if necessary, and procedures were put in place to adjust the programme to legal changes that occur.

Tables given in the Self-Evaluation Report show that the number of ECTS conforms with or exceeds the legal requirements outlined in the General Requirements for the Provision of Studies (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016) and Descriptor of Media Art Study Field Requirements (Order No. V-717 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 5 May 2021).

The scope of the programme is 180 ECTS, 156 for the study field. The final thesis is credited with 12 ECTS. The internship is 30 ECTS. Due to the nature of the field, the quantity of practice in the study programme exceeds the one-third requirement. The contact hour learning is 45% in full-time and 36% in part-time studies. The study programme meets the legal requirements.

The compatibility and evaluation of the study goals, learning outcomes, teaching (learning) and assessment methods are in compliance with applicable legal requirements of the field and cycle study programme. Obligations and rights are clearly described and monitored.

The given study credits are based on the study plans (annex 1). The principles are presented and monitored. The students confirmed to the expert panel that their workload is at an acceptable level.

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

The SER does not include an analytical or self-evaluative paragraph about the compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programme. It does present these in the form of annex 3, which contains a matrix with learning goals, curriculum, and learning and assessment methods. The annex does not contain much descriptive information about how learning goals are linked with teaching and assessment methods. As the expert panel understands the annex, the HEI uses a categorisation system for learning methods (passive, active, interactive, investigative, specific) to translate learning goals into a varied mix of learning activities. Assessment procedures are presented clearly and transparently, and generally follow the same structure for all semesters (examination, interim review, test, final review, report).

The expert panel assesses this compatibility as inconclusively good or very good, based on its reading of the annex and its combined expertise. Since the evidence provided in the SER is mostly practical in nature—presenting the structure of the programme—and provides some examples of why and how it might be adjusted (such as in response to changing legislation), the panel looked for additional and conclusive evidence during the site visit. And, again the theses and graduation works did indeed provide (although more indirectly) evidence in support of an actually very good coherence, and of the important role that teachers and department heads

play in its realisation. Collectively, graduates' theses and works connect to study programme aims and intended learning outcomes in a very good way. The panel sees that they are actually realised to a very good extent, in the outcomes. For example, the intended criticality is evidenced by the graduates' choices and treatments of subject matters and by how presentation formats are tailored to their specific projects. The coherence that the expert panel observed in the nature and high quality of graduate theses and works (as a whole) further demonstrates the HEI's very good ability to achieve coherence in education and outcomes.

Analytical or self-evaluative evidence for this indicator is provided to a lesser extent in the SER. To put it in other words, the things that are done are presented very clearly in the SER, but the reasons (rationale) for choices and the evaluation of their outcomes are described to a lesser extent. (This might be achieved—just for instance and to illustrate this observation by the expert panel—by giving an example of why a specific teaching method and assessment method were considered as most fitting to achieve a specific learning goal, and if and how this was indeed confirmed by outcomes.) For this reason, the panel encourages the HEI to evaluate if and how it may benefit from some further active analysis of pedagogical principles in art and how it applies them.

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

The SER does not include an analytical or self-evaluative paragraph about the coherence of the curriculum. It does present this in the form of annex 3, which contains a matrix with learning goals, curriculum, and learning and assessment methods. As the expert panel understands the annex, the curriculum is structured around various forms of Applied Photography that the HEI distinguishes, as well as around entrepreneurship. It starts with foundational knowledge and its application, then proceeds with a variety of increasingly detailed theory and practice, before moving towards specialisation and entrepreneurship.

Based on the annex alone, the expert panel inconclusively assessed that this approach (including the HEI's assessment scheme that is presented to be solid) ensures good or very good consistency in students' competence development. The panel makes a similar observation about the coherence of the field study programme curriculum as it does about the previous point. Based on their combined expertise, the panel sees that the annexes are clear and

transparent and assesses that they evidence the coherence of the curriculum to be good or very good, but looked for additional and conclusive evidence during the site visit. During that, the coherence was further evidenced to be actually very good, through observations the panel was able to make about the high quality and coherence of study outcomes, as well as through the whole of conversations in which persons of the various groups describe this coherence to be very good.

The expert panel notes that the apparent good dynamics between students, teachers, social partners, and staff (their general social climate, as conveyed during conversations) appear to contribute to the consistent development of students.

The expert panel offers for consideration that this evaluation could have benefited from a Self-Evaluation Report which would have also contained a more analytical and self-evaluative paragraph for this indicator (for example, by providing a paragraph with a descriptive summary of and rationale for how the curriculum is constructed).

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

Students can choose an individual study plan or participate in only part of the programme. The procedures for this are clearly and transparently presented in annex 4 and annex 6 of the SER.

The expert panel makes a similar observation about the evaluation of opportunities for students to personalise the structure of the field study programme according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes, as it does about previous points. Procedurally, the HEI presents this very clearly and transparently, and based on their combined expertise the panel assessed it as inconclusively good or very good. The site visit again provided further evidence that it is actually very good. For example, the variety of approaches and presentation formats that graduates display in their theses and final works, very convincingly evidence very good opportunities to personalise. In conversations, various persons also evidence other specific opportunities for personalisation of the study programme that are very good.

During the visit of the panel, it became clear that the interdisciplinary nature of the HEI and the way different departments collaborate in ensuring an efficient learning process help for students in the personalisation of the learning objectives. The expert panel notes that teachers describe that they are very active in helping students find opportunities for personalisation, for instance by actively connecting individual students to specific social partners for internships and projects. Students, graduates, and social partners independently mention and confirm these things. Additionally, evening courses are available to students at a discount. Erasmus exchange program provides further opportunities for additional personalisation. However, the workload and the number of assessments for students per semester make the intended personalisation of their studies hard to achieve. During the visit, it has also become clearer that the possibility for students to personalise schedules increases during the third year, towards the thesis, but is less available during the first year,

The possibility of additional courses, which the HEI presents as a primary way for personalisation of studies, could in practice be used by more students. The expert panel recognises the complexities that the SER and multiple persons describe facing with regard to students' opportunities to follow additional courses and for personalisation in general (such as students needing to work outside of school, as well as the impact of COVID-19). However, because some persons also mention study load as a possible factor to this and other forms of personalisation, the panel recommends the HEI to evaluate workload in relation to the possibility to take additional courses, and in relation to personalisation in general. Some speakers also speculated on whether having a wider variety of elective courses might contribute to the quality of personalisation.

The expert panel commends the teachers, and department heads for their strong and consistent efforts in aiding students with personalisation—and doing so beyond the HEIs stated scope for this—by connecting them to networks, social partners, internships and projects in a personalised manner, as well as during interdepartmental collaborations they facilitate. Since it appears to the expert panel that such efforts may in practice be a key and structural aspect of personalisation for the students, the panel would like to encourage the HEI to see if and how students, teachers, and department heads might further be supported in these efforts, including in more formalised and structural ways and at the managerial level, to ensure consistent access to personalisation opportunities for all students.

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

The HEI refers to two of its general information documents in full (annex 7 which contains the HEI's thesis requirements, and annex 4 which contains the HEI's study regulations), as primary evidence of compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements. During the site visit, the expert panel was given a very good presentation of graduate theses and works, which provided a wealth of evidence for several indicators.

As the expert panel understands these annexes 4 and 7, and based on its combined expertise, it assesses them as very good. They present the principles and procedures of thesis arrangement in a clear and transparent way. Graduates express to have been very well prepared for the final thesis and supported at every level. Social partners, some of whom participated in the thesis defence, also express to be very happy with their very good compliance with the field. The presentations of graduate works and thesis further evidenced the quality of work and support that the panel assesses as very good. The panel also observes that the quality of the final thesis themselves is at a very good level.

During the site visit, a social partner who was a member of the thesis evaluation group confirmed that graduate theses are often based on real contracts, which the expert panel takes to indicate that the theses are often commissioned by social partners.

The SER does not specifically evaluate the conformity of the curriculum of the final theses to the field studies, but the social partners confirmed their very good conformity. During the very good thesis presentation that was given during the site visit, the expert panel also observed that the quality of the final thesis themselves is at a very good level.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Integrated and coherent vision on society and the labour market.
2. Small scale of the organisation is used for its strengths.
3. Thorough and transparent in providing practical information, such as about regulations and procedures.

4. Strong informal systems (climate) in place, which support the quality and coherence of goals and outcomes as well as opportunities for students to personalise their studies.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Indications of some possible dependence on (strong) informal structures, which may contain certain risks at the individual as well as at the managerial level.
2. Workload in relation to the actual use of additional and personalisation of studies in general.

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 HEI participates in Research, Experimental Development and Artistic Activities (RED&AA) annually by executing agreements and projects with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. During the period that is assessed here, this led to thematic, education-focused, annual projects, including a publication about the relevance of social partners for the HEI, a conference about innovation in design education, and a conference-practicum and conference-seminar about applied art studies. Additionally, RED&AA takes place in practicums and internships which students undertake with social partners, and which connect with their specific interests. Some students participate in competitions and exhibitions.

The RED&AA described in the SER are primarily aimed at lecturers, through their focus on educational themes, with the aim of benefiting students through increasing teachers' knowledge and experience. Study field lecturers actively participate in RED&AA. Its integration arises from this participation, for example, when it leads to their subject descriptions being updated by them, by content improvements they make, by them developing new learning activities, and so on. The proactive approach of teachers which was evident during conversations, and the HEI's description of structures for programme adjustments (which

involve teachers and governing bodies) ensure the integration of study results to a very good extent. This is further supported by the college actively sharing information with students and encouraging student participation, which students confirmed in conversations, as well as by the HEI's organisation of interdepartmental events.

During the site visit, a strong culture for RED&AA was also presented, for instance by the proactive ways in which teachers and department heads facilitate opportunities and connections for it, which was evidenced during conversations with them and confirmed by students and social partners. An example of this can be seen in the presented graduation theses and works, which evidence great care in providing opportunities for study field-specific RED&AA in their specific executions and forms, and through the networks provided to enable them. Students also mention exhibition visits and getting acquainted with the teachers' own practices as a valuable contribution in RED&AA.

The Ministry is a main partner in RED&AA. The programme is (partially) aimed at attracting social partners and including them in education. This corresponds with points for improvement the HEI saw for themselves for the previous period. This indicates a very good ability to use RED&AA in the social partner strategy.

The HEI is a relatively small organisation. Budgets available for RED&AA are relative to the HEI's size. Other evidence also presents the efforts the school makes to provide RED&AA support, for instance by allowing the use of equipment for students' own artistic work.

The HEI is relatively small and the possibilities to implement RED&AA are relative to its size. It implements RED&AA to a very good extent by using what it has in well-considered and productive ways. This allows the HEI to develop a meaningful, own approach. This approach is systematic, but not yet fully embedded (formally) throughout all parts of the HEI. Relatively limited possibilities to participate in varied RED&AA (which mainly focuses on larger, annual projects, and is mainly aimed at teachers and social partners, and thematically focused on art education) are supplemented via a strong culture and willingness among students, teachers, department heads, staff, and social partners, for finding opportunities for RED&AA and integrating it into education. This is then done in a way that is specific to the study field and programme, as well as to students' specific interests.

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

The content of studies is linked to the latest achievements in research, art, and technology, mainly through its teachers, most of whom are practitioners. During the annual review and updating of equipment, the latest achievements in research, art, and technology are also taken into consideration. The SER also indicates a strategic approach for linking the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology, which consists of attention in the curriculum to comparative theory and practice, such as during classes with art history and media history content.

The expert panel assesses the links between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology as very good. This is evidenced during conversations, in which teachers gave very good examples of such links and how they bring them into classes, and in the description of the governing structures which are in place to ensure quick integration. Persons at all levels are aware of how to use these structures. Students evidence this by providing examples of having been interested in certain latest research or technology, knowing how to request it, and the HEI following up very quickly and in a hands-on manner (or explaining why a request could not be met). Teachers confirm that this is also the case for them. Links are also evidenced by the subject matters and presentation of graduation theses and works, which connect to the latest research, art, and technology in various ways, such as for example through projects which critically focus on diversity and its representation in media art products. Social partners play a role in facilitating this connection, for example, during internship projects during which students work with the latest achievements in technology.

The teachers are described as a (or the) primary source of connection to the latest achievements, by persons from all groups. The HEI instrumentalises this value they contribute to a very good extent, for instance via structures it has put in place to enable quick updates to the curriculum, which it has ensured everyone throughout the HEI understands. This approach also allows students to contribute as a source of connection, which is very good. Through their own practice and experience, teachers as well as social partners enable the school to be very consistently connected with achievements in the study field, especially locally and nationally.

The expert panel recommends the HEI to consider finding an approach for consistently connecting with the latest achievements outside of the view and expertise of its students, teachers, and social partners.

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

All students participate in internships with social partners which contain opportunities for RED&AA, mostly towards graduation, and students are actively encouraged to use other opportunities, which teachers also actively look for and provide. Additionally, information was provided about 6 students participating in commissioned projects for magazine publications, 6 students' specific theses subjects, and 6 students participating in exhibitions, all of which have contained opportunities for RED&AA. Although COVID-19 impacted the level of participation, the HEI has achieved RED&AA to a very good extent during this period, for example through organising a remote conference-practicum, and through the successful participation of a student in a competition.

Because of some remarks made in conversations, the expert panel would like to encourage the HEI to evaluate if and how the study load relates to opportunities for RED&AA, for students. Some remarks also expressed a desire for access to a larger variety of RED&AA activities, including some that would be less focused on commercial photography. Some remarks speculated on whether having more international speakers might contribute to the quality of RED&AA.

As the expert panel observes some similarities between how the HEI approaches and effectuates study personalisation and RED&AA, it encourages the HEI to see if the panel's recommendations and encouragements about study personalisation may also be helpful towards the HEI's RED&AA.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The HEI has its own strategy and approach for artistic activity and research, which uses the HEI's reality to its advantage.

2. The HEI has a strong culture for artistic activity and research.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Opportunities for artistic activity and research are not available to the same extent for students of all years.
2. Artistic activity and research activities outside of the larger events are dependent on the informal culture for artistic activity and research, which is strong but could be more formalised.

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

The college has approved the admission procedures for the college, which meet all of the national standards of transparency and equity that have been established as a result of the college's approval process. There is a determining factor between applicants who have the same grade point average and those who have the same grade point average when it comes to the college's evaluation of their motivation for studying. The number of first priority applicants in the years 2019-2021 were 23, 22 and 19 for the full-time studies, and in 2020-21 7 and 3 for the part-time studies (2019 part-time was not implemented). The number of students starting in the study programme was 21, 16 and 24 (respective years) for full-time students and 5 and 6 for part-time. The graduates the expert panel met, confirmed that they had chosen this study programme because they knew in advance that the education would be very practically oriented.

The HEI is having very good averages of competitive scores compared to the other colleges in Lithuania. For the study programme of Media Art, the average competitive scores for the full-time studies in years 2019-21 were 6,91, 8,58 and 8,32 and for the part-time studies 8,9 and 7,78 (years 2020-21).

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

The International Society of Management (VDK) has regulations regarding the recognition of non-formal and informal competencies. There is a quality manager at VDK that checks if the institution is officially accredited and forwards the documents to the study department for recognition based on the level of study, field of study, as well as compatibility of the learning outcomes with the VDK programme/module learning outcomes. For the recognition of diplomas from other institutions, you will need to contact the Study Services department before you submit them.

In the years 2018-2022, there were 2 students who had Erasmus studies outside the HEI recognised as part of the degree. The number of students who had their studies in other HEI transferred to VDK was 3. In both cases, the final number may rise, due to the process of recognition of these achievements being pending. The recognition of the achievement is at a good level.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

The VDK provides information about mobility opportunities on its website, on its information boards, during career fairs and by arranging meetings with students in individual study programs in order to make students aware of these opportunities. During this process, consultations are made with the Coordinator of International Relations. It is the responsibility of the university to promote student mobility through information seminars that are held every semester. These seminars serve as an opportunity for students to get an overview of the requirements for the Erasmus+ programme and to hear from students who have taken part in studies and/or internships and shared their experiences with them.

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

Based on the information provided in the SER and summarising the interviews with the students, it can be seen that all students in the field have the good opportunity to receive support: academic information and consulting, career services, information technology

services, library and information services, financial support, accommodation services, cultural and leisure services, the opportunity to participate in student activities, psychological services, spiritual and religious services, and support and services for students with special needs. As part of its mission, the programme is primarily focused on providing academic support to students in order to help them succeed in their studies, as well as helping them establish themselves on the job market once they have graduated.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

The Counselling and Training Centre offers students the privilege of receiving psychological support through consultations regarding personal, family, academic, and social matters. This is a privilege that can be taken advantage of by students, and one that can be accessed through the Centre. Besides that, the University also provides students with additional support that includes career counselling, professional and personal development, healthy lifestyle practices, as well as various types of cultural, sports, and social activities that relate to school life. Students can receive mentorship from their fellow students, teachers, graduates, community partners, or companies as a whole. Students with a variety of needs are given adequate support by the university, which means that they are able to succeed. In addition, the university ensures that the students are well-informed and well-cared for. Both cycles of students receive informational emails or mention being able to speak with the faculty members they trust the most when they need assistance.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Well-detailed academic mobility information and its presentation to students.
2. Strong support to students with special needs.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses have been identified in this evaluation area.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

The teaching/learning methods are divided into passive and active. Active methods are implemented in practical sessions, which are organised with the guidance of lecturers.

A big part of HEI's activities are occupational internships, during which the actual projects of the students are realised with the supervision of the social partners. The efficiency of the process is ensured by the lecturer of the course unit. The more passive teaching method is implemented in theoretical lectures, during which teachers present and teach theoretical material.

The HEI encourages the independent work of the students by providing them with guidance on their individual research activities, and theoretical and creative work. The research activities of students are strengthened by teaching them how to use learning tools independently, apply the tools of modern information technologies and critical self-evaluation. The constant feedback is provided by the teachers in order to imply consistency in students' work. The students appear to be happy with the way they are taught how to apply theory in their creative work.

The HEI has a clear score assessment system as a way to evaluate the achievements of the performance of students. The plan of individual assessments and general criteria for the evaluation of students' work is presented ahead of time and allows the students to plan ahead their study schedules.

Overall, the expert panel sees the current direction taken by the HEI as systemic, good and without any fundamental shortcomings in the evaluated area. However, during the site visit, the expert panel saw the ambition and potential of the HEI to further develop their teaching

and learning processes and reflect the needs of the students by adding some more specific and experimental methodologies, which the panel encourages to do so.

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

The HEI provides an opportunity for students with special needs to individualise their study plans. Additionally, they are provided with additional counselling and monitoring throughout their studies. SER gives much attention to the integration of students with special hearing impairments who have studied and entered the HEI (page no. 30). The lecturers are encouraged to adapt their teaching methods to students with special needs.

However, much less attention is given to students from different socially vulnerable groups. Although on page 30 the SER states that there are financial incentives that are also available to them, there is a lack of information regarding other forms and means of integration of students into the academic community and ensuring a safe environment. Also, there is no clear evidence that students from other than low-income groups are given any special attention that would be formalised in the SER.

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

The SER provides sufficient information on how the progress of the students in the field is monitored. Additionally, the staff of the Department of Studies and the heads of Departments at the HEI are responsible for constant monitoring of the progress made by students in the respective study fields. In case students have doubts about their studying progress, the participation in interim and final reviews, attended by both students and lecturers provides a good occasion to discuss their work. Besides, the study programme is monitored through the Information System of the HEI which ensures a systematic approach to student outcomes.

Also, an integral part of constant evaluation and improvement of the study quality is an anonymous general survey, conducted by students and graduates. After being analysed, in order to deliver concrete points and observations, the surveys are then evaluated by Academic Council and Methodical Council.

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

The SER provides enough data on graduate career tracking, which is done through the means of surveys and in collaboration with the Employment Service and the Government Strategic Analysis Centre.

Information on the opinions of the graduates and the employers regarding the professional training and competencies of the graduates is not provided by SER but was presented during the visit of the expert panel.

The HEI is in a close partnership with social partners that actively participate in raising the quality of the field. Social partners are generally satisfied with the level of qualifications of graduates and complement their motivation and skills. Additionally, social partners praise students' practical skills and their knowledge in the field of Cultural and Creative Industries.

Both the data of the SER and the comments of students and social partners show that after graduating students tend to do mostly freelance work and engage in individual activities. However, there appears to be a close relationship between students and teachers, with teachers taking direct action to get students into the labour market, through their guidance and support. For example, students expressed an opinion that teachers help them to find social partners that are specific to their focus areas, which helps to ensure an efficient learning outcome.

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

The SER provides a sufficient level of information regarding the implementation of policies that ensure academic integrity. The Code of Ethics (provided in annex 10, as well as on the website of HEI) establishes the guiding principles of values, practised by the administration, staff, and students throughout their activities. The Code of Ethics, which has been updated in 2015, is planned to be revised in the year 2021-2025. The implementation of the principles of the Code of Ethics at the HEI is monitored by the Ethics Supervision Commission of the College.

However, although tolerance and integrity are stated as primary principles of HEI's policy, more concrete information could be provided on specific measures and implementations to ensure

non-discriminatory policies for students that belong to different socially vulnerable groups as well as examples of past cases of violations and how these were approached.

The expert panel questions the architecture where the Methodological Council—which consists of the Director, the Deputy Director, the Head of the Study Department, and the department heads—also serves as the Dispute Commission and the Academic Ethics Supervision Commission. A rationale for this is not provided. The question the panel asks is if disputes and ethics may be served by an independent perspective.

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

The SER provides clear and sufficient information regarding the application of the procedures of the appeals and its practical performance (information is given in annex 4).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The opportunities to individualise study plans according to the special needs of students.
2. Efficient involvement of teachers and social partners in ensuring that graduates have access to the labour market.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There should be a more concise strategy to ensure diversity and equal opportunity policies for different socially vulnerable groups.

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

There are 14 teachers in the study field. All of them are practitioners of the study field subjects and more than 35% are renowned artists (10% being the minimum demand by the Ministry). Some of them are pursuing their PhDs. The teachers meet the minimum requirements for pedagogical skills, but only one of the teachers the expert panel met has followed formal didactical studies. Last year altogether 103 teachers were teaching at the institution. One of the graduates stated that the big number of teachers in the study field enables students to see various styles and trends.

The ratio of the number of students to the number of teachers varies from 1:0,35 (year 21-22) to 1:0,4 (20-21) among full-time studies and from 1:1,38 (21-22) to 1:1,4 (20-21) among part-time studies. The workload of at least half of the studies is on teachers who have been working for the study programme for at least 3 years. More than 70% of the staff are lecturers or associate professors.

Around 50% of the teachers in the study field have 16 years or more of practice in the study field. Almost 80% have 10 or more years. According to the students, most of the teachers work in commercial photography and more variety among them might be considered. Some work in the field of artistic management. The level of salaries and the economic situation in Lithuania forces the teachers to have at least two paid jobs, which brings challenges to the management of the staff, especially to the teachers' participation in mobility and training.

The turnover of teachers is rather low. During the analysed years 2019-2022, 3 lecturers changed. Two of them left with the intention to return to VDK after gaining more practice in the study field subjects. While recruiting new teachers both practical and pedagogical skills are evaluated in the process. There is a clear method for new teachers to familiarise in the department. The integration of new lecturers in VDK is systematic. The Head of the Department oversees the familiarising of the new teachers with the HEI and its practices. This enables the new teachers to adapt to the goals and tasks of the entire study programme. During the first year in the HEI, the teacher's performance is monitored more closely by the Head of the Department, and if there are areas for improvement a suggestion is made.

In the case of an ERASMUS+ student (non-Lithuanian speaking) arriving in the programme, the teachers have enough foreign language skills to teach.

The students expressed their contentment with the teachers, both in their pedagogical and practical skills.

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

The development of internationality is listed in one of the goals of the HEI's strategy. The Department of International Relations and Project Management of the College is helping the teachers by providing invitations. During the analysed period, 17 lecturers and administrative staff members came to the HEI, 13 of those were in the study field, most from Europe. The outgoing number was 9 during the same period. The senior management of the study programme expressed that the international mobility of the study field teachers is lower compared to the other departments. Most of the teachers of the study programme work part-time and are active practitioners of the subject, and during the meeting with the teachers, it was expressed that this causes difficulties for the international mobility of these teachers. In the strategy of the HEI, internationalisation is emphasised. Teachers are aware of Erasmus programmes and how to apply if interested. Students expressed a wish for more international experience for teachers. The department should find ways to improve the international mobility of the teachers.

As part of international mobility, the VDK organises an International Week event each year. Due to the pandemic, the event did not take place in the semester 2021-22. The theme for the next week (planned to take place in spring 2023) is Beyond Obvious. The event is a very good opportunity for the study programme. In the year of 2019, part of the International Week was a Stage Photography workshop, especially designed for the study field. The department has recognised that participation in the International Week is more difficult for part-time students than full-time students.

According to page 40 of the SER, some teachers feel they do not have sufficient language skills to participate in mobility activities. During the visit, the expert panel, however, got the impression that the language skills of the staff and teachers were at a good level.

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

In the previous evaluation of the study programme, a suggestion was made to create a more clearly structured approach to staff development. The HEI has prepared a “Procedure for the Promotion of Artistic/Research Activities of the Lecturers of Vilnius College of Design”.

Each year teachers' competencies are evaluated in the discussion and teachers can express their needs. 18 various courses to improve the skills were offered in the year 2022. The selection this year included courses in Adobe Photoshop and Indesign skills, business management and didactics. The department collects information on the needs of the students and the teachers and makes a proposal to the Academic Board.

The participation of the teachers in training is obligatory. The department recognises a risk in participation in the training, as in international mobility, since most of the teachers are working part-time in the HEI and are also very active practitioners in the study field. The training is not compensated, but after gaining more competencies the teacher's salary may be raised.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Very devoted and motivated teachers and department heads.
2. Good opportunities for the teachers to develop their competencies.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The level of participation of the teachers in international mobility.
2. The level of teacher participation in further training.

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

A list of means and equipment is provided and is adequate, as well as adaptable to the current number of students. The resources available in the library are clearly described. Facilities for practice outside VDK are described and a full list of institutions is given. Students are provided with all the necessities of their field of studies, as well as support for individual interdisciplinary research. Students are well-informed regarding the resources available and generally satisfied with and content.

The HEI has access to software through computers in place. The learning facilities include equipment well-adapted for students with special needs. Students are allowed to rent equipment and studios for their individual projects outside of lectures at HEI. Students are provided with professional individual aid in the borrowing and usage processes of the equipment.

Students have access to specialised auditoriums necessary for the execution of their projects (photography studios, workshops). The HEI rents out certain auditoriums to their social partners so the students can see their work in the process. However, a clearer framework could be put in place to help students get involved with social partners in rented studios, in order for this policy to contribute to a more effective learning process. Also, as the HEI aims to train its students as practitioners in the media field, there could be more specialised spaces and classrooms for students to exhibit their work.

The library is well stocked with specialised study-orientated literature as well as the latest publications and international magazines. The HEI subscribes to periodicals that are relevant in the field of art, fashion, and photography and so the expert panel assesses this as good. However, a bigger variety of top periodicals in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences could be added in order to enhance the learning process. The library of HEI has good access to electronic databases that are necessary for carrying out research activities. However, a variety of accessible databases could be improved, for example, access to digital libraries of academic resources which provide content from unique source-scholarly journals could be added.

As the HEI is keen on educating their students on the latest trends in media arts, a more specialised section of selected artist publications could be added.

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

The small size of HEI allows efficient communication between the teaching staff and administration regarding the needs and upgrade of resources that are necessary for the efficient learning process. The resources of the HEI are constantly renewed, based on the recommendations of the teaching staff. This ensures the careful selection of equipment and teaching material with a clear focus on quality, rather than quantity.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The accessibility of equipment for students.
2. The efficient planning and upgrade procedures of resources needed to ensure an effective learning process.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The lack of resources which would be helpful in more scholarly research activities, in the collection of the library.
2. The lack of spaces suitable for exhibiting students' work.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

The HEI has two procedures which regulate the quality assurance: Study Programme Management and Study Process Management. VDK has prepared and uses a Quality Manual. The Manual is available in Lithuanian and English and it describes the responsibilities and

structures for quality control. The indicators are described in the Summary of the Indicators and the Description of Indicator Monitoring Methodology. The teachers and other staff members are aware of the quality processes.

The HEI has developed and is implementing a strategy for continuous improvement. Internal quality management is described in SER in detail. It involves all the levels of the stakeholders; students, staff, teachers as well as all social partners (graduates, employers). The collection of the data is regular and systematic.

The study plans are evaluated once an academic year. The updated plans will be accepted by the Methodological Council.

The quality process is used to develop the study programme of Applied Photography. As evidence of this, the expert panel was told by the students about a teacher, whose skills for teaching were not at a satisfactory level. The student expressed their concern, and the HEI took follow-up action. The situation improved for some time but returned to the unsatisfactory level again later. The teacher was eventually replaced. The effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system is at a good level.

However, as no part-time student attended the site visit meetings, so the team could not confirm their contentment.

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

The HEI conducts an annual survey for the graduates to gain information about the relevance of the study programme. Feedback is also collected from the employers after the internships of the students. Employers who are not yet among stakeholders are asked to participate in the processes of creative projects to enhance communication.

The stakeholders are invited to the defence of the Graduation Theses; the stakeholders can see the results of the Study Programme (theses and final works) and give their observations in round table discussions. These observations are analysed in the study programme. The employers and other social partners confirmed in the meeting that the collaboration with the

study programme is good; they know what the graduates are capable of and find their competencies being on a good level for employment.

In 2022, VDK conducted a survey where feedback on the quality of the studies at the institution in the study field of Design was collected from the social partners. The survey was done electronically. 27 social partners out of 96 sent questionnaires answered. Among the partners submitting the answer were many of the partners of the Media art study programme. According to the survey, more than 80% of the partners agreed or rather agreed that the HEI prepares the students for the labour market. The same percentage applies to the question if the graduate is having sufficient practical skills. Being a rather small college, with only 5 study programmes, VDK collects this information only on the college level, it is not clear if the same figures apply also on the study programme. The information is collected regularly and systematically, however, the HEI should consider a way how it can ensure that the information could be collected and used to improve the study programme.

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

The analysis of the collected information on studies is done by Academic Council once a semester and by Methodological Council 2-3 times a semester. If needed, meetings with the Heads of Department and the Director are organised.

The information on self-evaluations of the study programme is available on VDK's website. The department publicises all the information of the study field on various occasions: it is discussed in the Faculty Council, Study Programme Committees and Department; at the annual Studies exhibition; at higher educational fairs; and at career days. The faculty organises Design Days each year. Also, practical conferences are arranged.

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

An annual student survey is the basis of the collection of student feedback. The students have opportunities to express their suggestions and observations in between the surveys as well. The collection of input from the field students is at a good level.

The HEI conducted a survey for all graduates of the institution between 2019-2021. However, none of the graduates from the Applied Photography Study Programme took part, so no conclusion can be made on the quality of the programme on the basis of this survey.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The collection of the data involves all the partners.
2. The close connection between the study programme and the employers and social partners.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The low level of participation of graduates in the surveys.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

| Evaluation Area | Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle) |
|--|---|
| Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum | <p>The HEI is encouraged to assess student workload in relation to the possibility to take additional courses and in relation to personalisation in general. It is also encouraged to assess whether having a wider variety of elective courses might contribute to the quality of personalisation.</p> <p>The HEI is encouraged to see if and how students, teachers, and department heads might further be supported in their efforts to aid students with personalisation, including in more formalised and structural ways and at the managerial level, to ensure consistent access to personalisation opportunities for all students.</p> |
| Links between science (art) and studies | <p>The HEI is recommended to consider finding an approach for consistently connecting with the latest achievements outside of the view and expertise of its students, teachers, and social partners.</p> <p>The HEI is encouraged to evaluate the study load in relation to opportunities for all students to participate in artistic activity and research. It is also encouraged to assess whether having a wider variety of artistic activity and research activities, as well as some more international perspectives (speakers, workshop leaders, guest teachers etc.) may contribute to the quality of artistic activity and research.</p> <p>The HEI is encouraged to see if and how students, teachers, and department heads might further be supported in their efforts to aid students with using artistic activity and research opportunities, including in more formalised and structural ways and at the managerial level, to ensure consistent access to artistic activity and research opportunities for all students.</p> |
| Student admission and support | <p>In order to increase the number of students participating in international mobility programs, students should be offered additional incentives.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment</p> | <p>The HEI is recommended to evaluate if disputes and ethics are best served by the Methodological Council (which consists of the Director, the Deputy Director, the Head of the Study Department, and the department heads) fulfilling the roles of the Dispute Commission and the Academic Ethics Supervision Commission.</p> <p>A formal internal policy to ensure the integration and safety of students belonging to different socially vulnerable groups should be implemented.</p> |
| <p>Teaching staff</p> | <p>The teachers' participation in international mobility should be increased.</p> <p>Teachers' participation in the training for pedagogical and other competencies should be encouraged.</p> |
| <p>Learning facilities and resources</p> | <p>The HEI is encouraged to dedicate a variety of spaces for a proper representation of students' work.</p> |
| <p>Study quality management and public information</p> | <p>The participation of the graduates in the after-graduation surveys should be assured.</p> |

V. SUMMARY

Vilniaus Dizaino Kolegija is a small, private institution. In the institution, the study programme Applied Photography prepares graduates for the various needs of Lithuanian and foreign photo studios, advertising agencies and other freelance positions in the field of media arts. The SER and visit in Lithuania convinced the expert panel of the clear and present need for practitioners in the respective field.

The institution and the study programme show great energy to contribute to the study field, society and the labour market. The connection between the study programme and the employers, other social stakeholders and graduates is very good. There is a direct link to the employers and other social partners. The stakeholders are content with the skills and competencies of the graduates.

The coherence and the quality of the curriculum study outcomes show very good quality.

The teaching staff in the study programme is devoted and, partly due to the small size of the institution, the communication between various study fields in VDK and also between the students, the teachers and the administrative staff is at a very good level.

The teachers' and the students' participation in international mobility is at a relatively low level. Partly, this may be due to the pandemic, but the study programme should pay attention to this and find ways to encourage the teachers and students to participate.

The study programme shows great flexibility towards students' needs, however, social safety and inclusivity should be more formalised. Also, the HEI should continue the good work on the formalisation of quality control.

Program quality management is at a good level but the participation of the graduates in the after-graduation surveys should be ensured.

The expert panel wishes to express its gratitude to all the teachers, department heads, staff members and other stakeholders for their great openness to present the study programme and college during the site visit.

The expert panel finds that the assessment could have benefited from some more analytical, self-evaluative, summarising paragraphs in the Self-Evaluation Report, instead of referring to practical annexes in full and requiring the panel to fully analyse these in relation to indicators (which is outside of the scope of the panel's tasks, and practically makes information harder to access). However, it stood out to the panel in the SER and during the site visit, that the HEI offers information in a very transparent way. The expert panel experienced that the HEI actively attempts to openly convey its situation, activities and outcomes. The HEI also proactively provides insight into improvement points and its approach to them. The panel would like to commend the SER team and conversation groups on this, as it believes that such directness contributed positively to the conditions of the evaluation.

It appears to the expert panel to be expressive of the HEI's intent to contribute to the study field, labour market, and society.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Riku Mika Ritalahti