



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of HERITAGE STUDIES
at European Humanities University

Expert panel:

1. **Prof. dr. Christopher Whitehead (panel chairperson)**, *academic*;
2. **Ms. Marianne Lehtimäki**, *academic*;
3. **Assoc. Prof. dr. Gudrun Drofn Whitehead**, *academic*;
4. **Mr. Saulius Rimas**, *representative of social partners*;
5. **Mr. Imantas Jonas Šimkus**, *students' representative*.

Evaluation coordinator – dr. Domantas Markevičius

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>European Heritage</i>	<i>Cultural Heritage Development</i>
State code	6121NX076	6111NX065
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (4 years) Part-time (5 years)	Full-time (1.5 years)
Credit volume	240	90
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Humanities	Master of Humanities
Language of instruction	Russian/Belarusian/English	Russian/Belarusian/English
Minimum education required	Secondary	Bachelor
Registration date of the study programme	19.04.2019	19.04.2019

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on 24 November 2022.

Prof. dr. Christopher Whitehead (panel chairperson), *academic;*
Ms. Marianne Lehtimäki, *academic;*
Assoc. Prof. dr. Gudrun Drofn Whitehead, *academic;*
Mr. Saulius Rimas, *representative of social partners;*
Mr. Imantas Jonas Šimkus, *students' representative.*

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 document
1.	University governance organogram
2.	Course descriptions
3.	Examples of coursework

1.4. BACKGROUND OF HERITAGE FIELD STUDIES AT EUROPEAN HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY

The European Humanities University (henceforth EHU) is a non-state Belarusian University operating in exile in Vilnius and subject to Lithuanian state regulation for higher education and degree programme evaluation and accreditation. There are two academic departments: Social Sciences and Humanities and Arts. Governance is via a Senate and Rectorate, above which is a Governing Board, comprising external members with either academic or public sector roles (the rector has an ex officio role). Above this is a General Assembly of Part Owners, comprising representatives of the institutions that re-established EHU after its closure in Minsk.

Both EHU programmes in the field - the first-cycle programme European Heritage and the second-cycle study programme Cultural Heritage Development were evaluated in October 2018 and had been given a positive evaluation (reports available only in Lithuanian).

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of *Heritage* study field at European Humanities University is given a **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	2
3.	Student admission and support	2
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	2
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
Total:		17

*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.

The **second cycle** of **Heritage** study field at European Humanities University is given a **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	2
3.	Student admission and support	2
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	2
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
Total:		17

*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)

Nota bene: because of translation issues, the SER does not provide sufficient insight to address the evaluation criteria, meaning that this report refers to the SER where possible but also relies significantly on the interviews undertaken during the site visit.

The aim of the first-cycle programme 'European Heritage' - as ascertained through the SER and interviews during the site visit - is to create a liberal arts graduate whose education is framed by the notion of European heritage, from a classical perspective on European cultural history and ontology, while also cultivating basic understandings of heritage as theory and practice. The aim of the second-cycle programme 'Cultural Heritage Development' is to create graduates with advanced understandings of heritage theory and practice, such that they are equipped for work in the heritage field and/or further study.

As was clarified in site visit interviews, these aims must be understood in the geopolitical and cultural context of EHU as a university in exile, where the intellectual and scholarly purpose is linked to the political imperative to counter - through higher education - a Belarusian nation-state governmental perspective on global history and the place of Belarus and its region within this. Both programmes are carefully positioned in this complex context, and EHU makes good use of its own contingent position to contrast different narratives of culture and heritage. This is a strength. As EHU is a university in exile, conformity or the programmes to the needs of society and/or the labour market is not evaluated here, although it is evident that graduates have found employment in relevant fields and institutions.

The first-cycle programme uses an innovative place-based approach to teaching European heritage, which is to use key cities as loci for a wider understanding of the cultural and historical development of Europe. One difficulty with this is the danger of falling into canonical, much-critiqued ways of seeing and making Europe through dominant narratives (Ancient Greece, Italian Renaissance, Modern Paris, etc.). This approach needs to be framed through attention to other 'imaginaries' of Europe that could be accessed via other choices, including unusual ones that challenge dominant understandings (e.g., Islamic Andalusia) and non-urban ones. The idea that 'Europe' is limited to 'European geographical space' (itself mutable and contested) is also heavily critiqued in post- and de-colonial studies, which emphasise Europe's pervasiveness around the world through forms of colonialism (including settler colonialism). The significant literature on these issues needs to be incorporated into the curriculum, reading lists, and

library holdings. This pertains to the 'D' level of the 'European Tradition' block, which, in coming last, appears as an afterthought in the curriculum. The panel suggests that this be rethought and greater centrality be placed on wider critical perspectives on Europe and its histories and heritages from the outset.

Internationally, first-cycle heritage studies programmes are relatively rare, meaning that there is no dominant standard for their intended outcomes and curricula. EHU's programme, therefore, has few external reference points and needs a unique scope. However, it suffers from an ambiguity about its intellectual and pedagogical identity, i.e. whether this is: 1) to use heritage to understand European history; 2) to develop students' basic knowledge of heritage processes and practices (e.g. conservation, interpretation, listing, management, safeguarding etc.); and/or 3) to introduce students to European heritage paradigms, represented in instruments such as relevant conventions and programs (e.g. Faro Convention and the European Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, and, related to the European Union, the European Heritage Label, European Capitals of Culture, etc.). This ambiguity needs to be eliminated through the adoption of a more articulated identity for the programme. The panel notes that a similar recommendation was made in the 2018 Evaluation. However, this issue still obtains, notwithstanding the action set out in the SER (p. 22).

The second-cycle programme contains normal components for the study area, although the detailed conformity of these with the field is unclear. The extensive focus on Belarusian and regional issues, including Jewish cultural heritage, is important and comprehensible within the EHU context but needs to be further qualified through attention to heritage concepts, politics, practices, policy, and issues from around the world.

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

Both first- and second-cycle programmes conform broadly with EHU's stated mission, objectives of activities and strategy. These relate, *inter alia*, to the promotion of transdisciplinarity, academic freedom, civic engagement, criticality, and innovation, with the overarching aim to foster democratic civil-societal development. 'European Values' are cited as key to the institution's values, but it is not clear exactly how such European values are understood, e.g., whether they relate to values of the Council of Europe (CoE) or European Union (EU), e.g., as laid out in the Lisbon Treaty and elsewhere,¹ or to another notion of European values. This needs to be more clearly articulated and the relationship of these values to programmes and pedagogy made explicit.

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

¹ See https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en. NB. The EU has no mandate on culture, and all explicit EU and CoE cultural and heritage policy instruments are 'soft' in the sense that member states have no obligation to adhere to them.

The study programmes are compliant with internal institutional frameworks (statute, procedures, guidelines, regulations and standards) and with the following Lithuanian national legislative structures:

- Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 54-2140);
- Resolution No. 764 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 24 July 2019 'On Approval of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework' (TAR, 25 July 2019, No. 12291);
- Order No. V-1075 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 1 December 2016 'On the Approval of the List of the Study Fields and Groups of Fields in Higher Education Institutions, the Procedure for Amending the List, Principles of Establishment of the Framework of Qualification Degrees and the Titles of Study Programmes' (TAR, 2 December 2016, No. 28009);
- Order No. V-1012 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 16 November 2016 'On Approval of the Descriptor of Study Cycles' (TAR, 17 November 2016, No. 2698);
- Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016 'On Approval of Description of General Study Requirements for the Provision of Studies' (TAR, 30 December 2016, No. 30192);
- Order No. ISAK-1026 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 May 2009 'On Approval of the Descriptor of Full-Time and Part-Time Studies' (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 59-2325).
- Order No. V-192 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 5 February 2021 'On Approval of the Descriptor of the Study Field of Heritage' (TAR, 5 February 2021, No. 2329).

Table No. 1. Study programme's *European Heritage* compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes*

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	240
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	222
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	36
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	24
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 15 ECTS	18
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	20%
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	96 ECTS (40%)

Table 1 indicates the conformity of the study programme to the requirements, in all cases meeting or exceeding the minimum threshold.

Table No. 2. Study programme's *Cultural Heritage Development* compliance to general requirements for *second cycle study programmes*

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	90
ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 60 ECTS	90
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	12
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	20%
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	80 (89%)

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

The main aim of the BA programme as outlined in the description of the working academic programme, European Heritage, is to graduate socially responsible experts, with an understanding of modern society and European heritage, able to work in various cultural, public and business initiatives. Learning outcomes outline the various skills needed to work with and critically evaluate European heritage. The main aim of the MA programme, outlined in the description of the working academic programme, Cultural Heritage Advancement, is to provide students with interdisciplinary theoretical and practical skills that will enable them to work sustainably in the cultural heritage field. Learning outcomes, as outlined in the SER, aim to support that overall goal and were written broadly in accordance with pertinent academic standards.

The overall lack of identity of both the BA and MA programmes needs to be addressed, which would better inform the main aims and learning outcomes of each programme. Furthermore, there is a lack of overall coherence within the BA and MA programmes: theory and practice are not fully integrated. This was mentioned as an issue in the previous evaluation and has not been resolved.

Unfortunately, course descriptions were not provided in English, so it is hard to report on learning and teaching methods specific to any given study module. However, during the Panel visit, academic staff indicated that each module includes both peer and teacher assessments,

which should provide students with ample feedback on which to build through their studies. The SER indicates that each student is given access to various study materials and attends seminars and lectures and both individual and group assignments, which aim to support students to meet the goals and learning outcomes of the BA and MA study programmes.

At least one academic staff member indicated that students could choose to hand in either an academic paper or a creative writing assignment. While both can certainly provide valuable insights for students, it would be advisable for all students to attempt both and thereby gain a more balanced, identical experience of the BA and MA study programmes. This also may reflect the need to better connect theory and practice throughout the BA and MA programmes.

In short, students are provided with the ability to meet the overall aims and learning outcomes of the programme. However, the Panel would suggest a thorough evaluation of the BA and MA programmes' respective identities and a subsequent restructure of both the overall goals and learning outcomes. Furthermore, this would help to guarantee a consistent experience of both the BA and MA study programmes and strengthen the connection between theory and practice in each study module.

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

The first-cycle study programme comprises a range of subjects/modules that respond well in outline to the comprehensive development of students' competencies. However, a lack of clarity in the articulation and difference between modules means that the overall comprehensiveness and complementarity of the modules are hard to determine. The programme is articulated in 6 blocks: The European Tradition; Heritage Theory; Making Use of Heritage; Techniques of Heritage Work; Applied Heritage Work; and Specialization Disciplines. Arrayed under these, individual modules appear to have a progressive logic but there is a need for greater clarification of this, especially in cases of seriation, e.g., Practices of Actualization of Cultural Heritage 1 and 2. Further disambiguation is required between the heritage theory modules, particularly with regard to 'Cultural Heritage Studies', e.g., as to whether this relates to the articulation of 'Critical Heritage Studies' over the last decade.

The second-cycle programme's subjects/modules appear to respond well to the development of appropriate competencies of students, and this is evident in graduates' understandings and abilities. However, the linkage between elements of the programme is not apparent and the intellectual/knowledge journey undertaken by students as they progress needs greater articulation. There is a need for a clear strategy to ensure that modules communicate with one another and that programme staff actively develop and enhance this, such that students are able to make connections between modules and build their comprehensive knowledge. The precise content of modules such as 'Mythologization of Museum Objects' is unclear and the terminology of this is unusual in the global context. It should also be articulated how 'Intercultural Communication' is configured, e.g., as a discrete general subject available to all students, or as a subject that is specifically relevant to heritage studies and is presented as such.

Some students plan to stay in Lithuania, but for the programmes, the Lithuanian language is only offered as an elective course. Some alumni take Lithuanian courses after completing the programme, potentially indicating that the Lithuanian language provision is insufficient in the programme itself.

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 BA and MA programmes consist mostly of compulsory study modules, but in the MA programme students have two elective courses in the first and second terms (choosing from a list of acceptable study modules). Block 6 of the BA programme provides students with six elective courses to choose from, in addition to elective foreign language courses in block 7. The Panel would suggest allowing students to have the choice of attending a wider variety of study modules, outside the programme. This would allow for a more individualised study structure. The re-evaluation of the core identity of the overall study programme would also provide an opportunity to re-evaluate the most pertinent compulsory modules and thereby making more room for a more individualised study programme.

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

The theses listed in the SER and shown during the site visit represent an impressive range of topics of relevance to the field, in some cases involving innovation and creativity in the choice of areas of research. The theses conform to the field and cycle requirements insofar as - relative to the relevant descriptors - they evince an understanding of the heritage field and independent research skills, the ability to gather and analyse data, to link the historical, social, cultural, ethical and political contexts of heritage and, in the second-cycle study, to comprehend accepted institutional structures and concepts of heritage protection and valorisation. The EHU practice of inviting the most successful student authors to synthesise their research for short publications is an area of best practice.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. EHU makes good use of its unique position to provide compelling critical perspectives on European heritage in both study cycles, building students' criticality and geopolitical awareness.
2. The place-based approach taken in the first-cycle study is innovative and pedagogically well-developed.
3. The development of students' competencies in the second-level programme is appropriate and clearly evident in graduates' understanding and skills.
4. Theses are innovative and well-supported and high-achieving students are rewarded with publication opportunities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. While the place-based pedagogy is a strength, it does not appear that travel opportunities are available to all students, meaning that an equality/fairness issue obtains that is potentially in conflict with EHU values.
2. Although the approach taken to European history and heritage in the first-cycle study is intended as a corrective to politicised Belarusian historiographical narratives, it has the liability to reinforce instead a selective and relatively conventional/canonical history of Europe that is currently being critiqued (e.g., in relation to colonial histories).
3. The first-cycle programme does not have a consistently defined identity and aims, the relationship between historical study and heritage studies approaches and content is not well enough articulated.
4. There is a need for greater clarification of the relationship between modules and the logic of students' educational pathways in the second-cycle programme.

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

EHU teachers working on the study programmes under evaluation are mainly scientists and practitioners in the fields of heritage and history from Lithuania and Belarus.

In accordance with the Resolution No. 149 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 1 March 2017 'On the Implementation of the Republic of Lithuania's the Law on Science and Studies', EHU participates in the annual external assessment of scientific activities organised by the Research Council of Lithuania (SER p. 24).

In the previous qualitative assessment of scientific activities (institutionally collected research papers, publications, and other scientific and R&D outputs of teachers) in 2018 referring to the period 2013-2017, the expertise of the group of researchers on Belarusian history, and especially on Jewish history, was considered distinguished, but the average level of activities and achieved results of EHU R&D brought a satisfactory score of 2 out of 5. The small number of researchers was understood as an explanatory factor for the limited quality rate of the research. Active participation in regional conferences was mentioned as a positive aspect. It is to be noted that even then the international expert team faced some significant uncertainties during the reporting period. (SER p. 25).

According to SER, in 2018–2021, based on the overall analysis of these academic activities, the performance indicators of the teachers remain stable. There are some - the same - distinctive researchers as in the previous qualitative assessment period. During the period, lecturers

participated in projects dealing with former synagogues in Belarus; the formation of a cultural route 'Francišek Skaryna Cultural Route'; and in the project 'Ideas and Instruments for the European Heritage of Belarus'. They attended online conferences and the roundtable discussion 'Future of Heritage Education and Cooperation between Universities and Civil Society', on communist heritage in Belarus and the annual congress of Belarusian researchers. (SER p. 25.) The pandemic affected participation in international activities in the period under review from 2020 onwards.

Thus, research and international cooperation focused mainly on research on Belarusian and Jewish cultural heritage. Even if the strong political goal of these study areas in question may undermine the objective of more comprehensive R&D activities, it is the way to raise the average quality of R&D activities, as well as to access wider international research communities.

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

According to the SER, the EHU Library regularly receives the latest publications from renowned international publishers, and almost all study programmes use the most up-to-date bibliography on the subject. The latest cultural heritage projects and research are introduced by some of the study subjects, and the Programmes are regularly supplemented with new study subjects (p. 25).

Studies of the first-cycle programme 'European Heritage' should offer a basic understanding of heritage as theory and practise for BA students. The concept of 'European heritage' acts as the core of the programme.

The University has published a scholarly serial 'Цайтшрифт' ('Tsaytshrift') since 2011. It is the only Belarusian academic journal dedicated to Jewish studies. Numbers 1-8 (latest 2021) are mainly in Russian and can be found online (<https://en.ehu.lt/magazines/tsaytshrift/>). According to the SER, the issue published in 2022 was dedicated to the concept of European Heritage. Further, according to the SER, the publication includes texts prepared not only by the Programme's teachers but also by MA students and alumni of the University (p. 25). References to these articles in the Journal dealing with the concept of European Heritage were not to be found online for closer reading.

The concept of 'European cultural heritage' was introduced in the 1970s as an attempt to support European integration and to strengthen its legitimacy beyond its political context. This instrumentalized use of the heritage concept introduces an imagined community represented by a homogeneous cultural heritage. The current academic heritage research questions, and even contradicts, this ideal version of European cultural heritage, and instead emphasises research, for example, on diversity and power contexts. As the concept is positioned as a key term in the preliminary studies, the ambivalent connotations of the concept should be introduced to students and dealt with by the University's own research cluster.

Graduates of the second-cycle programme 'Cultural Heritage Development' should have advanced understandings of heritage theory and practice and be capable of working in the heritage field and/or undertaking further study. For a more advanced understanding, it is vital to understand the complexity of cultural heritage as an expression of culture-bound to time and context, not as a defined and closed canon. Furthermore, the most important knowledge of a cultural heritage professional is to be aware of the limitations of one's own expertise. Cultural heritage practices are developed in continuous international cooperation, based on knowledge of general cultural heritage ethics, terminologies, international and national legal aspects, regulations, instruments and standards, qualifications, assessments and research methods as well as decision-making processes. In addition, all professional heritage skills require extensive specialisation in particular material, cultural, and technical practices. Without a stronger investment in international exchange in the forms of contents and international research cooperation, the limited scope of the programme's research and its limited resources make it challenging to achieve the goal of an advanced understanding of heritage theory and practice.

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

Part of the studies of the first-cycle programme 'European Heritage' is carried out as a short 'Grand Tour', via a common study trip abroad. There is insufficient evidence for the assessment of how well the trip preparation, the activities in destinations, and the post-trip reflection and pedagogy are related to the Programme's study goals.

BA and MA students participated in conferences, seminars, and competitions despite the limitations caused by the pandemic. The range of the topics of these events was delightfully diverse and even extended geographically wider than the R&D outputs of teachers. According to SER, students are offered scholarships and grants to carry out independent research projects. In 2022, two teachers at the Department of Humanities and Arts, in collaboration with Central European University, launched 'the Science Shop programme' designed to widen access to research for non-commercial organisations and civic initiatives. (SER p. 26-27).

The students seem to be highly motivated and ready to deepen their knowledge in different ways. Despite the shortcomings listed above, students' interest in their studies and activities was confirmed both in the descriptions of the self-evaluation report and in the Panel interviews. The Bachelor's degree programme includes the study of two foreign languages. The Panel found that most, but not all, students had no difficulty conversing in English, which was not the case with teachers or administrators. Closer interactive cooperation between students, teachers and staff would undoubtedly benefit all parties.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Among the programme lecturers, there are some researchers conducting distinctive research on Belarusian and Jewish history.
2. Highly motivated students are ready to deepen their knowledge in different ways.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Based on the descriptions of the BA and MA programmes, the teaching does not deal comprehensively with the theoretical and scientific basis of cultural heritage.
2. There is no evidence of critical academic research on the concept of 'European cultural heritage', which is positioned as a key term in the preliminary studies.
3. Outside of a well-defined special research cluster, participation of the staff in international cultural heritage research seems to be limited.

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

Students are admitted to the first cycle of studies by competition that is organised and managed by EHU units. The Admissions Committee evaluates admission documents, forms a competitive queue, and makes a recommendation to the Rector regarding the admission of students. Admission of the students to the second cycle of studies is carried out in accordance with 'Regulations for Admission to the Second-Cycle (Graduate) Programmes of the European Humanities University' that are annually updated and approved by the Rector's order and then published on the website of the University. As in the first cycle, students are admitted for studies through a competition organised and carried out by units of EHU.

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

Institutional Regulations for Admission to EHU clarify that applicants who have acquired higher education outside the Republic of Lithuania are obliged to undergo the procedure for recognition of the education acquired outside the Republic of Lithuania in accordance with the procedure established by law. The majority (95 per cent) of EHU students are citizens of Belarus whose qualification for studies is recognised in Lithuania in accordance with the law of the Republic of Lithuania and international contracts, as well as by the Procedure for Recognition of Education Acquired at a University. Recognition processes appear to work effectively.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

EHU students have the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ student exchange programme and in the bilateral student exchange agreements. EHU declares what international opportunities will be available to students during the winter open days held twice a year.

During the orientation week, one of the webinars organised for first-year students introduces the application rules, deadlines, selection criteria, and partner universities. However, few students use mobility opportunities.

The Expert Panel heard from students that the European study trips are not available to all students, without sufficient clarity regarding the criteria through which students are selected to go on the trip. It appears that for students there is no guarantee of going on the trips, making their pedagogical value redundant within a framework of equal opportunities because it is impossible for all students to have the same quality of learning experience.

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

University support systems require improvement to ensure that fair and transparent student representation is incorporated into relevant committees. Some students identified problems in the student support system in connection with equality of opportunity, e.g., connected to travel for field studies and scholarship distribution. It is necessary for the University to improve in this field. Bearing in mind the difficult geopolitical context in which EHU operates, it is imperative to make a really strong student support system at the University that functions as an exemplar of good practice and fairness.

Students are evidently grateful to teachers for some support. However, the expert panel heard allegations of serious ethical issues including bullying on the part of staff members towards students; the lack of procedure for students to raise complaints, or for staff behaviour to be investigated; a lack of transparency in decision-making processes; and lack of a representative (or an identified/known representative) within key committees including those connected to ethics. The Panel is not equipped and has no remit to evaluate such allegations and subsequently this report neither endorses nor verifies them. Nevertheless, the fact that these issues were raised at all indicates a need for greater transparency, further attention to the channels and processes through which staff-student and institution-student are organised, and better communication about these. EHU should consider guaranteeing student representation in all governing structures of the University, particularly those connected directly to the study programmes.

Moreover, students find it very difficult to combine work and studies together because of the studies schedule and the tendency for this to be announced at short notice, negatively affecting students' financial stability.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

The SER details what students are introduced to in the study programmes, as well as requirements and other information of relevance. This is achieved in several ways: on the University website; through direct email communication; posting information on *Moodle*; and using social media channels. Intensive communication with newly admitted students and students who have transferred from other higher education institutions is carried out by

Student Service, later by the department and leaders of the study programmes, as well as by the staff of the Academic Support Centre – programme administrators and senior student-mentors who help students on a wide range of technical study-related matters. However, the Panel needs to stress that during the meeting with students, the experts heard contradictory information and viewpoints. At the least, this indicates a possible shortcoming in communication processes and a need for more structured and transparent approaches.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The admission process appears to be well-regulated and effective, according to the descriptive account in the SER.
2. It is evident that some students felt that they had benefited from high levels of personal support from teachers, and this is borne out by teaching initiatives such as the publication of students' work under staff supervision.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There is a lack of transparency in terms of processes, student representation, and complaints/grievance procedures, which has the potential to result in perceptions of unfairness.
2. There appears to be an unequal opportunity for student mobility connected to the first-cycle programme visits to European cities; the parameters for the selection of students able to undertake the mobility are unclear.
3. Communication approaches are not transparent and structured enough.

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 enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes

Classes are offered both as part-time distance learning and full-time on-site learning. Both are based on the effective use of the VLE. Students have access to various types of materials, including articles, books, videos, online material and more. The use of the VLE is certainly one of the strong points of this programme.

Areas for improvement include having the syllabus for the entire semester available for students at the beginning. As indicated, this issue was mentioned by students during the field visit. There also needs to be consistency in the taught language of each study course. There is a variety of teaching methods to help students achieve their goals, and a similar variety of assessment methods can be of great value to students. It might be advisable to consider the

consistency of the types of projects each student writes for individual courses, i.e., such that every student in the course submits the same type of assignments, helping to ensure a fair assessment.

According to the SER, when possible, study methods are adapted for use in distance learning and virtual environments.

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

The conditions to ensure access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs are met. The entire faculty building is wheelchair-accessible, and student requests for special needs technological aids are met as far as possible. This includes specialised computer technology. Students have access to assistance in regard to housing, student visas, financial aid etc. Information on help for students with special needs is provided in the 'EHU Student Handbook', published by the Student Service.

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

Students have access to consultations with teachers, either in real-time, online or via forums in the VLE, messenger and/or email. The self-study aspects follow regulations detailed in 'Organising Self-Study of EHU Students'. Academic achievements are assessed according to the university standards, detailed in the document titled 'The System of Academic Achievements, Assessment of EHU Students'. Students are assessed by means of mid-term assignments of various kinds and examinations. These assessment procedures follow academic standards and contribute to student progress. Assessment methods are related to the study material and methods. The Panel believes that this meets the requirements of the programme.

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

Students and social partners agree that students are equipped and ready to work in the heritage market in Belarus, to which many graduates have returned. Equally, students from Russia felt equipped to work in the heritage field. With the recent (2020) political changes in Belarus, it may become important for EHU to reconsider its language policies. If students are unable to return (safely) to Belarus, they will need to find positions elsewhere. To do that, they will have to strengthen - primarily and at least - their English (and Lithuanian) language skills and consider the needs of heritage work elsewhere in Europe.

The stakeholder meeting involved employers and senior figures within the sector who highly endorsed the employability of graduates from the second-cycle programme.

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

The programme adheres to the 'Code of Academic Ethics', which sets out regulations regarding academic integrity, for both students and teachers. The University has an ethics committee, the members of which are from the academic community. Plagiarism is monitored by academic staff and with the use of *Ouriginal* (formerly *Turnitin*). All coursework and thesis are checked using the software. The library training and counselling sessions related to citation and copyright are also to be commended as important tools for students.

The Code of Academic Ethics ensures a non-discriminatory study and research environment for students and the Equal Opportunities Policy and Implementation Programme (approved in 2019) assures equal opportunities to all students. However, it is not clear whether this is comprehensively observed, e.g., in relation to the issue that not all first-cycle students are able to visit the European cities that are a core focus of the curriculum.

Documents and information on the various policies in regard to academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are available to students online, on the EHU website and on *Moodle*. The Panel considers these measures to adhere to academic standards.

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

Students who disagree with assessments can appeal the results within three days of the published results. The Defence Committee has three days to respond to complaints made by students. The Appeals Committee is formed by the Head of the Academic Department and consists of at least three members: two from the faculty and one student representative. The results must be delivered within three days from when the complaint was made.

During the field visit it became evident that students were not entirely clear on the procedures for complaints made regarding the study process (see 3.3.4 above). The Panel would suggest that this process needs to be made more transparent, for example, by making policies regarding complaints and appeals available to students on the website and on the VLE, as well as clarifying the role of student representatives in the process.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There is an effective use of the VLE and distance learning and teaching methods.
2. Diverse teaching methods mean that students can gain a range of competencies and practise different skills.
3. There is good wheelchair accessibility and relevant equipment available for those students that need it.
4. Pertinent ethics codes are in place and available to students online, both on the EHU website and on the VLE.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. During the visit, students indicated that the entire syllabus is not always available at the beginning of the term; this is an important area for improvement.
2. The programme needs to re-evaluate the employability of students and their spectrum of language skills, considering the political situation in Belarus.
3. Complaints' procedures need to be clarified for students, made available online on the website, and VLE and student representative roles made evident.

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 teaching staff engaged in the heritage field is adequate. During the site visit it became apparent that some staff members are engaged in a high-level sectoral activity (e.g., connected to the Belarusian national committee of the International Council of Museums), which is likely to be positive for student engagement with 'live' heritage issues and practice. The Panel understands this as an engaged research practice. However, a major shortcoming is that there is very little engagement by staff with international heritage debates in scholarship, via contributions to key international publications and fora. The panel encourages new development and ambition here, for example, by aiming papers in English at key journals such as *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *Heritage and Society*, *Memory Studies*, *Museum and Society*, etc., and monographs at key international heritage publishers such as *Routledge*, *Sage*, etc.

Academic staff at EHU working on heritage have a key opportunity and position to talk from a critical site within global heritage geopolitics and the Panel encourages that this is taken up, for the benefit of: the visibility of the university, the programme, pedagogy, and student experience; academic staff careers; and for the scholarship.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staff's academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile)

This evaluation is not applicable to HEIs operating under conditions of exile. Nevertheless, as a general principle, the Panel advocates the feasible allocation of funds for staff mobility where this advances the academic quality of individual staff members' outputs and/or contributes to the positive development of the curriculum and pedagogy in programmes. The panel also advocates - at a general level - the provision of opportunities on a cyclical basis (e.g., potentially one semester in every seven) for research leave such that staff can advance their knowledge and output, e.g., through the international journal or monograph publications or research grant

applications. Another opportunity to consider is teacher exchange programs, such as Erasmus+ offers.

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

The Panel noted that it would be desirable for EHU to build opportunities for research mobility and leave into the operational structure as a matter of course. However, given the status of EHU as a university in exile, this is non-evaluative.

There is potential for the institution to instigate staff development initiatives relating to pedagogical skills and curriculum development or, alternatively, to work in partnership with other HEIs to implement this. An initiative of this kind would contribute to increasing the quality of teaching and learning and to the career development of staff.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Some academic staff members contribute at a high level to heritage and museum sector practice, which is positive for the visibility of EHU, its research environment for heritage and, potentially, student experience and learning.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There is relatively little engagement with and participation in the international heritage studies field, including publication in key international outlets that function as international fora for the latest ideas - e.g., *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *Heritage and Society*, *Memory Studies*, *Museum and Society* etc.

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

The university building is in the former Augustine Monastery in the Vilnius Old Town. The premises were taken into use after renovation in 2018. There are six bigger auditoriums for lectures, two computer classes and 126 computer workplaces. The study premises and facilities are adapted for persons with disabilities. (SER pp. 58-59). Student works and heritage fragments on display in the corridors create a feeling of community and a sense of interactive learning space.

There is a wireless connection in the entire building. Students and teachers use the 'Litnet' network services. The University's Academic Support Centre provides support to users. The virtual learning environment 'Moodle' and a blended mode of teaching combines distance and traditional studies. University studies are being digitised. The Multimedia laboratory has a special computer server, which is suitable for video and animation, VR programmes, etc. During the pandemic equipment was installed in all auditoriums for hybrid lectures. EHU is a member of the Lithuanian Science, Studies, Activities and Process Management Information System EDINA, and uses the subsystem 'Studies' (SER p. 57-58).

The Library's collections include printed and electronic publications in a wide range of social sciences, humanities and arts. All electronic resources are available to EHU users via a VPN service. The collections include resources in Belarusian, Lithuanian, Russian, English, German, French, Lithuanian, English and other languages. The University Library is a member of the eLABa consortium of academic libraries and the Lithuanian Association of Research Libraries. A well-curated list of open information resources for students exists on the University's website. Users can also access the EHU Virtual Library. The library uses the open-source software Koha for cataloguing and readers' services (SER p. 61-62). Probably due to the library's limited space in relation to the collections, the library seemed more like a well-kept storage for publications than premises dedicated to students for intellectual search and discovery. The library seems to have access to pertinent electronic databases and publications, although the library website's search function could be improved to enable students to access resources directly without going through database websites. There is a need for a more consistent and varied selection of printed resources related to heritage studies, as also mentioned in the previous expert evaluation.

The University collaborated with several European universities to develop Erasmus+ partnerships. Student internships are organised in accordance with the EHU Student Internship Regulations. For optional internships, a wide range of institutions and organisations working in the field of tourism and heritage are listed (SER 58-61). During the reporting period, the COVID-19 pandemic and political developments in Belarus after August 2020 affected these activities. Visiting the university created an image of a somewhat introverted community in exile with its own definitions of academic studies of cultural heritage.

The SER describes profoundly the adequate arrangements to facilitate the studies, which in many parts was verified during the visit. All in all, the dynamics of the allocation and use of the facilities seemed more authoritarian compared to European universities in general, or other Lithuanian universities visited.

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

The panel checked the extent of physical publications of classic literature and current research in the field of cultural heritage, for example on museology and memory studies, in the library, and found the state quite limited. The renewal of resources in the field of heritage studies is planned on the basis of the requests of the teachers and social partners (SER p. 62-63). It would

be advisable to acquire a good coverage of classic literature plus consider students' interests in purchases, too.

The actions planned to implement the recommendations made by the previous assessment remain unclear for the Panel, perhaps due to the several translations of the text in the Self-Evaluation report. It seems that the plan to develop distance learning and to arrange separate desks on the third floor for students, or plans to arrange more workplaces for teachers, do not solve the need to reorganise the library reading room with better integrated independent workplaces for students (SER p. 63-64).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The location of the university and study premises relate to the study substance and enhance the inspirational community feeling.
2. The existence and promotion of an EHU journal is a positive asset for the university and is innovatively connected to student learning and opportunities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Library holdings need to be updated to better reflect the state of the art in heritage studies.
2. The library needs to improve the availability of relevant printed study materials.
3. The library website search function could be improved to enable direct access to resources.

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

EHU has established a complex internal quality assurance system of the studies, based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The whole mechanism is structured at different levels, ensuring the inclusiveness of all stakeholders. Among other things, the mechanism includes means for monitoring, analysing and evaluating the course of studies, student performance evaluation, as well as improvement and development of teaching staff competence. The main role within the process of study quality monitoring is delegated to the Study Programme Committee (henceforth SPC). However, despite having a very complex and formalised structure of quality management, EHU acknowledges that 'all major decisions are taken on a collegial basis' (SER p. 65), which is appropriate insofar as it avoids unilateral decision-making. However, given the inevitably close-knit nature of the EHU academic community, it would be desirable to identify rigorous,

regulated, formal mechanisms beyond internal collegial agreement (potentially including additional external representation) to ensure the effectiveness and fairness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies.

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

EHU describes stakeholders' input into the internal quality assurance of the studies as being crucially important for the university. All students can contribute by participating in surveys on study quality assessing their teachers and subjects. Other social partners (who are mainly alumni) collaborate in study committees, provide feedback, participate in webinars and meetings with students. However, due to the uncertain political situation in Belarus and Russia, the engagement of some social partners is complicated and needs to be adjusted. The expert panel learned that many organisations in Belarus and Russia that were long-term social partners of the EHU have recently experienced political repressions and been forced to shut down; some of their personnel went into exile. At the time of the visit, engagement of local social partners - an obvious option to substitute for the loss of effective partnerships because of political circumstances - was not yet used to its full potential.

EHU states that the SPC consists of “the study programme teachers, the curator, students and social partners’, which in addition ‘is open to the public” (SER, p. 64). The expert panel could not confirm the latter claim as it emerged that some students were not informed about personnel, activities and the decision-making rationale of the SPC, despite some effort. Furthermore, no information about the SPC could be found by the expert panel on the EHU website. Although the SER gives the exact names of the students involved in the SPC (p. 66), their selection and the basis of their appointment remain unclear. It is understood that only MA students are involved in the SPC, while BA students’ involvement is described as participation in grant award and appeal committees (SER p. 72). Taking into account the recommendation of the previous evaluation report - ‘to provide for students’ more active involvement in the programme improvement processes’ (applied for both BA and MA programmes), the expert panel finds the recommendation only partially implemented.

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

Information about the quality of study is collected and analysed by EHU using a combination of formal and informal methods. In addition to the analysis of student performance, the main source of information for quality assessment is two student online surveys, conducted periodically. One survey researches students’ opinions on teaching and the study content; the second focuses on students’ general satisfaction with the studies. The availability of the collected data is, however, limited. It is understood by the expert panel that only teachers and members of the SPC are enabled to access the results. It should be further noted that the section on the study quality on the EHU website’s English version is outdated. The EHU students’ feedback, although published on the EHU website, is available only in the Russian language. The

quality assessment results, study improvement processes and outcomes of the heritage study programmes are not disseminated publicly, although EHU intends to do this in future.

Regarding the informal methods of feedback collection and dissemination, EHU highlights the role of alumni, who take part in thesis defences and in the Open Doors events for applicants: “to provide information, advice, talk about their careers and study experiences” (SER, p. 68).

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 expert panel learned that the majority of both BA and MA programmes students (including alumni) held a positive opinion towards the quality of the studies, with some serious exceptions (see section 3.3.4 above). During the meetings, the majority of current and former students expressed their general satisfaction with the skills and knowledge provided by the EHU. These findings matched the results of the student study quality assessment provided by EHU (SER p. 69-72). Many of the students emphasised that their qualifications acquired in this study programme met the requirements of the labour market.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Internal study quality assurance system is modelled according to European standards.
2. Most students and graduates are satisfied with the quality of the studies.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There is a lack of dissemination of information on study quality.
2. Due to the political situation in Belarus and Russia, the engagement of some social partners is complicated and needs to be adjusted.
3. Lack of transparency, absence of information and unclear selection and appointment process in terms of activities of SPC.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

The structured opportunity for students to publish synthesised versions of their original research is an area of best practice, insofar as it recognises their academic achievement and may inspire them to further development.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
<p style="text-align: center;">Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum</p>	<p>Mechanisms for equality of opportunity should be developed to ensure that all students are able to benefit from any travel component within the first-cycle programme.</p> <p>There is a need to clarify the identity and aims of the first-cycle programme, and to articulate the relationships between historical study and heritage studies approaches and content.</p> <p>The European focus of the first-cycle programme and the geographical scope of the second-cycle programme should be further qualified through attention to heritage concepts, politics, practices, policy, and issues from around the world.</p> <p>In the first-cycle programme, different critical perspectives on European history and heritage need to be engaged with, drawing on the extensive multidisciplinary works of literature (Geography, History, Heritage Studies, Politics, Anthropology etc.) that interrogate the nature of Europe and European history and heritage. This should be tied to a clearer articulation of the aims and identity of the programme and the relationship between the historical and heritage studies approaches and content.</p> <p>In the second-cycle programme, the relationship between modules and the logic of students' educational pathways should be clarified.</p> <p>The Panel recommends giving students the option to choose from a broader range of study modules beyond the formal programme's requirements. Additionally, reviewing the core identity of the programme would present an opportunity to assess the mandatory modules and potentially create more space for a more individualised study experience.</p> <p>Although both options of an academic paper and a creative writing assignment have their merits, it is recommended that all students attempt to achieve a more well-rounded and consistent learning experience in the study programme. This could also help to better integrate theory and practice throughout the programme.</p>

<p>Links between science (art) and studies</p>	<p>More comprehensive research field would enhance the quality of R&D activities and the theoretical and scientific basis of cultural heritage studies, as well as the access to wider international research communities. It would also pave the way for more active participation in international conferences. The Panel suggests in particular an academic research extract to analyse the concept of 'European cultural heritage' used as a key concept in the first-cycle studies.</p>
<p>Student admission and support</p>	<p>EHU should ensure full transparency in terms of processes, student representation and support, and complaints/grievance procedures, in order to ensure fairness. This should be allied to more structured and transparent communication approaches.</p> <p>The parameters for student mobility connected to the first-cycle programme focus on European cities should be made clear and the quality and content of education should be equal for all students, including equality of opportunity, both as a matter of fairness and to ensure the necessary consistency of teaching and learning for any given cohort.</p>
<p>Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment</p>	<p>Syllabi and timetables should be fixed and published well in advance of the commencement of teaching the relevant unit, without leeway for major changes to schedules and content <i>in medias res</i> unless significant external circumstances make this necessary and justifiable.</p> <p>The employability of students should be given careful thought in order to ensure that students are as prepared as they can be for the job market, particularly in a context in which students' return to their home country is problematic and international mobility becomes normal.</p> <p>The relative uniformity should be ensured of the assignments that each student produces for their respective courses. All students in a given course should submit assignments of the same type, which would help ensure that the evaluation is fair across any cohort.</p> <p>To improve student experience, it is important to clarify the procedures for filing complaints. These procedures should be readily accessible to students and available online through the website and VLE. Additionally, it would be helpful to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of student representatives.</p>

<p>Teaching staff</p>	<p>Staff engagement with sectoral heritage issues and practice should - where possible - feed into pedagogy such that students are exposed to 'live' developments in the field and better understand professional heritage processes.</p> <p>Academic staff should be encouraged to engage more closely with international debates in heritage, memory and museum studies, for example through publishing in key journals and international monographs, and contributing to international conferences.</p> <p>EHU should enable or instigate staff development initiatives relating to pedagogical skills and curriculum development either in-house or evaluating the potential to work in partnership with other HEIs to implement this.</p> <p>Mechanisms such as sabbaticals with full-salaried relief from teaching should be identified to allow teaching staff to undertake sustained pieces of research that increase their international standing.</p>
<p>Learning facilities and resources</p>	<p>The university should improve and ensure students' access to classic literature and current research in the field, e.g. in order to master the key concepts of the field and enable participation in international activities.</p>
<p>Study quality management and public information</p>	<p>Social partner policy needs to be adjusted as some of the Belarussian social partners are no longer functioning due to political repressions, while some of the remaining are potentially under threat. Making social partnership agreements with actors in the Lithuanian heritage sector is highly recommended.</p> <p>The university should also take measures to ensure transparency of selection and appointment processes in terms of activities of the Study Programme Committee. The university should identify and implement rigorous, regulated, formal mechanisms beyond internal collegial agreement (potentially including additional external representation) to ensure the effectiveness and fairness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies. Dissemination of information on study quality should also be improved.</p>

VI. SUMMARY

The expert panel extends thanks to the EHU staff for the organisation of the site visit and engagement in discussions, and to the students and social partners who freely gave their time.

The first- and second-cycle heritage programmes at EHU are situated and function within a complex geopolitical, institutional and pedagogical context. The Panel recognises and appreciates the careful negotiation of this by administrative and teaching staff. The unusual position of EHU is used to some effect in exploring heritage issues and in preparing a body of graduates able, conditions allowing, to use their knowledge and understanding to progressively transform the Belarusian state and society in future. This is based on a correct understanding of the basic implication of heritage within national and social identity and political formations. The Panel respects EHU's situation of exile, the duress under which it operates, and its active opposition to a prevailing regime. The Panel accepts, with caveats to follow, that this informs the pedagogical mission and content.

The Panel identified various aspects to be commended. These include the innovative focus (in first-cycle study) on European heritage; the use of cities as pedagogical nodes within the curriculum and wider understandings of European heritage; the high-level sectoral activity of some teaching staff (e.g. in relation to the crucial meeting of the Belarusian national committee of the International Council of Museums at the Prague conference) and the potential for this to inform teaching/student experience; sophisticated use of the VLE; good, accessible, and well-used, facilities; evidence of significant commitment from teaching staff to provide enriching student experience; high levels of favourable student feedback; and highly significant Belarusian social partner endorsement.

In the context of the above positive overview, the Panel also identified a number of serious issues for which deep improvement is required. These are explained at length in the main body of this report but are summarised as follows.

The relationship between the first- and second-cycle study programmes, their identities, and the internal logic of each, need to be better articulated. At present, the identities of the two programmes are ambiguous and the composition of units of study feels somewhat *ad hoc*, as if based primarily on assembling discrete areas of staff expertise rather than on pedagogical requirements and the coherence needed to prepare appropriately qualified graduates.

While innovative, the focus on European heritage in first-cycle studies comes with liabilities. The Panel understands the political imperative to embed a foundational European dimension within studies at EHU, but a serious risk here is that using classical European historiography as a counter-narrative to a Soviet one may have the effect of reproducing and reinforcing outdated, exclusive, hegemonic, metropolitan, and commendatory understandings of Europe that silence other perspectives and obscure power inequalities. The particular choice of cities (with the possible exception of Vilnius itself) seems to represent a canonic vision of Europe (Greek Antiquity, Italian Renaissance etc.) that could immediately be problematised with counter-

examples (Trømsø instead of Athens, Córdoba instead of Florence, etc., or rural rather than urban places). At the very least, attention to the key cities should be qualified by other contextual perspectives from diverse geographical and socio-cultural loci. A key issue here is the risk of perpetuating an idealised understanding of Europe at a time when the majority of scholars engaged with 'European heritage', and many actors within the European heritage sector, are carefully rethinking European historical identity, particularly in relation to colonial histories and legacies and to uses of European heritage myths by racist and xenophobic political actors and parties, mainly on the far right. Without the Panel providing a bibliography, more critical perspectives on European heritage(s) are readily available through a brief internet search or through the search engines of major international publishers, particularly *Routledge*, which also publishes the key international heritage studies journals (note also *Memory Studies* by *Sage*).

At the second-cycle level, deeper engagement with wider global issues is required. This links to a need to expand the focus on theoretical/conceptual issues, for a greater engagement with global realities and heritage issues in other locations around the world would lead to an increase in exposure to critical and theoretical debates. Obvious examples are the longstanding global debates about the nature of 'authenticity', global disparities in representation on heritage lists, and the different, sometimes vicious, political uses to which heritage is put in different global contexts. Furthermore, as a result of an expanded global focus, graduates may develop ambition for international mobility and be better equipped for it, which is particularly important in situations in which returning to one's home country is problematic.

Broadening the global scope of the second-cycle programme and deepening the theoretical, critical and political understandings of heritage should be allied to the development of the research environment within the field at EHU. As part of this, mechanisms such as sabbaticals with full-salaried relief from teaching should be identified to allow teaching staff to undertake sustained pieces of research that increase their international standing. This would align with European norms. Where possible, staff mobility should be enabled, in order to engage with and participate in key international fora for critical heritage, tourism and memory studies which have become 'where the action is' within the field, e.g. the Association of Critical Heritage Studies biennial conference, the Memory Studies Association conference, etc. Such increased scholarly extroversion will positively inform teaching and contribute to the development of research culture in the field at EHU. This could be further enhanced by enabling incoming staff mobility, for example through more structured mechanisms for inviting visiting scholars and incorporating their perspectives in ways that benefit the pedagogy and student experience. Such activity would help to develop the international reputation of EHU in heritage.

There is little publication among the staff base in key international outlets that function as international fora for the latest ideas in the heritage studies field - e.g. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *Heritage and Society*, *Memory Studies*, *Museum and Society* etc. There is no reason why this should be the case. Staff should be enabled by EHU to aspire to contribute to international debates using appropriate channels of these kinds. The research achievements of staff, international collaborations and the impact of research, should be improved, with a view

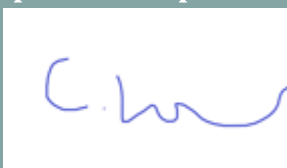
to improving staff research careers and the quality of research-informed teaching. This necessarily requires further engagement in (mainly) anglophone contexts.

In turn, this relates to a confused situation with regard to language policy in the university, particularly in terms of the language of tuition, which does not appear to be standardised. On the principle that all classes should be taught in the same language, the study-cycle programmes need to make an overall decision about which language to adopt. Language tuition at EHU will need to be structured to enable this.

While many students were highly positive about the programmes and the support and learning experience they receive, they were not unanimous. Very serious - in some cases alarming - concerns were expressed within the student group around rapid timetable changes (problematic because they disrupt students' working lives and therefore their financial wellbeing); grave staff misdemeanours (on which allegations this report expressly does not comment because of the Panel's limited remit and insufficient evidence); grievance procedures; transparency of student-facing communications; inequality of opportunity for students (see 3.3.4 above); and lack of representation on decision-making committees/bodies, or lack of sufficient information about mechanisms for choice of student representatives. The Panel concludes as best it can: that there is evidently some breakdown in communications that needs to be addressed; and that fairness, transparency, and respect of student requirements and experience need to be foremost and evident in managing the programmes.

The final critical point to make is that the SER was largely unusable as a source of reliable information about the programmes because of translation issues. In fact, the SER led to considerable misunderstandings that had to be resolved during the study visit. The Panel was later informed by an EHU staff member that the SER had been translated across three languages. The panel strongly recommends that EHU discontinue this practice and avoid translation issues by writing future reports in English from the outset.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'C. W.', is centered within a white rectangular box. The box is set against a dark teal background.