



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**STUDY FIELD of REHABILITATION**  
at Klaipėda University

**Expert panel:**

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Report language – English

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### Study Field Data\*

|                                                          |                                              |                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of the study programme                             | <b>Physiotherapy</b>                         | <b>Complementary and alternative medicine</b>                                                        |
| State code                                               | 6181GX001 <sup>1</sup>                       | 6211GX016                                                                                            |
| Type of studies                                          | University studies                           | University studies                                                                                   |
| Cycle of studies                                         | First                                        | Second                                                                                               |
| Mode of study and duration (in years)                    | Full-time studies, 4 years                   | Full-time studies, 2 years                                                                           |
| Credit volume                                            | 240                                          | 120                                                                                                  |
| Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification | Bachelor of Health Sciences, Physiotherapist | Master of Health Sciences                                                                            |
| Language of instruction                                  | Lithuanian, English, Russian                 | Lithuanian                                                                                           |
| Minimum education required                               | Secondary education                          | University bachelor's degree in the field of rehabilitation or relevant additional studies completed |
| Registration date of the study programme                 | 24 May 2011                                  | 21 August 2013                                                                                       |

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

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<sup>1</sup> A joint degree programme implemented by Klaipeda university and Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine (**Ukraine**)

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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 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 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 *10 November 2022*.

**Prof. dr. Sandra Buttigieg (panel chairperson)**, *Professor and Head of Department of Health Services Management, Faculty of Health Science, University of Malta (Malta);*

**Prof. dr. Hector Tsang**, *Head of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Hong Kong);*

**Prof. dr. Luigi Tesio**, *Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, School of Medicine Milano (Italy);*

**Ms Jurgita Veliulytė**, *Head of Dep. of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy at the Valakupių Rehabilitation center (Lithuania);*

**Ms Emilija Karaseva**, *a student in the field of Architecture, Kaunas Technological university (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.  |                      |
| 2.  |                      |

### 1.4. BACKGROUND OF REHABILITATION FIELD STUDIES AT KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

Klaipėda University (hereinafter – KU) was established in 1991 in the region of Western Lithuania as a science and culture centre. KU offers multidisciplinary, national and Baltic marine science and studies meeting the needs of the Western Lithuania region and Klaipėda. The Study Quality Assessment Centre accredited Klaipėda University for a 7 year term on August 3, 2021 (Order No. SV6-15 of the Director of SQAC). KU has 3 faculties: Social Sciences and Humanities, Marine Technology and Natural Sciences, Health Sciences and two research institutes – History of the Baltic Region and Archaeology and Marine Research.

As part of an ongoing reform of higher education in Lithuania to optimise the financial situation, KU was reorganised in 2018, namely that the number of faculties was reduced from 7 to 3, the number of departments was halved, and the structure of the university administration was reorganised. The three KU faculties have 17 departments, 8 research and study centres, 2 museums, and more than 60 laboratories and offer the three cycles study programmes.

KU *Faculty of Health Sciences* covers the areas of rehabilitation, nursing, public health, social work, and tourism management. In the assessed field of rehabilitation study, KU *Faculty*

of Health Sciences Department of Holistic Medicine and Rehabilitation offers the first cycle *Physiotherapy* (since 2011) and the second cycle *Complementary and Alternative Medicine* (since 2014).

During the period 2011-2020, KU together with Šiauliai University, the Department of Holistic Medicine and Rehabilitation implemented the joint Bachelor of Health Sciences study programmes in *Physiotherapy* and *Occupational Therapy*, as well as study programmes of the Master's degree in *Complementary and Alternative Medicine* (since 2014). The latter programme was accredited for three years by the international external evaluation experts in 2016. After the merger of Šiauliai University with Vilnius University, KU lost its partner, and as a result it was decided not to pursue the first cycle study programme of *Physiotherapy* with Šiauliai Academy of Vilnius University (former ŠU). Nevertheless, KU forged another partnership with the Ukrainian Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine that led to the creation of a joint international undergraduate programme in *Physiotherapy*, in 2021 consisting of 210 ECTS credits (See documents listed in Table under General Information: 1,2, 6, 15).

There are two previous evaluations that are presented in the pack. One is for Occupational Therapy (OT) that was evaluated in 2015, but which programme is not being assessed because OT is not being offered anymore after KU lost its partner after the merger of Šiauliai University with Vilnius University. The other evaluation, which took place in 2014, is relevant for this evaluation as it is the one for physical therapy. This was at the time offered as a joint programme by KU and Šiauliai University.

Despite being commended as a joint programme as an example of the European spirit of cooperation, the last evaluation highlighted communication problems – which communication is needed to ensure parity of teaching and assessment and similarity of student experience of both groups of students. Of relevance to KU, the 2014 evaluation recommended that the practical physiotherapy facilities at KU be expanded to be adequate for 50+ students, and for these facilities to be located closer to the main campus. The 2014 evaluation also recommended market research to project the number of students that should be admitted to meet the needs for physiotherapists in the region, to reconsider the number of credits allocated to physiotherapy core subjects to better reflect best physiotherapy practice in Europe.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Rehabilitation* study field and *first cycle* at Klaipėda University is given **positive** evaluation.

*Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas*

| No. | Evaluation Area                                                    | Evaluation of an Area in points* |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1.  | Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum             | 3                                |
| 2.  | Links between science (art) and studies                            | 3                                |
| 3.  | Student admission and support                                      | 3                                |
| 4.  | Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment | 3                                |
| 5.  | Teaching staff                                                     | 3                                |
| 6.  | Learning facilities and resources                                  | 3                                |
| 7.  | Study quality management and public information                    | 3                                |
|     | <b>Total:</b>                                                      | 21                               |

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

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

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

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

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

*Rehabilitation* study field and *second cycle* at Klaipėda University is given **positive** evaluation.

*Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas*

| <b>No.</b> | <b>Evaluation Area</b>                                             | <b>Evaluation of an Area in points*</b> |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1.         | Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum             | 3                                       |
| 2.         | Links between science (art) and studies                            | 2                                       |
| 3.         | Student admission and support                                      | 3                                       |
| 4.         | Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment | 3                                       |
| 5.         | Teaching staff                                                     | 3                                       |
| 6.         | Learning facilities and resources                                  | 3                                       |
| 7.         | Study quality management and public information                    | 3                                       |
|            | <b>Total:</b>                                                      | 20                                      |

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

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

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

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

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



### III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

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

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

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

The expert panel was asked to evaluate the two study programmes in the study field rehabilitation, namely first cycle studies Bachelor of Health Sciences Physiotherapy and the second cycle studies Master of Health Sciences in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (hereinafter – CAM).

There is conformity of the aims and outcomes of the rehabilitation field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and labour market for the region of Klaipėda. The interviews with the various stakeholders confirmed what is stated in SER (p. 7) that the aim of the physiotherapy study programme is to educate and train physiotherapists to be able to work independently mostly in the community, and regional levels, while less in the national and international levels.

Since the last evaluation of physical therapy first cycle studies in 2014, KU lost its strategic partner, namely Šiauliai University. This partnership provided KU with the possibility to offer a joint programme of Physical therapy, as well as a joint OT program. The loss of this strategic partner in the form of another Lithuanian University has shifted the strategic positioning of KU to a more regional market, while losing the OT programme which is an essential profession to complement physiotherapy in a more holistic view of rehabilitation. So as to maintain its ability to offer a joint program, KU partnered with Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine (DMI TNM Ukraine), thereby having to face inter-cultural and language differences between Klaipėda and Ukrainian regions.

The interviews in particular with teachers and students of the second cycle study programme in CAM confirmed the SER report (p. 8) that the aims and outcomes meet the requirements to have students perform professionally and creatively, to improve the learning skills necessary for continuing their independent studies, and to actively contribute to the improvement of human health through their work. While this Master of Health Sciences in CAM offers unique exposure to a number of therapies for example animal therapy, dolphin therapy,

acupuncture and art therapy, there is a lack of conceptual focus that links these therapies together, which is in particular important for building an evidence base, by means of scientific research. KU admits students with an array of first cycle studies study programmes, including psychology and art. It is less likely to attract physiotherapists or occupational therapists. Therefore there is lack of clarity as regards to the conformity of the programme's aims and outcomes to the needs of the society and the labour market.

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

The mission of Klaipėda University is “universal and exceptional in satisfaction of national demands for high quality professionals in fundamental and applied researches” (Klaipėda University – HELP2 Project). The aims and study outcomes of the first (Physiotherapy) and second (CAM) cycles of the rehabilitation study field programmes ensure that competencies relevant to the study field of study in rehabilitation do not only achieve the theory, knowledge and practice of the professions but also contribute to the creation of the welfare of the society and the fulfilment of the public and individual health needs. This conforms to KU's mission statement and focuses on establishing academic, social and business partnership for the development of scientific progress, and public welfare. Indeed, the site visit's interviews with various stakeholders confirmed in a triangulated approach that the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes are adjusted according to the needs of the regional social partners, students and teachers. This is in particular achieved with a focus on the regional rather than national level. “Underlying scientific trend in the University is cohesive development of the Baltic region and national identity under the conditions of globalisation. It is closely linked to scientific and artistic activity of other university subdivisions” (Klaipėda University – HELP2 Project). In addition, in 2019, KU became a member of the EU-CONEXUS, an alliance of universities in Europe. The specialism of EU-CONEXUS representing nine partners – universities from coastal cities in different European countries – is sustainable development of smart coastal cities.

The aims and study outcomes of the first (Physiotherapy) and second (CAM) cycles of the rehabilitation study field programmes are also in line with the vision of KU “a future-oriented university with recognised international achievements in science and studies and innovations that contribute to the well-being of the Baltic Sea Region” (SER p. 10), and the priority objectives of KU activities (Objective No. 2: Ensuring the satisfaction of the needs of the city and

the region social partners, the academic community, the society, the labour market, and investors).

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

The study field rehabilitation and the first and second cycle study programmes comply with the legal requirements as detailed in Annexes 1\_A\_B\_Annex\_Study Plans, 1 and 2\_A\_B\_Annex\_Programme\_Study\_Results\_Study\_methods\_evaluation\_methods\_interfaces.

**Table No. 1** Physiotherapy Study programme and compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes of College level – Joint with Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine (DMI TNM Ukraine)*

| Criteria                                                        | General* legal requirements             | In the Programmes |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Scope of the programme in ECTS                                  | 180, 210 or 240 ECTS                    | 210 ECTS          |
| ECTS for the study field                                        | No less than 120 ECTS                   | 132 ECTS          |
| ECTS for Scope of one - year full - time studies of the program | No less than 60 ECTS                    | 60 ECTS           |
| ECTS for final thesis (project)                                 | No less than 9 ECTS                     | 15 ECTS           |
| Practical training and other practice placements                | No less than one third of the programme | 45 ECTS           |
| Contact hours                                                   | No less than 20 % of learning           | 23%               |
| Individual learning                                             | No less than 30 % of learning           | 77% [4136 hours]  |

*\* in case there is a national Descriptor of the Field Studies, please check if there are no stricter requirements*

**Table No. 2** Complementary and alternative medicine study programme and compliance to general requirements for second cycle study programmes

| Criteria | General* legal requirements | In the Programmes |
|----------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
|----------|-----------------------------|-------------------|

|                                                                 |                               |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Scope of the programme in ECTS                                  | 90 or 120 ECTS                | 120 ECTS |
| ECTS for the study field Information Services                   | No less than 60 ECTS          | 120 ECTS |
| ECTS for Scope of one - year full - time studies of the program | No less than 60 ECTS          | 60 ECTS  |
| ECTS for final thesis (project)                                 | No less than 30 ECTS          | 30 ECTS  |
| Contact hours                                                   | No less than 10 % of learning | 20%      |
| Individual learning                                             | No less than 50 % of learning | 80%      |

*\* in case there is a national Descriptor of the Field Studies, please check if there are no stricter requirements*

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

The aims, learning outcomes, teaching and learning and assessment methods of the first (Physiotherapy) and second (CAM) cycles are compatible with the rehabilitation study field programmes. For the physiotherapy study programme, these are achieved on a full-time basis within 3.5 years (7 semesters) with a credit value of 210 ECTS. (Annex 2A). The learning outcomes level corresponds to the European Level VI and the qualification requirements described in the National Qualifications Framework Level VI. The study programme is also in line with the requirements for undergraduate bachelor's degree programmes in terms of ECTS credits. For the CAM Master programme, the aims and learning outcomes are achieved on a full-time basis within 2 years (4 semesters) with a credit value of 120 ECTS (Annex 2A). The learning outcomes correspond to the qualification requirements described in the National Qualifications Framework Level VII (Annex 2B).

As regards teaching and learning, the fact that Lithuanian students are taught in Lithuanian and Ukrainian students are taught in Ukrainian/English/Russian does not allow attendance to the same lectures – albeit within the ethos of international collaboration. The Lectures in English/Russian are given by KU lecturers, who deliver the content twice within the same semester. Despite having guidelines that provide for academic mobility between institutions related to the study process, namely KU and Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine, travel to Ukraine is not happening because of geopolitical

conflict. Two to three internships of DMI TNM students take place in Lithuania in the 4th semester.

As shown in Annexes 2a and 2b, study methods and assessment methods are compatible with the learning outcomes for both the first (Physiotherapy) and second (CAM) cycles study programmes. Assessment methods are comprehensive and are both formative and summative. They correspond to the various aspects of the subject matter in line with the learning outcomes. The results of the assessment of the Ukrainian students' assessment are recorded in the KU academic information system.

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

The first cycle study programme in Physiotherapy is competency-based and is structured in a manner that study units build on each other. The content is relevant and consistent with Physiotherapy Bachelor degree programmes in Europe. The intention for interdisciplinarity is there in particular with medicine and nursing. But since the loss of the OT bachelor degree in 2014 by Klaipėda University, which was run in partnership with Šiauliai University, physiotherapy students cannot be exposed to a more complete and natural rehabilitation team learning in physiotherapy and OT. The study programme does have general university studies, e. g. Philosophy, Professional Foreign Languages and Psychology that are intended to help students acquire a wider and deeper perspective of study apart from the technical subjects.

The second cycle study programme in complementary and alternative medicine provides an array of interesting therapies, e. g. hippotherapy, dolphin therapy, acupuncture, Ayurveda which however do not have a properly defined conceptual commonality. Nevertheless, the subjects and modules related to policies, research methods and thesis preparation are included in the programme to provide an adequate academic platform necessary for a second cycle programme.

### *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*

The site-visit and interviews showed that Klaipėda University is student-friendly with provisions for personalised learning that is oriented to suit students' professional needs. Articles 53.6, 109, 161, 162 of the Study Regulations allow students to individualise their studies and create an individual plan with a list of compulsory and elective study subjects that

are provided for in the study programme. The students also confirmed that in individual cases an additional list of study subjects is compiled for an individual student. The senior management confirmed the University's commitment for both teachers and students to have a better grasp of foreign languages in view of the joint programmes, as well as European mobility. This is reflected in the first cycle study programme as 6 credits - professional foreign language [1\_A\_B\_Annex\_Study\_Plans\_xlsx].

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

The final theses of both the first (Physiotherapy) and second (Complementary and alternative medicine) cycles reflect the research requirements of the rehabilitation study field programmes. The structure in terms of student preparation and supervision is in place. The assessment is in line with the KU Study Regulations (2018). Nevertheless, the first and second cycle study programmes' final theses should better reflect the communication with and interests of social partners – such that the topics chosen could be of better use to build evidence-based practices in the region.

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

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

1. KU provides a physiotherapy study programme that satisfies the needs of society and of the labour market in the region of Klaipėda, and therefore prevents a brain drain to bigger cities like Vilnius and Kaunas.
2. The study aims, outcomes and content are discussed with social partners in the region's communities.
3. KU has shown through its joint programme with Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine (DMI TNM Ukraine), the ability to promote intercultural competences. KU is also projecting a humane aspect in its partnership with a Ukrainian institution in this difficult geopolitical context.
4. KU has shown an entrepreneurial ability to position itself in the rehabilitation study field by offering the second cycle CAM study programme. This includes art therapy and animal therapy.

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

1. KU lost its partnership with Šiauliai University in the previously joint programme on Physical therapy. KU also had a joint OT programme with Šiauliai University. This proves to be challenging on two counts: first, the loss of OT programme from having a more complete rehabilitation study field, namely of physiotherapists and occupational therapists both while learning and eventually in the region when working; second, the joint programme with Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine (DMI TNM Ukraine) is challenged by the inter-cultural differences between Klaipeda and Ukrainian regions.
2. The first cycle joint programme in physiotherapy is facing linguistic challenges in that both the Lithuanian and the Ukrainian teachers and students are proficient in their respective languages and potentially in Russian, but are not perfectly proficient in English.
3. The first and second cycle study programmes' final theses should better reflect the communication with and interests of social partners – such that the topics chosen could be of better use to build evidence-based practices in the region.
4. The second cycle programme of CAM's aims and objectives, in particular in view of the rather long list of therapies studied conceptually lacks a focus, which is to say that there is no properly defined conceptual commonality in the aims and objectives of these various therapies. This is in particular important for building an evidence base, by means of scientific research, that needs to be closer to that found in western medicine.
5. The second cycle programme admits mature students who may not be at a sufficiently proficient level in English that would enable European mobility.

### **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 research activities of the teachers in the Field (Physiotherapy-Bachelor level; CAM, Master level) seem still relatively weak. The SER (p. 18) declares that “in 2018-2021, teachers of the field of rehabilitation studies with co-authors published 96 scientific works”. The number of teachers (Table 11) between 2018 and 2021 ranged from 31 to 37 (of which 15 to

20 professors). In other words, each teacher published less than one paper per year. However, Table 3 shows that in the publications indexed in the WoS database, listing journals with Impact Factor, there are only 5 five items. There is also one book chapter published in 2021. This suggests that research is mostly documented by other products (congress proceedings, articles on non-indexed Journals etc.).

A look at the SCIVAL database may help . On the one hand, SCIVAL is more lenient than WoS because it counts all products within the “scholarly output” retrievable through databases (e.g., book chapters; indexed proceedings). On the other hand, SCIVAL may be more restrictive than WoS. The research areas surveyed by SCIVAL may not coincide with those observed by WoS. In particular, “Rehabilitation” (a sub-area of “Medicine” in SCIVAL) still has different definitions within the most authoritative databases (e.g., research is in progress from the Cochrane database to give a sharper classification of “rehabilitation” articles). This discrepancy may explain the different counts produced by WoS and SCIVAL relative to the Rehabilitation “topic” or “area”. That said, from the standpoint of SCIVAL KU published, between 2018 and 2021, 22 products in the area of “Nursing” and 128 products within the area of “Medicine” (including the six items classifiable as “Rehabilitation” products). There are three retrievable products under the sub-heading “Complementary and alternative medicine”. Therefore, from what WoS and SCIVAL show, the Rehabilitation field appears somewhat ancillary within KU regarding scientific evidence.

The SER (p. 7) reinforces this impression. The SER cites the good results obtained by KU in the 2013-2017 national “Comparative Expert Evaluation of Research and Experimental Development”. But these results relate to Medicine, Nursing and Public Health, so the role of Rehabilitation cannot be disentangled.

Also, the Faculty of Health Sciences established a Health research and innovation centre in 2015. This initiative, although not specific to Rehabilitation, should be appreciated.

The efforts to conduct external research activities are worth praise (see pages 18-19 of the SER). Research is carried out to meet the needs of the Region. At least three projects are cited: 1) Overcoming Barriers to Children's Rehabilitation: From Correction to Inclusive Cooperation; 2) Effect of Therapeutic Ball Integration on Psychomotor Development of Preschool Children; 3) Assessment of the ergonomic environment of employees. Participation in international projects also seems promising. Six teachers are engaged in international research networks, and several lecturers participated in 9 international projects. In addition,



cooperation with the Klaipėda Hospital is ongoing on vestibular/balance pathophysiology research.

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

The scientific production of the field at Klaipėda University is represented mainly by the number of theses (Annex 4, years 2018-2021: 164 theses). It is of note that these theses seem completely appropriate with the field, and fully consistent with the contents of the Courses in Physiotherapy (Bachelor level) and CAM (Master level).

The commitment to provide a science-based education to the students, i. e., teaching the “ability to conduct research” (Annex 2), is clearly stated in the ambitious “programme outcomes” listed in Annex 2A (Physiotherapy, points B1 to B4) and Annex 2B (CAHC programme, Points B1 and B2). In this respect, there seems to be a modest number of credits given to the Course on “biomedical research methodology”: 6 credits out of 210 for the Physiotherapy program and 6 out of 120 for the CAHC program.

Some more comments must be reserved for the CAHC program. In 120 credits, it introduces the students (some of them with no biomedical background) to a broad list of “complementary/alternative” disciplines: these are (Annex 1 – Study plan-CAM: Ayurveda, Animal-assisted, Traditional Chinese medicine, Homeopathy, Phytotherapy, Music therapy, Biblio-poetry therapy. The list might be widened, of course (e.g., to Osteopathic Medicine, Chiropractics, Anthroposophic Medicine etc.)

Considerations on the program itself are given in another section of the Report. It is clear, however, that in a 2-year program (120 credits), only a summary overview can be given of so many fields, some of which represent entire medical models provided with a vast series of diagnostic and therapeutic approaches (e.g., Traditional Chinese Medicine, Homeopathy). From the standpoint of research, it is recommended to adjust the educational project. This wide-angle, short-term education seems not optimal if the goal is to generate a specific scientific attitude and a practical experimental experience, enabling the student to contribute creatively to research programs. This adjustment might be modest, of course, if the goal of the study program was generating a critical attitude towards medical research in general (including, research in western Medicine), allowing the student to engage in further research and clinical practice in one of the many “complementary” disciplines available. But this would require a more explicit focus on one or two “alternative” medical models and a sharper focus on epistemic arguments.

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

Apart from the good Thesis production, students' engagement in applied research activities seems sufficient but needs some improvement. In the years 2019,2020, and 2021, only 20 to 25% of them were involved in "joint research and projects with faculty members and disseminating research results at national and international conferences and other events". The teaching facilities seem good (library, rooms for manual physiotherapy practice, the Dolphinarium, etc.). However, the biomedical research labs seem still under-dosed. The main lab-research area is balance/posture and force measurements, with modern yet still basic instrumentation. A limit to the development of research in the field may be the absence, at KU, of Courses on Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy and a Course on Specialization in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine. This would foster cultural interactions in the Field and the sharing of scientific/technical resources. Collaboration with other Lithuanian Universities might be looked for.

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

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

1. KU actions undertaken to promote research skills among students and teachers (e.g. through an innovative Research Center)
2. Innovative idea of a CAHC master course, inclusive of research teaching, in cooperation with a foreign (Dnipro-Ukraine) university.

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

1. Low scientific production (indexed articles) from the field. This seems of particular relevance for the second cycle studies, which have a more substantial research component.
2. Low development of rehab research laboratories.
3. Still blurred the scientific identity of the CAHC course (collection of broad information on various alternative medicines and procedures). The scarce focus on general methodological issues may hinder the fully active involvement of students in clear-cut scientific research.

### 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 admission is carried out by the Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for Organizing General Admission (LAMA BPO) and follows standardised procedures for the calculation of competitive scores. The score includes grades in biology, mathematics, physics or chemistry, Lithuanian language, and additional subjects. A minimum score needs to be reached for admission. These rules are publicly available on the universities and the associations website. As for the second cycle studies, people enter the chosen study program during competition if they meet the requirements specified in the admission rules. Students can get consultations regarding admission and study process in the relevant University departments directly or by other online means of communication. KU provides students with access to virtual learning environments, as well as their personal accounts, e-mails and other tools that are necessary for successful studies.

The admission criteria are public, straightforward, and suitable for programmes of both cycles. However, as it was mentioned during the interviews, University plans on focusing more on international students where problems may occur as not all the staff members presented great knowledge and fluency in English language. Based on the Table 5 of the SER the number of applicants have decreased in both cycles, however, the competitive scores of the entrants remained high and this leads to small groups of highly motivated students that get hands-on and personal learning experiences. However, the expert panel concluded that the application and admission situation has to be closely monitored and promotional actions, for example career fairs, marketing courses to schools preparing students for University, social media must be taken.

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

KU has defined procedures for the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning, partial studies and foreign qualifications that follow common practises such as learning agreements. These regulations are laid down in the KU Study Regulations. Compatibility is

evaluated by the Head of Studies and the teacher of the respective subject and approved by KU Senate. The rules are focussed on general comparability of subject, scope and essential objectives. In the last three years the rules have applied once.

Adequate procedures are in place and are lenient. The rules are compliant with the Lisbon convention. During the interviews there were no indications about problems with their application.

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

As stated in the SER (p. 26), the academic mobility policy implemented by KU is in line with the University's international strategy for research and study activities, which is integrated into the University general strategic documents. Selection for students takes place twice a year, and the promotional events take place before the deadlines. Information about the academic mobility is published on the websites of University, Faculty and on social media. Due to the pandemic, the academic mobility of students stopped. University has a great opportunity for students to study at KU and DMI TNM at the same time, and take some subjects remotely.

KU provides students with a wide variety of academic mobility opportunities and also has a great partnership with DMI TNM University organising full-time studies that are conducted in a mixed distance mode. In the SER Table 6 the number of outgoing students is abundantly lower than the incoming students. Only two students in 2018-2019, and one in 2021-2022 went to a program of mobility abroad. The number of incoming students on the other hand was 14 students in 2018-2019 and 2 in 2021-2022. The countries involved in this exchange are Spain, Poland, Belgium and Estonia. This situation could be softened by providing a possibility of an e-mobility system that would introduce students to academic mobility in general and later on encourage them to engage in physical mobility. At the same time, more promotions through individual communication channels should be disseminated. Research should be conducted on why students are passive and work on the problems.

Overall, the experts panel concluded that the conditions for academic mobility of students can be improved.

### *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*

Students at KU are offered academic, social, financial, and personal, psychological and spiritual support as well as discussions on career opportunities are provided for students. Students with disabilities, financial difficulties, or those with excellent marks or high

engagement in activities can earn scholarships. University also has an active student body KUSS. Individual consultations with a psychologist are provided as well as a spiritual pastoral consultation that are conducted by chaplain of the pastoral care. KU is highly focused on providing academic support for national, international, full-time, Erasmus+ and bilateral exchange agreement students.

During the site visit the expert panel came to the conclusion that students are overall happy with the support given. According to the students all issues could be resolved directly through interaction with the on-site staff, or by referral to the proper responsible persons. The students value the small size of the programme and the direct and efficient communication with the staff. The panel considers the support to be good, including the support for disabled and socially disadvantaged students.

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

Students are introduced to the programme and relevant information by the MRI study organisation group and administration at the beginning of the academic year. This includes introductory lectures. They are also acquainted with the library and reading room, as well as research areas and potential course project topics. Information about individual modules is provided in the first lecture of the module in question. In addition, there are frequent formal and informal meetings.

During the site visit the evaluation group concluded that students are happy with the information provided. The small size of the student body allows for direct communication between staff and students. The panel considers the information provided and counselling given to be good.

The website of KU is very clear, student-friendly and provides information on the goal of the program, subjects, expected outcomes and admissions.

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

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. Effective financial, academic, psychological and spiritual support of KU students for good learning results including disabled and socially disadvantaged students.
2. Small cohorts allow for shortcuts and direct interaction of students and responsible staff.

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

1. Passive engagement in academic mobility and not formed e-mobility system.
2. Decreasing numbers of applications and admissions must be monitored and worked on to ensure continuity of the first cycle programme.

### **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 SER has had a very clear description of the evaluation of the teaching and learning process for this point of concern. The teaching and learning process is conducted using lectures, group projects, case study, group work and small group consultation, etc. which is in line with the current international practices. In both the first cycle and second cycle studies, formative, intermediate and final assessment of each subject is performed. Practical training for the first cycle physiotherapy programme is well structured and implemented in a variety of settings including educational and counselling institutions and rehabilitation and medical settings. Evaluation of students' independent work is clearly reported.

Despite the above good practices, it is noted that there has not been much description on the use of new technologies for teaching, for example, virtual reality and simulation.

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

The policy and support given to students from socially vulnerable groups and with special needs are clearly documented in the SER (p. 34). These include consultations of the accessibility of studies, individualised study process, and integration of students into the life of the academic community. On page 42, paragraph 112, it provides a list of students under these conditions who are allowed to study in the program. For example, this list includes students after partial studies in foreign higher education institutions. In our meeting with their teaching staff, we

were told that some students from Ukraine were admitted into the KU programmes because of safety reasons in their own country. A teacher from Ukraine also joined our meeting with the teachers sharing experience in his country. In paragraph 113, it is stated that students with disabilities are also ensured accessibility to the study programmes.

Given the good policy and practice stated above, the expert panel was not shown facilities to ensure access to students with various types of disabilities such as hearing and visual impairment.

#### *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*

According to the SER (p. 34-35), the programmes have clearly defined cumulative assessment to monitor student study progress. The examination formats and other details are clearly provided to the students at the beginning of the semester. There is a final grade provided to each of the subjects. Different parts of the cumulative assessment assess different learning outcomes. The minimum score for assessments is 5. Based on Tables 7 and 8, the overall average (ranging from to 8) of the first cycle Physiotherapy and second cycle CAM among the students in different cohorts is fairly high. However, the SD of the scores in Tables 7 and 8 and hence the normal distribution are not known. It is difficult to evaluate if the assessments are good enough to differentiate good and poor performing students.

According to Table 10, the number of drop-out is very low. In addition, there is a mechanism (p. 116) to ensure early identification of students at high risks of failure due to problems in attendance or special needs.

At the end of each semester, student feedback is collected via an anonymous online questionnaire to evaluate the student and performances of the teachers. It is also stated in the SER that more than 90% of students rated the subjects taught as good or very good. This is in general in line with the comments we collected while the expert panel met the students. However, it is not known if the students are free to choose if they want or do not want to fill in the questionnaires. Meanwhile, the percentage of filling in the questionnaires is also not known to the expert panel.

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

The mechanism to evaluate the employability of the graduates is clearly reported in the SER (p. 37). The career monitoring is performed with the help of the Career Management Information System. Objective indicators of employment among graduates can be obtained for

5 years and are regularly updated. In general, both study programmes are considered good in terms of employability. More than 50% of graduates from the first cycle Physiotherapy programme worked directly in rehabilitation, and others choose to study in the second cycle and work in other fields. This echoed the information we obtained during our meeting with the graduates and employers.

In paragraph 121, it is stated that students with good academic results and having an interest in scientific research are invited to stay with the university. The evaluation team regards this as an excellent practice to recruit those who have potential for studying PhD and add to evidence-based practice of the profession.

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

Based on the information provided by the SER (p. 38), the principles and procedures to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are clearly documented. It is also a good practice for each student to sign a declaration of integrity. In paragraph 128, it is clear that the student has the channel to appeal his/her assessment grade if found to be not correct. This is observed during our meetings with teaching staff and students. There was no concern on these issues, suggesting that the principles and practices are well put in place.

#### *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*

According to the information given by the SER (p. 39-40), the rights of the students for appeal of the assessment grades and the appeal procedures are clearly stipulated. It is a good practice that the Dean of the Faculty or Head of Department is involved in the process. If the student is not satisfied with the appeal result, there is a channel for applying to the university level.

However, the appeal is not applicable to the final thesis (para. 131). The figures for appeal and outcomes are not available to the evaluation team.

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

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

1. More than half of the graduates work in rehabilitation and related settings.

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



1. The daily maximum students' contact at eight hours is too high leaving too little time for self-initiated study activities.
2. The expert panel has not seen many facilities to cater for study needs of students with disabilities (e.g., students with visual and hearing impairment, etc.)
3. Although it is stated that students with good academic results and having an interest in scientific research are invited to stay with the university, we did not see any examples in our meetings with the students and employers.

### **3.5. TEACHING STAFF**

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

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

The number of teachers of the programs under evaluation is listed in the SER (p. 42). Based on the information provided in the report including Annex 3, both the quantity and quality are up to the expected standards in general. The majority of the teachers are at the rank of Associate Professors, meaning that they have achieved certain standards of teaching and research experiences. The teachers are multidisciplinary in nature, covering medicine, psychology, CAM, physiotherapy, research and statistics, and clinical practice. The manpower for teaching biomedical and social sciences, and CAM subjects is found to be sufficient. In terms of quantity, the staff to student ratio is about 1 to 10 which is highly desirable and allows small group teaching to ensure good learning outcomes. One more observation is that the turnover of teaching staff is low which suggests good job satisfaction in the current terms of employment as experienced by the teaching staff. This is in line with our observation during the meeting with the senior management and teachers.

According to the information provided in the SER (p. 43), 26 teachers have taught the first cycle programme subjects in which 14 of them are doctors of science, thus fulfilling the legal requirement on the staffing of undergraduate university subjects. The second cycle programme in Complementary and Alternative Medicine has 16 teachers possessing a scientific degree, contributing to 82% of the total number of teachers and comply with the general requirement of the second cycle legal acts.

However, it is noted that the number of staff having an expertise in physiotherapy and other rehabilitation disciplines is limited. Based on Annex 3, we can only identify 5 who have a solid background in teaching physiotherapy subjects. The spectrum of expertise across various sub-speciality of physiotherapy seems not adequate. For example, we did not find any teaching staff having an expertise in paediatric physiotherapy and cardiopulmonary physiotherapy. The current staff strength in physiotherapy is only sufficient in coping with the teaching needs of the existing student number which is far below the desired number given the increasing needs of physiotherapy from the views of the stakeholders we met. **The impact of the current staff complement has an impact on both the first and the second cycles.**

Last but not the least, we did see any staff member who is trained as an occupational therapist. In the long run, this has significantly limited the university to develop an occupational therapy programme which is equally important to cater the rehabilitation of elderly and people with disabilities according to international experiences of the evaluation team.

### *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)*

According to the SER (p.43-44), the conditions for academic mobility or staff development among teachers are quite favourable. Short-term visits are provided to teaching staff which are usually in the form of study visits and internships and are funded by the ERASMUS+ program. Most of the visits centred around Europe such as Belgium and Estonia. In our meeting with the teachers, this is confirmed by the sharing among the teachers. It seems that teachers are quite satisfied with the existing arrangement for academic mobility as provided by the university.

While the expert panel appreciates the existing practice on academic mobility of the teaching staff, we do have some comments for consideration for the university. First, the visits are mainly short-term. According to international practice among high ranking universities, there is usually the provision of "sabbatical leave" among tenured academic staff after serving for the university for six to seven years. This sabbatical will usually last for at least six to 12 months, with the staff member being attached to another university of his/her choice for full-scale exchange in teaching/learning and research. This kind of longer academic mobility may be considered by KU. Second, the existing visits are mainly teaching in nature. However, the expert panel suggests that the visit may also be research focused so that teaching staff will work on a collaborative project with another university so as to improve competencies in scholarly activities. Finally, we suggest that the visits should not be limited to Europe. If possible, teachers

should be encouraged to travel to the Asian Pacific Region such as Australia and Hong Kong (SAR of China) and North America such as Canada and USA.

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

In terms of competencies improvement, it is good to know that KU is an associate partner in the project ADULET to improve the quality of teachers teaching competencies and the use of modern technologies. Meanwhile, teachers in KU also participate in training programmes organised by Lithuanian and foreign universities.

Given these good practices, there are still two points the expert panel would like to point out. The first point is that the competencies improvement focuses only on teaching pedagogy but limited attention is given to research competencies. In addition, “foreign” universities are restricted to Europe. This has potential to go further away to different parts of the world similar to 3.5.2.

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

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

1. The experience and quality of staff is rich.
2. The staff to student ratio is low and desirable.

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

1. The number of staff with an expertise in physiotherapy is not enough.
2. The expertise of the staff members with a background in physiotherapy is not enough.
3. There is no staff member with an expertise in occupational therapy.
4. The academic mobility is only short term without long term attachment to other universities such as sabbatical leave.
5. KU should have more collaborations with Universities outside Europe.
6. Competency training among staff is limited to teaching aspects, without much attention on research.

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

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

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

At KU, Rehabilitation field studies are carried out in the main building of the Faculty of Medicine, where the main auditoriums, laboratories, administration and department rooms are located. Auditoriums are equipped with video demonstration tools – multimedia, computers, smart boards. The faculty has facilities adapted for distance learning. Free wireless Internet connection is available in all classrooms, laboratories and library reading rooms. Information on facilities and science studies is adapted for students with special needs.

The Aula Magna building is modern, it is located on the KU campus and is intended for streaming lectures, conferences and large-scale events (2 auditoriums with 240 seats each and a 100-seat conference hall). This building houses the FHS library and reading room. In conclusion, it can be said that the study facilities are adequate, but during the visit it was noticed that the library has a minimal number of seats.

Methodological resources in the library (textbooks, books, periodicals, international databases, etc.) are suitable, sufficient and available. Students have the opportunity to use 6 sections of the library, which are equipped with 87 reading places, but the number of reading places in the FHS reading room is minimal, only 18 of which only 7 places are computerised.

Practical training of students takes place in the Kinesitherapy room and the Neurosensorimotor diagnostics laboratory, which is located in the KU business incubator. Students can use a variety of devices and diagnostic equipment to assess the condition of patients. Students also conduct research in these laboratories and collect data for coursework and final theses. The document does not specify the physical resources and material base for teaching the following subjects of the physiotherapy program: "First aid, nursing and pharmacology" and "Electrotherapy".

The university has implemented a virtual learning environment and a collaboration system Moodle, Office 365 (student/teacher communication takes place, study materials are placed), which contributes to ensuring the effective study process. The system enables teachers to choose different forms of teaching, to organise practical activities in various ways, and to share teaching tools.

The university cooperates with more than 20 social partners, where students carry out professional practice. During the visit, the students expressed positive assessments of the quality of the practice bases. The department has a flexible approach to the choice of practice base, so students have the opportunity to do practice throughout Lithuania.

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

The fund of methodological publications of the library is constantly updated taking into account the recommendations of students and teachers. Every year the University community is introduced to the catalogues of foreign Lithuanian publishing houses. The procedure for ordering new publications is simple, so new publications are available by filling out a book order application online. Teachers, students and the library cooperate directly and the library staff informs about the possibility of purchasing desired publications by e-mail. Thus, literature for science is easily accessible. There is enough literature for rehabilitation field studies.

The library and the department cooperate in order to improve students' information literacy and organise information competence development training.

The plan for the need for physical facilities is drawn up according to the needs of students and teachers. Equipment planned for purchase: muscle tone assessment machine with software, sensory brushes, Tumble Forms tool kit, Chattanooga Intelect Neo multimodular electrotherapy platform. The means are necessary to develop the practical abilities of the students of the field of study. According to the purpose of the tools, the choice of tools is more directed towards teaching students of the physiotherapy study program.

SER briefly presents the possibilities of using the material base of the centre of simulation training methods of the Dnipro Institute of Traditional and Alternative Medicine are limited due to the geopolitical situation in Ukraine.

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

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

1. The Neurosensory Motor Diagnostics Laboratory established in the premises of the KU Business Incubator is intended for students to carry out scientific activities and to develop practical diagnostic skills.
2. The library's information resources fund is accumulated in close cooperation with university teachers and students, taking into account the needs of the academic community and changes in study programs.
3. Students have the opportunity to have professional practice throughout Lithuania, the university cooperates with more than 20 social partners.

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

1. The library reading room at FHS has a minimum number of seats that does not correspond to the number of students.
2. The purpose of the diagnostic equipment in the laboratories is focused on the training of physiotherapy study program students, meeting the needs of first-cycle students.

According to the available equipment, there are limited research opportunities for students and teachers of second-cycle studies.

### **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*

According to the SER (p. 52-55), there is a well thought out and planned quality assurance system. It is clearly stated that this is the responsibility of KU involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders. It is also stated that KU complied well with ISO 9001: 2015 with evidence of certification for this achievement. There is a Study Quality Commission formed by the Rector of KU consisting 12 members from all departments and administrative units. At the departmental level (i. e. The Department of Holistic Medicine and Rehabilitation), the implementation of the Quality Assurance rests on the Head of the Study programs. The activities involved in the process are clearly reported in the SER. This begins with a quality assurance plan at the beginning of the academic year, based on comments received from students, social partners, etc. There are seminars afterwards to make sure this is fully implemented. This is consistent with what we heard from the meetings with teachers, students and social partners. It is observed that Key Performance Indicators (KPI), which are widely recognised and used in many world-renowned universities, are not used in the quality assurance system of KU.

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

Both the information given by the SER (p. 56-57) and our observation at the meetings have pointed to the conclusion that KU has had in general an effective system in the involvement of stakeholders including teachers, students, and social partners.

However, it seems that KU, including the Department of Holistic Medicine and Rehabilitation, does not have a strong alumni association which may also be a part of the stakeholders. In addition, the stakeholders did not include some important members from rehabilitation such as occupational therapists, speech therapists, etc. These missing professionals may serve an important purpose of informing KU the needs of those with disabilities and chronic illness.

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

The information on the study programmes available on the KU website is clearly described in the SER (p.59, para. 208). The contents include requirements for admission to the programs, study programme outcomes, etc. However, the information is in Lithuanian only and no English version can be available (first cycle programme at <https://www.ku.lt/lt/bakalauro-studijos-2/sveikatos-mokslai/kineziterapija> and second cycle programme at <https://www.ku.lt/lt/papildomosios-studijos/sveikatos-mokslai-3/papildomoji-ir-alternatyvioji-medicina-1>). The expert panel was also shown selected videos on the study programmes which were impressive, and the videos are available to the public under the above-mentioned websites.

### *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*

The various channels used by KU to collect opinions of the students of the study programs are described in the SER (p.60P). These channels include different kinds of surveys conducted among different parties. The results collected are used by the senior management and study programs for consideration of improvement.

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

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

1. A well planned quality assurance system is in place in KU involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

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

1. There is a lack of the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in the quality assurance system.
2. KU including the Department of Holistic Medicine and Rehabilitation does not have a strong alumni association which may also be a part of the stakeholders.
3. The stakeholders did not include some important members from rehabilitation such as occupational therapists, speech therapists, etc.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

| Evaluation Area                                        | Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To improve collaborations with other related Universities in Lithuania.</li> <li>2. To ensure language proficiencies of both the Lithuanian and the Ukrainian teachers and students in the joint programme.</li> <li>3. To ensure that the first and second cycle study programmes' final theses better reflect the communication with and interests of social partners – such that the topics chosen could be of better use to build evidence-based practices in the region.</li> <li>4. To better define the conceptual commonality in the aims and objectives of the various therapies listed in the second cycle programme of complementary and alternative medicine.</li> <li>5. To ensure that the mature students in the second cycle programme are sufficiently proficient in English.</li> <li>6. To work with other Lithuanian Universities so that complementary and alternative therapy becomes a regulated profession.</li> </ol> |
| Links between science (art) and studies                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To encourage scientific production of indexed articles.</li> <li>2. To better develop rehab research laboratories.</li> <li>3. To clarify the scientific identity of the CAM course (collection of broad information on various alternative medicines and procedures).</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Student admission and support                          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To encourage student mobility.</li> <li>2. To better market the study programmes and the study field in view of the decreasing numbers of applications and admissions.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Teaching and learning, student performance             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To ensure provision of facilities to cater for study needs of students with disabilities (e.g., students with visual and hearing impairment, etc.)</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| and graduate employment                         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. To ensure that there is an appeal system in place for the final thesis.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Teaching staff                                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To increase the number of staff with an expertise in physiotherapy.</li> <li>2. To recruit staff with expertise in occupational therapy.</li> <li>3. To improve academic mobility with longer term attachments to other universities by offering sabbatical leave.</li> <li>4. To widen academic visits beyond Europe if possible.</li> </ol> |
| Learning facilities and resources               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To increase the number of seats in the library reading room.</li> <li>2. To acquire equipment that would encourage teachers and students to carry out higher-quality scientific research.</li> <li>3. In order to increase KU's competitiveness, look for new additional partner universities.</li> </ol>                                     |
| Study management and public information quality | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To introduce Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in the quality assurance system.</li> <li>2. To encourage the development of an alumni association KU for the Department of Holistic Medicine and Rehabilitation.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                    |

## VI. SUMMARY

Overall, the Rehabilitation field of Klaipėda University deserves a positive evaluation in all six areas of assessment, i.e.

1. Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum
2. Links between science (Art) and studies
3. Student admission and support
4. Teaching and learning, student performance, and graduate employment
5. Teaching staff
6. Learning facilities and resources
7. Study quality management and public information

Correspondingly, on a 1 to 5 scoring system, scores were almost all 3 across the areas except 'Links between science (Art) and studies for second cycle rehabilitation programme (see Table on page 9 of the present EER). The level of publications per teacher is less likely to impact the quality of the first cycle in contrast to the second cycle, which has a more substantial research component - both in the number of credits and the level of study. This justifies the score of 3 for cycle 1 and 2 for cycle 2. The teaching staff deserves a score 3 nonetheless. The Experts' panel observed positive attitudes, engagement in the academic work, and potential, deserving further investments in research from the university.

Klaipėda University is a young university and offers multidisciplinary, national and Baltic marine science and studies to cater mostly to the needs of the Western Lithuania region and Klaipėda. Indeed, KU provides a physiotherapy study programme that satisfies the needs of society and of the labour market in the region of Klaipėda, and therefore prevents a brain drain to bigger cities like Vilnius and Kaunas. The Physiotherapy study programme provides students with individual attention, mentorship and coaching. After the merger of Šiauliai University with Vilnius University, KU lost its partner, and as a result it was decided not to pursue the first cycle study program of *Physiotherapy* with Šiauliai Academy of Vilnius University (former ŠU). KU also had a joint OT programme with Šiauliai University, which was lost. The loss of OT programme has impacted the rehabilitation study field in that physiotherapists and occupational therapists are not together while learning. The number of staff with an expertise in physiotherapy is not enough and there is no staff member with an expertise in occupational therapy.

Although KU forged another partnership with the Ukrainian Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine that led to the creation of a joint international

undergraduate program in Physiotherapy, this is a challenge in view of the current Ukrainian geopolitical crisis. KU has shown through this joint programme the ability to promote intercultural competences, while also projecting a humane aspect in its partnership with a Ukrainian institution in this difficult geopolitical context. The first cycle joint programme in physiotherapy is facing linguistic challenges in that both the Lithuanian and the Ukrainian teachers and students are proficient in their respective languages and potentially in Russian, but are not perfectly proficient in English. Therefore it is not clear whether adequate communication exists in both teaching and learning to ensure smooth running of the programme.

KU has shown an entrepreneurial ability to position itself in the rehabilitation study field by offering the second cycle Complementary and Alternative Medicine study programme. This includes art therapy and animal therapy. Nevertheless, the aims and objectives of this programme conceptually lacks a focus and a properly defined conceptual commonality across the long list of therapies studied. This is in particular important for building an evidence base, by means of scientific research, that needs to be closer to that found in western medicine. Furthermore, complementary and alternative therapy is not a regulated profession and therefore KU cannot have information on how many are needed in the service, nor on the acceptance of the type of qualification for employment.

The first and second cycle study programmes' final theses should better reflect the communication with and interests of social partners - such that the topics chosen could be of better use to build evidence-based practices in the region. Nevertheless, KU has invested in an innovative research centre, which is a reflection of KU's interest in promoting research skills among students and teachers. However, rehab research laboratories need to be better developed. Scientific production of indexed articles in the field is still low.

KU offers effective financial, academic, psychological and spiritual support to students, including those with disabilities and social disadvantages with good learning results. The presence of small cohorts allow for better direct interaction between students and staff. Students have the opportunity to have professional practice throughout Lithuania, the university cooperates with more than 20 social partners. The various channels used by KU to collect opinions of the students of the study programmes are adequate.

The teaching and learning processes using lecture, project, group discussion, case study, etc. are clearly described and in line with current international practices. There is formative, intermediate and final assessment of each subject. The practical training for the first cycle

physiotherapy programme is well structured and implemented in a variety of settings. There is a clear and well defined career and employment monitoring system for the graduates.

The principles and procedures to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are clearly documented. Students also have appropriate channels to appeal his/her assessment grade if found not to be correct.

KU has adequate learning facilities and resources. Auditoria and laboratories are well-equipped for lectures and have equipment for distance learning. Free wireless Internet connection is available in all premises. The academic community actively uses the virtual learning and communication system. Furthermore, the facilities and scientific study information are adapted for persons with special needs. KU has the Neurosensory Motor Diagnostics Laboratory, which has been established in the premises of the KU Business Incubator and intended for students to carry out scientific activities and to develop practical diagnostic skills. The library's information resources fund is accumulated in close cooperation with university teachers and students, taking into account the needs of the academic community and changes in study programs. Yet, the library reading room has a limited number of seats. The purpose of the diagnostic equipment in the laboratories is focused on the training of physiotherapy study program students, meeting the needs of first-cycle students but offers limited research opportunities for students and teachers of second-cycle studies.

KU has a well planned quality assurance system in place involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders. Yet, the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in the quality assurance system is poorly developed. The information on the study programmes is available on the KU website.

Expert panel chairperson signature:  
Prof. dr. Sandra Buttigieg