



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD OF FORESTRY

AT KAUNO MIŠKŲ IR APLINKOS INŽINERIJOS KOLEGIJA

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Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	FORESTRY
State code	6531IX001
Type of studies	Higher education college studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)
Credit volume	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Agriculture Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	30-8-2002

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of study fields is based on the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) 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 prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI)*; 2) *site visit of the expert panel to the higher education institution*; 3) *production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The remote visit to the HEI was organized on the 24th of May, 2022.

1. **Prof. dr. Bo Dahlin**, *professor at University of Helsinki, (Finland)*;
2. **Prof. dr. Vilis Brukas**, *professor at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, (Sweden)*;
3. **Prof. dr. Turčáni Marek**, *professor at Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, (Czech Republic)*;
4. **Dr. Rimvydas Juškaitis**, *Natural Research Center Institute of Ecology, (Lithuania)*;
5. **Ms Karolina Limanovskaja**, *student at Vilnius University Life Sciences Center, (Lithuania.)*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report 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 THE STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD POSITION/STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HEI

Public Enterprise Kauno Miškų ir Aplinkos inžinerijos Kolegija (subsequently KMAIK or College) is the state higher education institution of the Republic of Lithuania (subsequently LR).

Upon the resolution of LR Government, on August 30 of 2002 Kaunas Higher Forestry School was reorganized into the state higher educational institution (subsequently HEI) by entitling it as Kauno miškų ir Aplinkos Inžinerijos Kolegija. After gaining the status of the HEI, the College has intensified its activity. The institution organizes and implements higher education college studies, grants higher education qualification defined by The Law on Education and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (subsequently LR Law on Education and Studies), conducts applied research, experimental activities and applies their results in practice. The College develops creative activity and culture, fosters values and traditions of its academic community.

KMAIK is a specialized HEI with a clear niche and has been training professionals of forest specialisations for many years. At the College a student can choose one of the six study programs (subsequently SP): Forestry, Horticulture, Hydrotechnical Engineering, Real Estate Cadastral Measurements, Land Management, and Landscape Design. However, in this evaluation we restrict us to the Forestry SP.

The future employment situation should be favourable as the traditional forestry (State forest enterprise) is anticipating that many of its personnel has to be replaced during the coming years, due to retirement.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Forestry field study and first cycle at Kauno Miškų ir Aplinkos Inžinerijos Kolegija (KMAIK) is given positive evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

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

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field is being developed systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (excellent) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

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)

(1) Factual situation

One third of Lithuania is covered by forest and some 10,000 people are working in the forest sector. It is a net provider of income to Lithuania and as such important for the national economy. There has been an over-supply of educated foresters, but the recent decline in the number of students and projected retirements will turn that into a deficit by the end of this decade. The main aims of the Forestry SP are as follows (SER): *“to prepare high qualification, broad erudition forestry specialists who have knowledge of growing, protecting, using and management of multi-purpose forest, forestry management planning; able to act following the principles of sustainable forestry, to apply this knowledge in forestry work practice by ensuring functions and services of sustainable forest ecosystems for the sake of society, to pursue scientific research, consultancy activities in the fields of forestry, wood industry and/or nature tourism”*.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The students are well equipped for the needs of the society and of the forestry as a whole. They fill a need for practical forest professionals that can be used in different positions in the society and in companies. Several of the students interviewed already had their own private companies that were operating within the broader field of forestry.

There is a lack of forest industrial processing education in Lithuania. This field was earlier covered by a technical University (Kaunas University of Technology), but the study programme was closed. This may be an opportunity for the KMAIK to include this part in its curriculum.

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

(1) Factual situation

The College mission formulated in the Strategy 2030 is “to prepare specialists of higher professional education able to satisfy needs of country's forestry, agriculture and environmental/surveying engineering sectors”.

The aims of Forestry SP are related and in line with the mission of KMAIK. Furthermore, aims are to develop applied research and to provide conditions for individuals to develop and to be able to work in conditions of rapid technological advancement.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Forestry SP's aims are well in line with KMAIK's mission and objectives. The Forestry SP is fulfilling KMAIK's aims, but the aim to develop applied research could further be strengthened.

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

(1) Factual situation

The study programme is performed in compliance with the requirements – *Description of Study Cycles (Order No. V-1012 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2015)* and the *Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016)* (hereafter referred to as - *General, Legal Requirements*).

According to the SER the situation at KMAIK is as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Compliance of the program with the general requirements for College first cycle study programme.

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	153
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	21
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	38
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9
Contact hours (including distance contact hours)	No less than 20 %	50%

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The KMAIK Forestry SP does comply with the legal requirements. The contact hours are well above the requirement, which seems reasonable as many of the subjects contain parts of practical skill which require guidance of qualified teachers. The curriculum varies well between theory and practice to ensure both skills and knowledge of the students and to provide the sufficient learning outcome.

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

(1) Factual situation

The aim of the Forestry SP is to educate qualified and broad minded forestry specialists. There are 3 partial aims: 1) to develop students' worldview and creativity and to act in an international space, 2) to develop forestry specialists, and 3) to develop motivated specialists.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The team assesses that the compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes is of a compelling level. The

study aims, and teaching/learning methods, are well balanced. However, more emphasis should be put in encouraging international interaction.

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

(1) Factual situation

The compulsory studies encompass 162 ECTS out of 180. There are 24 ECTS of general studies, 100 ECTS of forestry field studies and 38 ECTS of practice. The 100 ECTS of field studies include the thesis (9 ECTS).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As forestry being a complex area, including mathematics, chemistry, biology as well as social subjects, it is important that the students get a broad and holistic knowledge. This is mirrored in the mandatory curriculum of the studies. It ensures that students get a working knowledge in all the fields of forestry. Also, the practice is divided into 5 different areas to ensure a broad experience of the field.

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

(1) Factual situation

The elective field studies are of 15 ECTS. There are 6 study programs to choose from. Furthermore, 3 ECTS can be chosen either as general subject or a special forestry course. Within the practices there are also possibilities (12 ECTS) to specialize further into a subject.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The elective studies are important for the student to deepen their knowledge in a specific topic, which, together with the thesis, will give them a certain profile for their future work. The variety of choices should ensure the content of most students. The Study Programs are well designed and include the essentials for students to deepen their knowledge.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students are required to choose the topic for their Professional Bachelor Graduation Thesis (subsequently shortened GT) by the latest in their third year. Topics are proposed by subject lecturers, social partners or by students themselves. Topics and supervisors are approved by the department. The students develop the GT plan individually but discuss it with supervisors. The work (data collection, analyses, writing etc.) is done by the student individually. There are quite strict regulations around the defence which is (must be according to regulations) the last thing a student does before graduating. In the Qualification GT Defence Committee different specialist are represented and the Chairperson is a representative of social partners. 10% (17 of 163) of the theses 2018-2021 are commissioned projects of social partners, thus showing a practical relevance.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert team assesses that compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements is good. The thesis requirements, procedure, and defence well meet the accepted levels of thoroughness and attainment that would be expected of comparable cycle requirements.

While looking through the theses from last year (they are all in Lithuanian) there are some details that could be improved. The title should also be in the language of the summary on the frontpage (English or Russian). The list of references of the theses varies a lot and is not consistent. Make sure there is a comprehensive manual for the students how to write references. You can use an instruction from a scientific journal (e.g. Baltic forestry). Very few of the references are in English and/or from international scientific journals.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The studies provide a broad and balanced mixture of topics which should give a holistic view of the field.
2. A good balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills.
3. Good proportion of contact teaching. Especially important for enhancing practical skills.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. References in theses are inconsistent and very low proportion of international scientific references.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

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

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

(1) Factual situation

KMAIK is providing forestry education in the first cycle and it is practically oriented. The general requests for scientific work are fulfilled according to Law of LR Minister of Education and Science issued on 25-07-2019, No. V-858. The top management of KMAIK realises the importance of research and science and it is supporting the preparation and submission of scientific grants, consultancy and expertise projects for practical foresters and other possible partners on the market (Ministry of Environment is more frequent partner than Ministry of Agriculture).

The need to do research is also mentioned in the KMAIK strategy 2030, and some of the goals already starting to be fulfilled. The research is done in the areas of the forestry, forest and landscape ecology and students are informed about those activities. The publishing activities are not extensive, and the WOS publications are concentrated among a few (six) members of KMAIK. Those skills would be welcome to spread among additional persons. The cooperation of KMAIK with external partners is connected to the study fields via personal presence of students on practical field trips.

The equipment kept by KMAIK is fundamental for education of practical foresters, and more up-to date equipment is needed for high quality scientific work. There are quite clear plans for scientific activities related to the study field with potential viability showed. The factual situation in this area is good on KMAIK.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Publishing skills are not common among teaching staff and it would be welcomed, if additional persons start to publish. Young teachers are already supported and motivated (also financially) in development of their scientific career via PhD study. Subsequently, it is necessary to define needs for their publishing activities (e.g. to publish a scientific WOS paper every two to three years). The equipment kept by KMAIK is fundamental for education of practical foresters. To increase scientific level of HEI, there are needs for more up-to date equipment, which is needed for high quality scientific work. The equipment must not necessarily be bought, there are possibilities to prepare cooperation agreement with Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), as well as with commercial partners.

Some career rules are needed to be defined as a first step. As teaching staff is conducting research via scientific projects and giving consultancy and expertise, it is highly needed to discuss “plans of personal development” for individual teachers and to give feedback to them regularly. Not necessarily every teacher must publish in WOS journals, but to keep the link between science and studies it is highly recommended to support as many of them as possible, however.

This will improve the forestry teaching activities implemented by the KMAIK and the research related to forestry.

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

(1) Factual situation

The curriculum shows that in most cases teachers are well acquainted with the advances in science and technology. Teachers are involved in many National organisations of forestry and related topics. They are also on the board of National forest journals, so they are well aware of forestry in the national context. They also have cooperation with Professional forester educations in other countries and by attending fairs, conferences, seminars and field days, they should be familiar with the latest advances within their speciality.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As the main language of science is English, there is a real need to make a long-term strategy (to 5-10 years) for international cooperation. Some teachers and many students may need to improve themselves in English and thus it is needed to define personal plans for every employee in this field. This may start from short-term scientific meetings attendance, continue via longer mobilities up to effort to be involved in international projects. The final step may be partial teaching in English which allows to bring foreign experts to start to live internationally. This should be highly needed to prepare KMAIK science and education to latest progress. There is also a real need to prepare and sign inter-institutional agreements to research institutes/universities, which allow the use high quality equipment for educational and scientific purposes immediately.

The lack of references in English in the theses, is worrisome as it means the students have not accessed the very latest scientific findings.

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

(1) Factual situation

There is an effort to include students to scientific activities via applied projects, scientific conferences, support from teaching staff, visits at commercial companies with top equipment, etc. The teachers have effort to include to scientific activities as many students as possible. There is high involvement of students to fundamental activities like field data collection (over 90%). The data processing and analysis is done by smaller portion, about 40% of students are involved in such more complex scientific activities. The main question is, if teaching staff with no regular publishing activity may support the student's scientific work.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The main task of KMAIK is to increase publication activities of teaching staff. Students, who are included into scientific projects may not be only used for data collecting. If so, it is needed to involve those students also in data processing, statistical analysis and writing bachelor thesis/papers based on those data. Subsequently, synthesis of such partial data sets may bring a higher number of scientific WOS journals in bigger teams of students. This is valuable for both students and also teachers.

As science needs scientific equipment, it is highly needed to increase scientific cooperation not only to Forest Research Institute, but also to VMU and social partners (mainly wood processing companies may have top technological equipment, which may be used also for a research). It is highly needed that students and also teaching staff will have the possibility regularly use up-to-date equipment, including UAV laser and scanning technologies as those are fundamental also for practical foresters.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There is an existing link between education and science system.
2. There is an existing equipment for fundamental scientific work and existing cooperation with commercial partners.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Limited number of teaching staff regularly publishing scientific papers.
2. Limited top scientific equipment and limited international cooperation.
3. Lack of the scientific aspects of the applied research in student scientific activities.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

Student admission and support shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process

(1) Factual situation

Students are being admitted by standard state procedures. The admission criteria are designed in accordance with LR legal rights and are coordinated with the Academic Council at KMAIK. The competitive scores are calculated on the basis of maturity exams and year marks of subjects, which are required for admission (Biology, Chemistry or Mathematics, any other subject, Lithuanian language). The minimum Competitive Score is increasing in 2018 CS for the state funding (SF) and the state not funded SNF was 2.0 and in 2019 to 2020 it was 4.3. Publicity on admission is provided in a few journals like – publications “Kur stoti”, “Kuo būti”.

Information can also be found on the website of Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for Centralised Admissions and on KMAIK's homepage.

Students who finish their exams well can get into the program on SF and others can be admitted and pay for their studies. The admission formula is calculated from school or exam grades (additional points may be added following the standard state procedure). In 2018 91 applicants were admitted and in 2021 it had decreased to 61. One of the reasons is the increased requirements for admission. The required (competitive score) CS has increased significantly after 2018, and e.g., the average CS increased from 3.04 in 2018 to 7.02 a year later.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Even with good publicity student admission rates are dropping. The uncertainty with the future of forest state enterprise who is the biggest employer of graduated foresters, is probably one factor. Now it is projected that forest enterprises will need more personnel during the next decade due to upcoming retirements, so that has to be conveyed to potential applicants. Furthermore, the status of forestry as a profession has degraded, a fate shared with many other countries. This has to be addressed not only to KMAIK, but to the whole forestry sector in cooperation.

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

(1) Factual situation

Evaluation of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its applications was created on the basis of the Lithuanian Law on Education. All extra-curriculum competencies may be evaluated and applied if the students ask (formally) and provide evidence of acquired competence. During 2017-2021 17 students had practice mobility credits recognised and 3 students studies' mobility credits.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is a readiness to approve of foreign experiences. But such evaluation is rarely applied because of low international student mobility. This has of course been affected by the COVID situation.

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

(1) Factual situation

Exchange programs for student mobility are present in KMAIK. Students are encouraged to travel abroad via ERASMUS+ or the NordNatur programme. Students are also able to take up academic leave and/or ensure the flexibility of their studies. Any student can go to the administration office and ask for an individual study plan, which will be provided.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Prerequisites for academic mobility are in place but students are not engaging in mobility. Due to Covid-19 restrictions little to no mobility was present in the past two years. Students seem now to be more willing to take the opportunities for mobility, due to fewer restrictions. From interviews expert team also understand it is hard to have mobility (at least for a longer period) as so many of the student are also working. The language is also a problem. Even if there are some foreign guest lecturers, there are no courses in English. As stated in section

3.1.7. very few theses referred to articles in English. An increase of the students' proficiency in English would likely rise the interest for international exchange. The students experts met were quite fluent in English, but it is impossible to say how representative they were, as students that are less proficient in English were probably not so interested to take part of the interviews.

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

(1) Factual situation

Newly admitted students take part in integration programs, where they can learn how to better establish themselves in KMAIK. There are many scholarships provided for various occasions and accomplishments. In case of special circumstances students may create individual study plans thus making their study process more fitting to their needs. KMAIK also provides accommodations to special needs students via accessible infrastructure. If a student ever needs help regarding financial or psychological matters they may always contact the administration of KMAIK.

Students are provided with financial/social support in form of scholarships. 20% of all students in a course get the scholarship for excellent grades. The scholarship is quite low and is not sufficient for motivating students to get higher grades. Students may obtain social scholarships if they are facing financial difficulties. Students receive psychological support, if needed.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

KMAIK staff is very welcoming and are willing to help if the students are in need. If the students get involved in scientific work they may get additional financial support. KMAIK also provides annual visits from social partners where students have the ability to meet future employers and find themselves professional practice places, though certain parts of the study field seem to be overlooked (no student knew about the wood processing field of forestry).

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

The College, together with the student council, organises various events and collects feedback from students that is then used to better the study field. Most of communication from the College is provided in the Moodle system whilst KMAIK student union is more active on social media.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It was emphasised that every student can get a personal counselling session about their achievements and struggles in the study field. Overall, the students are very content with what the College has to offer in forms of study support. Compared to the study program that was present 10 years ago, the quality has risen, and the information provided today is more useful and applicable. Beside the centrally organised feedback, many teachers collect feedback on their courses by themselves. In the interviews criticism that some teachers lack IT competence was raised.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Student counselling system is good.
2. The possibility to have flexible deadlines and study calendar is positive.

3. Feedback from students is not only collected by the annual surveys but also by the teachers themselves.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low international mobility of students.
2. There are little English courses in KMAIK and English is poorly incorporated into the study curriculum.
3. Teachers need better IT knowledge.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

(1) Factual situation

KMAIK teachers apply a variety of methods of teaching and student assessment such as lectures, laboratory works, practical training, seminars, case analysis, experiments, group discussions, preparation of reports, individual assignments, etc. Lecturers set up projects, practical assignments and individual creative tasks and apply cumulative assessment, which encourages students to be active participants in the SP. Intermediate assessments facilitate student's learning progress and enable to better take into account students' needs in achieving intended learning outcomes. A special focus is laid upon maintaining a good balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. A big share of students have full-time or part time jobs, which was an important contributing factor to the transition of KMAIK's full-time studies from purely campus-based to blended learning with substantial share of distance-based studies. This transition was reinforced by Covid-19. Despite the improved pandemic situation, KMAIK intends to maintain the blended approach. The high number of KMAIK graduates (15 people during 2018-2021) that entered Master programmes at VMU provides clear evidence for good opportunities to pursuing further studies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The applied methods of teaching and assessment take into account student needs and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. On the other hand, the transition from campus-based to blended learning with substantial share of distance-based studies must have been a major pedagogical and practical challenge at KMAIK and should have wide ranging implications for the process of studies. This aspect was not taken up in SER and needs more attention in the coming years.

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

(1) Factual situation

In 2018-2021, KMAIK has conducted two social projects, namely, "Ensuring of study access for students with special needs" and "Ensuring of study access for disabled students". These projects aimed to improve the study environment for students with special needs, including physical infrastructure, financial support to disabled students, information environment

(including special software, equipment, and furniture) and staff qualifications. Furthermore, the self-evaluation of Areas of Improvement in SER shows continued commitment of KMAIK to accommodate the special needs of students, e.g. to modernise the premises for students with mobility impairments, financed by external projects and/or own funding. Individual study plans are developed for vulnerable students, as in the exemplified case of imprisoned student. Individualised study plans are designed, having well motivated request from a student, with appropriate rearrangement of study modules and examination.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

KMAIK puts proper attention to providing suitable conditions for students with special needs and socially vulnerable groups, including scholarships to students from vulnerable groups and creating supportive physical and psychosocial study environment for disabled students. The adoption of blended-learning with a substantial share of distance studies increases flexibility of studies and can be especially suited for students having jobs. However, there is no analysis of effects on students that prefer campus-based studies.

3.4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

(1) Factual situation

KMAIK applies well elaborated routines for systematic monitoring of students' study progress. Teachers record students' participation in obligatory course activities, and identified problematic cases are taken up between teacher and the respective head of department. Further, summaries of the study progress of each student are presented after each term by study administrator to the head of department. Student surveys are conducted after each semester to obtain students feedback about the studied subjects.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Evidence from SER and evaluation interviews show that KMAIK applies systematic monitoring of study progress by each student, and individually supports students in achieving the expected learning outcomes of SP. Post-semester student surveys must give a good overview of the students' relative satisfaction with the courses attended during the semester; but might be insufficient for considering specific improvements at course level, as individual course evaluations are not required and left for the discretion of each course-leading teacher.

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

(1) Factual situation

KMAIK conducts regular annual surveys of graduates. For 2018-2021, 88% of responding graduates were employed six months after the graduation, which can be considered a high share. It has been relatively stable over the analysed period, ranging between 82–96%. The graduates employed within the field of their studies constituted significantly lower 63%, also with high variation between years: 57% in 2018, 49% in 2019 and 84% in 2020. According to the evaluation interviews, the rather high share of employment outside the sector can be explained by relatively low salaries in forestry as well as the job offer in remote parts of the country. The establishment on the job market (often in full-time positions) during the studies might be an additional factor to take into account. Data from Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA) shows that 25 to 37% of KMAIK forestry SP graduations had high qualification job in 2017-2019. The actual share of high qualification is likely higher as the STRATA does not show graduates who work abroad, are self-employed or have established their own business

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Thanks to regular annual surveys of graduates, KMAIK keeps a commendable track of their employability. The forest job market is generally good as reflected in high share of employment six months after the graduation. However, the high share of employments outside the sector indicates potential for reinforcing the links between graduates and their potential employers within the field. It is good to see that KMAIK intends to take concrete measures, including further publicising of graduates' survey results via digital media; and to expand consultations on employment opportunities to motivate the graduates to find employment according to their speciality.

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

(1) Factual situation

KMAIK has a solid regulatory base concerning academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination, including Code of Academic Ethics and Provisions of Sexual Harassment and Discrimination. According to SER, these documents are introduced to all staff members and their implementation is supervised by the Academic Ethics Committee, and the cases of violating the academic integrity 'are not tolerated and actions are taken in case of disclosure'. No cases of violating academic integrity, tolerance and discrimination were recorded during 2018-2021.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Judging from SER, KMAIK has proper legal basis and institutional structures to handle academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. It is, however, somewhat surprising that no cases of violations were recorded during 2018-2021, especially knowing the generally increasing cases of violated integrity in the academic world, not least in the countries of Eastern Europe. Expert evaluation of SP is not set up for detailed investigations of whether the lack of recorded violations reflects the reality; or rather the violations (such as plagiarism by students) are present but undisclosed; or "sorted out" at the course level without reaching the administration or the Academic Ethics Committee. We do not have a basis for criticism however, we identify a potential area for a more proactive approach to disclosing the problematic cases.

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

(1) Factual situation

Appeals and complaints at KMAIK are handled by Appeal Committee and Student Dispute Resolution Committee. The procedures of submission and examination are defined in the regulations for the respective committees and on the number of other pertinent regulations at KMAIK (cf. SER). As noted in SER, College Appeal Committee did not receive any cases during 2018-2021.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process are well established and lucidly described in SER that also contains hyperlinks to pertinent documents. Lack of cases at College Appeal Committee makes it difficult to evaluate the actual procedural efficiency.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. KMAIK teachers apply a variety of teaching methods and focus on achieving good balance between theory and practice.
2. Strong and lasting commitment to accommodate the needs of vulnerable groups and students with special needs.
3. Systematic monitoring of the study progress by each student.
4. Good tracking and high rates of employability of KMAIK's graduates.

(2) Weaknesses:

There are no main weaknesses, but attention should be posted on the effects of the radical transition from campus-based to blended learning and to relatively high shares of graduates taking jobs outside their field of studies.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The order of LR Minister of Education and Science "On approval of Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies" state (section 28) is fully fulfilled in case of KMAIK. Apparently, all requests by law are precisely checked and fulfilled by KMAIK, mainly long-term practical expertise is common (see Table 2).

Table 2. Teachers meet the general requirements for the first cycle studies.

Requirement stated in Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies	In the study programme of the first cycle
No less than 10% of study field subjects must be taught by scientists or recognized artists.	48%
More than half of all teachers of college level study fields must have at least 3 years of practical work experience in the subject of the field being/to be taught.	100%

The KMAIK has good ratio between number of teaching staff and students. It is around 20 students per 1.0 load. There is definitely no problem with experienced teachers, the teaching staff who deliver study fields subject and work at least part-time and for at least 3 years fulfils requests in 100%. The teaching staff seems to be well stabilised, the turnover of lecturers-practitioners and staff is very little. The teaching staff with the legal requirements reaches 76% what is much more then requested. There are signal, there is not sufficient knowledge of English which influences not only scientific performance but also limits mobility. Low salaries, ongoing reform of the State Forest Enterprise (staff reductions), and negative public opinion about foresters are the main problems, and they must be solved first of all at the country level. External conditions pressing KMAIK are not easy to solve and one of the most crucial is the

quite rapidly decreasing trend in the number of candidates for admission. Forestry is not a branch with high salaries and the public is not always positively feeling the foresters. One of the most important motivating factors of parents may be well educated, highly up-to-date teaching staff, which may prepare students for real practical life. Parents and students may also have possibilities to visit KMAIK prior to their admission. There are already open days for students, those ones may be extended for parents, where teaching staff will conduct professional communication to them.

By selecting the teaching staff, the University regards “KMAIK qualification requirements for lecturer’s position”. However, requirements for scientific activity of lecturers are very low. For example, professor has to publish only one scientific article in WoS or SCOPUS journal during a 5 year period and associate professor (docent) – only two articles in reviewed publications (not necessary in WoS or SCOPUS journal) during a 5 year period.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Fundamental fact is the quite rapidly decreasing number of students. If the trend continues, the funding should decrease, which means a limited number of teaching staff. It is highly probable that part of the teaching staff shall have to increase project and publication activities. Thus, it is fundamental to extend the courses for teaching staff like: Academic writing, Methodology of scientific work, Work with data and databases, Data processing, Scientific English, Communication to students. Decrease of students caused decrease in teaching activities and it is necessary to improve performance in research and science. There must be initial motivation followed by regular feedback and positive and/or negative motivation after evaluation. Subsequently, it is highly needed that existing plans for personal development (if they exist) would be connected to the motivation (also financial) system. It seems that employees are not using all possibilities for career development, which has been offered by KMAIK last years.

Requirements for scientific activity of lecturers are very low in KMAIK and they should be increased. KMAIK staff is focused mainly to practise education, and this is the main mission of teachers. During on-line visits quite a high proportion of staff needed translation from and to English. This is a signal, there is not sufficient knowledge of English which influences not only scientific performance but also limits mobility.

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)

(1) Factual situation

KMAIK has signed 39 cooperation agreements with HEIs in 16 European countries. It is also part of the NordNatur network. KMAIK and Forestry SP is taking part in the ERASMUS+ programme. During the period 2018-2021 14 lectures were given abroad, 11 lecturers had internship abroad and 11 visitors from abroad came to give lectures at KMAIK. 26% of the lecturers participated in the ERASMUS+ mobility programme. The exchange was cut off the last year because of the COVID restrictions.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is highly needed to make English courses real, which would result in writing/speaking skills. Subsequent steps should be to prepare a long-term plan for attendance of teaching staff at conferences/mobilities in central and Western Europe. Such plans must be supported by money available for international mobility. Foreign languages skills (English mainly) may be

crucial and it is not sufficient up to now. Of course, COVID pandemic has hindered mobility during the last two years.

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

(1) Factual situation

The staff regularly gets possibilities to access courses of teaching, foreign languages, other skills, and evaluation runs every five years. The KMAIK has well defined conditions and systematic nature of the teaching staff development in the science and art, didactic or professional activities. Very popular are on-line courses, nor every employee is accessing these opportunities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The question is how efficient are mentioned courses and mainly, how real is feedback done for employees in the evaluation process. It is important to not only declare a functional system of education of teachers and their regular evaluation. It is important to live with all needed skills. It is needed to discuss the importance of better English knowledge and the goal is to motivate each teacher to give at least one hour talk for students fully in English every semester. This would be crucial both for teachers and students. Bring more foreign experts and let them possibilities for both formal and also informal discussions to exchange personal experience among them. The staff needs more intensive contact with English speaking foreigners.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Well established team of experienced foresters covering all the important fields of study.
2. High proportion of staff with PhD and 100 % of experienced teachers.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Not optimal distribution and intensity of publication activities.
2. Not optimal skills in real speaking/writing English.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

(1) Factual situation

Students are provided with necessary study equipment both in a form of physical and online libraries. There are 9 specialized laboratories for specific topics (e.g., Forest botany lab, Lab of Information technology and Lab of Timber harvesting machinery). There are 11 forest object for practical training and 6 other objects for practical training. Furthermore KMAIK has an agreement with the Research Institute to use some of their facilities when needed. The library has access to international scientific databases. Students may also freely use the LRCAF forestry institute library. Certain needed equipment is absent from KMAIK but students are able to get practice while performing professional practice with social partners. Some

equipment is old and outdated. It can be used to teach students the basic principle of work but does not represent an adequate view of the current field of work.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The present situation is good. KMAIK is managing well in maintaining and providing its students options to work with necessary equipment. If the College itself does not own the equipment agreements with private companies are signed so students are not missing anything.

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

(1) Factual situation

KMAIK has access to EU funds but cannot buy modern equipment for studies. The funds will be used in cooperation with private companies so that the needed equipment gets purchased. The topic of private forest is stagnant and no progress is being made in plans of achieving a private area of forest for applicational practice.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Arrangements in order to get better equipment are on the way and unfortunately the private forest topic is still under big debate.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Signed agreements with private companies regarding equipment use.
2. There are very good labs and facilities for different kind of activities.
3. There are good opportunities for doing field studies/work nearby.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Wood processing field lacks equipment and management.
2. Lobbying regarding private forest has stopped.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

(1) Factual situation

“The Description of the Internal Study Quality Assurance System of KMAIK” was approved by the Academic Council of KMAIK in 2017. As stated in the SER (p. 54), Forestry SP Committee regularly (once per term) revises study programme procedure and results of students’ assessment, discusses study procedure with members of the KMAIK Student Council and SP students, evaluates SP implementation problems and needs for improvement. The Committee makes suggestions to upgrade SP, considers and certifies descriptions of study subjects. It also suggests specifying study subject outcomes, changing their volume, teaching sequence, including new or eliminating current study subjects, improving organisation of the study process, applying active teaching methods, etc. The Forestry SP Committee makes proposals for the Forestry Department, which in turn takes them into consideration and subsequently improves the SP.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert committee finds that the quality assurance system of the studies is well described and follows a well-structured system. The internal quality assurance system of the studies is detailed in a series of internal legal documents of the KMAIK. All documents regulating the system of internal quality assurance are made public on the web-site of the KMAIK which is good. The Forestry Study Program Committee is the main part of the study program quality assurance, and the work of the Committee is described in a good manner. In summary, it could be stated that the internal University College study quality assurance system is adequate and efficient: it is based on regular monitoring, feedback and publicity

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

(1) Factual situation

The stakeholders (students, lecturers, social partners, and graduates) are involved in the study quality assurance and improvement activities via participation in the College decision-making, management and improvement processes. They participate in the work of the College Council, Academic Council, College Ethics Committee, Study Programmes Committees, Qualification Graduation Thesis Defence Committee, Exam Appeal Committee, organisation committees of different conferences, groups preparing self-evaluation reports of study programmes, and other committees and groups. Stakeholders always take part in the process of the External study programme evaluation and accreditation.

Students of the KMAIK are involved strongly in evaluation and improvement of quality of studies in different stages. Student representatives are members of University College Council, Academic Council, Directorate, and Study Programmes Committees. Members of the KMAIK Student Council are invited to participate in departmental meetings in order to discuss term results, arising problems, make proposals concerning study organisation, schedules of lectures and exams. At least once a term, a meeting of the department head, study administrator and members of the KMAIK Student Council is organised to discuss study quality issues.

The College has established close and long-lasting connections with numerous partners from the business sector working in forestry and the wood industry. Employers – stakeholders interested in the quality of graduate preparation – are involved in the study quality assurance process in different ways. Employers are mostly involved in Forestry SP evaluation and improvement during Professional Activity (specialisation) Practice. Representatives of partner companies are included in the Study Programme committees and the Qualification Graduation Thesis Defence committees. Employers help to analyse and summarise the data of employers' feedback survey, to discuss employers' needs, the specialisation field and prospects. They take part in development of study programmes, make proposals concerning practical training, development of practical skills.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert committee finds that involvement of stakeholders (particularly students and employers) is good. Administration of KMAIK has taken into account the previous recommendation that student associations could be more intensively involved in the management of Forestry study programme. Students of KMAIK are well involved in internal study quality assurance: student representatives are members of different councils and committees, where they can express their remarks on quality of studies. The expert committee finds that close cooperation between the KMAIK and employers is established.

Representatives of employers are involved in different committees, and they can present their recommendations regarding preparation of graduates for practical work. It is noteworthy the significant role of employers in the activity of the Qualification GT Defence Committee which must contain at least two social partners-employers, and the chairman of the Committee is the representative of employers. However, the Alumni club could be more formally engaged in the assurance of study quality, rather than relying upon individual social contact between graduates and the teaching staff.

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

(1) Factual situation

For monitoring and improvement of the Forestry study programme, the opinion of all stakeholders (students, graduates, lecturers and employers) is important. The procedure of organisation of surveys, feedback data collection, analysis, access, use and publicity at the College is defined in the “Description of KMAIK Feedback for Improvement of the Study Quality”. The feedback is collected during periodic surveys of stakeholders by summarising their comments and evaluation. Different surveys provided in the “Description of KMAIK Feedback for Improvement of the Study Quality” carried out regularly.

Forestry SP Committee analyses the collected feedback information about the SP on the regular basis once per year: summarises remarks of students, graduates, employers and lecturers about the drawbacks, informs the Head of the Forestry Department, the Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, College administration and other departments related to SP implementation about the arising problems, makes suggestions, proposes ways of problem solution.

The employees of responsible academic departments analyse the data of the surveys and prepare reports. The summarised results are used for SP self-analysis and improvement of study process organisation. Summarised results of the feedback are introduced to survey participants in electronic form. Confidentiality of the personal data is guaranteed. Subject lecturers are introduced to the results of the survey concerning their teaching quality individually. Information about evaluation of Forestry SP quality, outcomes and changes is discussed during SP lecturers’ meetings, academic community meetings, public discussions with Forestry SP students, and social partners. Summarised reports of the periodic feedback are announced on the College website (<https://www.kmaik.lt/studiju-kokybe>) and Moodle system.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert committee finds that collection of feedback information on different aspects of studies is well-organised in the KMAIK. The procedures for data collection, analysis, use and publication are approved by the order of the Director. All interested parties (students, lecturers, graduates and employers) are involved in Forestry SP evaluation. The procedures are transparent, the confidentiality of the surveys is ensured. The results of surveys are used for improvement of study quality. Summarised results of surveys are publicly available at the web-site of KMAIK which is good. Lecturers have the possibility to do additional anonymous surveys about the quality of their courses as it was found during the meeting of the expert team with teachers of KMAIK. In summary it could be stated that the procedure of Forestry SP evaluation, monitoring and improvement is adequate, concise and clear.

3.7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the SKVC or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI

(1) Factual situation

Opinion of Forestry SP students about the quality of the studies is collected regularly using surveys. The procedures of survey organisation, feedback data collection, analysis, use and publicity in the College are comprehensively described in the SER.

According to the SER (p. 57), students of Forestry SP are satisfied with study quality and study organisation. General satisfaction score of Forestry SP students (in a five-point system) in the academic year 2018/2019 was 4.2 points, in 2019/2020 – 4.3 points and in 2020/2021 – 4.7 points. Students best evaluated the fact that teaching material was beneficial for studies of a subject, applied methods helped better perceive the subject content and increased motivation to learn. Also, students claimed that they have gained new knowledge and practical skills essential for their future professional activity.

In the survey of academic year 2020/2021, 90 % of Forestry SP students expressed an opinion that studies encouraged them to be more interested in their future specialisation, most of the subjects were beneficial and the studies met their expectations.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert committee assesses that 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 KMAIKI is adequate. It could be stated that the opinion of Forestry SP students (both of full-time and part-time study modes) shows that students are satisfied with the quality and organisation of studies at the KMAIK. Meeting of the expert team with representatives of Forestry SP students confirmed students' satisfaction with the quality of studies.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The KMAIK has a well-developed internal study quality assurance system, which is detailed in a series of internal legal documents that are publicly available.
2. Collection of feedback information from students, lecturers, graduates and employers on different aspects of studies is well-organised.
3. Good collaboration with social partners and involvement of employers in the development of study programme.

(2) Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

If, according to the expert panel, there are no such exceptional characteristics demonstrated by the HEI in this particular study field, this section should be skipped / left empty.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS*

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<p>The Forestry SP works in general well. The curriculum covers a broad spectrum of both general and field courses, and has a good balance between theory and practice to ensure graduates to be ready for different tasks of the working life.</p> <p>Expert panel recommends the scientific profile of the theses to be raised, the way of referencing and including references from international scientific journals.</p>
Links between science (art) and studies	<p>Strengthen the scientific aspects of the applied research and involve students more in it.</p> <p>Incorporate English as a science language to KMAIK community via long-term program for teaching staff and also students.</p>
Student admission and support	<p>Student admission and support follows standard procedures and meets the needed criteria. The international mobility of students is quite low. The assessment team recommends the College to encourage more students to utilize of the mobility opportunity.</p> <p>Furthermore, KMAIK does not provide forestry courses in English which prevents international incoming students.</p>
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<p>As KMAIK's full time studies was in recent years transformed from purely campus-based to blended learning, it could recommended to conduct a study (e.g. as a pedagogical development project for selected staff members) investigating the effects of this transformation, concerning students and teachers' wellbeing, students' motivation and learning capacity, teachers' pedagogic skills and workload, administrative support, etc.</p> <p>The evaluation team endorses the intentions of KMAIK to organize the College Open Days on a larger scale. Alumni Club members could have an important role in presenting job opportunities, working life experiences and useful skills for students tailored by offered specialisations.</p>
Teaching staff	<p>Teaching staff must increase scientific publishing in high level journals included in CA WoS database. "KMAIK qualification requirements for lecturer's position" should be revised, and requirements for scientific activity of lecturers (numbers of publications in CA WoS journals during a 5 year period) should be increased.</p> <p>It is recommended to further develop international mobility and language skills.</p>
Learning facilities and resources	<p>KMAIK has some impressive facilities, labs and equipment. It has the access to nearby forests for training. However, it has problems to renew its inventory, as EU money primarily goes to research.</p> <p>The expert panel recommends that it would be natural to have a</p>

	<p>closer cooperation with VMU and in some cases share more exclusive equipment. A forest for practising private forestry issues is still missing.</p>
<p>Study quality management and public information</p>	<p>Increasing the public awareness about forestry and promoting the forestry profession among youth should be an important mission of KMAIK. It is recommended that the staff of KMAIK more actively contribute to public debate on national and professional media and take part in policy processes, like the National Agreement on Forest.</p> <p>The College delivers high quality education and produces graduates attractive on the job market, it could adopt an even more offensive marketing strategy to spread the word about the strengths of the forestry study programme, including media adds, schools visits, public debates, etc.</p>

*If the study field is going to be given negative evaluation (non-accreditation) instead of RECOMMENDATIONS main **arguments for negative evaluation** (non-accreditation) must be provided together with a **list of “must do” actions** in order to assure that students admitted before study field’s non-accreditation will gain knowledge and skills at least on minimum level.

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of Forestry field study at Kauno Miškų ir Aplinkos Inžinerijos Kolegija (KMAIK):

The KMAIK forestry programme is a well-functioning institution providing education for practical professional foresters at BSc level. It fulfils all the requirements and is well aligned with the College.

However, the way of referencing in the theses is inconsistent and there are almost no references from international scientific journals.

KMAIK should strengthen the applied research and involve students in that process. Incorporate English as a science language to KMAIK community via long-term program for teaching staff and also for students. More English course options should be provided in order to attract foreign exchange students. Teaching staff must have better training regarding IT usage.

KMAIK teachers apply a variety of methods for teaching and assessment and pay attention to ensure a proper balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, which is instrumental for achieve expected learning outcomes. KMAIK's full-time studies were in recent years transformed from purely campus-based to blended learning, and targeted analyses are needed to better understand the effects of such transformation.

Teaching staff must increase scientific publishing performance. It is extremely needed to develop international mobility and language skills.

KMAIK has some impressive facilities, labs and equipment. It has access to nearby forests for training. However, it has problems renewing its inventory. We think it would be natural to have a closer cooperation with VMU and in some cases share more exclusive equipment. A forest for practising private forestry issues is still missing.

The biggest problem is the declining number of applications to the studies. Increasing the public awareness about forestry and promoting the forestry profession among youth should be an important mission of KMAIK. It is recommended that the staff of KMAIK more actively contribute to public debate on national and professional media and take part in policy processes, like the National Agreement on Forest.

The College delivers high quality education and produces graduates attractive on the job market. It could adopt an even more offensive marketing strategy to spread the word about the strengths of the forestry study programme, including media advertisement, school visits, public debates, etc.

The KMAIK has a well-developed internal study quality assurance system, which is detailed in a series of internal legal documents that are publicly available. Collection of feedback information from students, lecturers, graduates and employers on different aspects of studies is well-organised. Good collaboration with social partners and involvement of employers in the development of study programme, but the Alumni club could be more formally engaged in the assurance of study quality.

Expert panel leader

Prof. dr. Bo Dahlin