



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of TOURISM AND LEISURE
at KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

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Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	Recreation and Tourism	Recreation and Tourism Management
State code	6121LX059	6211LX081
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle (undergraduate)	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time, 3-year studies	Full time, 2-year studies
Credit volume	180	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Business Management	Master of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English, Russian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Bachelor degree
Registration date of the study programme	02/08/2001	02/08/2001

** 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 online site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on *May 20, 2022*.

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Associate prof. dr. Henri Kuokkanen, *Academic vice dean at Paul Bocuse Institute France*);

Associate prof. dr. Rong Huang, *professor at Plymouth University (United Kingdom)*;

Associate prof. dr. Dalia Prakapienė, *professor at General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, tour leader and guide of “Novaturas”, “Kelionių laikas”*;

Ms. Skaistė Kairytė, *first cycle student of Organisational communication and marketing at Šiauliai State College (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.	Studijų nuostatai
2.	Studijų grįžtamojo ryšio organizavimo tvarka (002)
3.	Rašto darbai.rar
4.	Modules_KU.rar
5.	Klaipėdos universiteto papildomai atsiųsti dokumentai
6.	Įsakymas_grižtamasis ryšys
7.	Example.docx
8.	Answers to the questions sent during site visit

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD POSITION/STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HEI

Klaipėda University (hereinafter - KU, University) is located in Western Lithuania. It is a multidisciplinary, national and Baltic marine science and studies centre integrated into international academic networks (Self-Evaluation Report (hereinafter - SER), p. 5). The institution was established in 1991 and serves a region with a population of about 600 thousand people. Due to its location, KU pays special attention to the coastal region and its development.

The present evaluation considers two study programmes within tourism and leisure study field: 1) the first-cycle study programme Recreation and Tourism (University Studies, Bachelor of Business Management, 3 years, 180 ECTS) and 2) the second-cycle study programme Recreation and Tourism Management (University Studies, Master of Business Management, 2 years, 120 ECTS). The study programmes are implemented at the Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism of the Faculty of Health Sciences of Klaipėda University. The degree programmes in Recreation and Tourism, which commenced in 2001 are one of the longest established, if not the longest established, Tourism and leisure study field programmes in Lithuania.

An international group of experts commissioned by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter - SKVC) carried out an evaluation of the Recreation and Tourism study programme in 2015. The study programme was evaluated and positively accredited for 6 years. Since the last evaluation, the following structural changes have been applied to the study programme: 1) the scope of the Recreation and Tourism Bachelor programme (hereinafter – RT programme) has been reduced from 240 ECTS to 180 ECTS, and accordingly 2) the scope of the Recreation and Tourism Management Master programme (hereinafter – RTM programme) has been increased from 90 ECTS to 120 ECTS. The total

scope of first and second cycle studies is now aligned to common practice in international (tourism) education programmes.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Tourism and Leisure study field and first cycle at Klaipėda University (KU) is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	2
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	23

*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.

Tourism and Leisure study field and second cycle at Klaipėda University (KU) 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	4
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	26

*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

The aim of the first cycle study RT programme as shown in Annex 1 (p. 1-3) is to train competent recreation and tourism specialists who know the regularities and problems of recreation and tourism functioning and service provision, are able to maintain and improve the quality of recreation and tourism, participate in the analysis, administration, planning and management of recreation and tourism processes, work in the changing environment, apply science-based solutions of a problem. Specialties in competencies in the development of health and e-tourism. There are sixteen learning outcomes which address professional competences (10 learning outcomes) and general competences (6 learning outcomes).

The aim of the second cycle study RTM programme as indicated in Annex 1 (p. 3-4) is to train highly qualified specialists with a whole of expert knowledge and skills in the field of recreation and tourism, which would enable them to act professionally and creatively in solving theoretical and practical problems in the field of recreation and tourism, implement innovations in their professional fields, improve learning skills necessary for continuing independent studies. There are twenty learning outcomes which also address professional competences (13 learning outcomes) and general competences (8 learning outcomes)

To examine whether the aims and outcomes of both cycles of the programmes conform with the needs of the society and/ or the labour market, the studies of tourism and leisure field considers statistical data from the World Economic Forum (point 14, SER, p. 7), a range of strategic development and investment documents as shown in point 15-19 of the SER (p. 7-8) and different public surveys regarding impacts of the COVID-19 in the tourism sector (point 20-21 of the SER, p. 8).

The meeting with the social partners and employers indicates that the students and graduates from these two programmes of KU have a very good understanding of relevant theories in tourism, specialising health tourism or e-tourism which are highly demanded in the industry. The students and graduates of these two programmes demonstrate high competencies in practice when they work in the industry.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Analysing the wide range of regional, national and European strategic plans and similar documents, the two study programmes at KU are directly linked with the needs of the society by contributing to the growth of the number of recreation and tourism specialists and the development of the professional field in the region, the country and wider society. The social partners and the employers confirm that the two study programmes are developed in line with the labour market demand. Therefore, the review panel concludes that aims and learning outcomes of the two programmes conform with the needs of the society and the labour market.

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

(1) Factual situation

KU is a significant research and study institution in Western Lithuania which focuses on the development of this region. The mission of KU is revealed in point 28 of the SER (p. 10) which is "to create new scientific knowledge and innovations, to develop future specialists and personalities, to develop humanistic and creative values" and "educate the most highly qualified specialists in various fields, including social sciences, and creative work".

The goals of KU activities are to develop critical thinking, creative specialists in their field, capable of applying knowledge and skills and their creative potential in professional activities. The main directions of optimization of KU activities: to ensure the quality of science and studies; to contribute to meeting the needs of the urban and regional society and the labour market; to create an ecosystem of educational and scientific innovations that meets the needs of the economy of Klaipėda region, which would create more favourable conditions for investing and developing talents.

The new KU Development Strategy 2021-2030, the KU Strategic Guidelines for Health Sciences 2030 and the strategy of the alliance "Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability" focus on the development of coastal tourism.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

A review of the aims and learning outcomes of both programmes indicates that they are in line with the mission of KU. The aims of the programmes respond to the goals of KU activities. Furthermore, the aims and learning outcomes of the programmes correspond to the strategic activities in coastal tourism. Therefore, the review panel concludes that the aims and learning outcomes of both programmes conform with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of KU.

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

(1) Factual situation

The aims and associated learning outcomes for both 1st and 2nd cycle programmes are mentioned in Annex 1. Table 1 (p. 11 of the SER) and Table 2 (p. 12 of the SER) provide further details of the first cycle of the RT programme in relation to the Description of General Study Requirements and the Description of Study Degrees.

Annex 2 indicates that the first cycle programme has a total duration of three years including six semesters. The number of subjects in the RT programme per semester does not exceed seven modules. Annex 2 and Point 35 of the SER (p. 12) indicate that it consists of 1677 hours of direct contact with the lecturers, 2892 students' independent work hours, and 15 ECTS are allocated for practical training.

Annex 2 and Point 41 of the SER (p. 14) indicates that the second cycle RTM programme has 4 semesters for 2 years. The total number of hours is 3200. 1697 hours are allocated for contact work with a teacher; the student's independent work in the programme is 1503 hours.

Point 44 of the SER (p. 15) explains how the number of the credits for a study subject is estimated at KU. The principles of compiling study credits are defined in Chapter XI of the KU Study Regulations (2018).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In consideration of the aims and learning outcomes of the two programmes listed in Annex 1, the two programmes are developed in line with the description of learning outcomes of first and second cycle programmes set by Order of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on Approval of the descriptor of study cycles (2016).

An analysis of Table 1, Table 2 and Annex 2 study plans of both programmes indicates that the two programmes are designed in line with the requirements of the Description of General Study Requirements and the Description of Study Degrees. Furthermore, credits of different subjects of the two study programmes in Annex 2 demonstrate that the study credits of these subjects are developed in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System ECTS.

Based on the available evidence, the review panel concludes that the field and cycle of two study programmes comply with the relevant legal requirements.

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 aims and the learning outcomes of both first and second cycle study programmes are presented in Annex 1. Annex 2 provides details of the study plans of these two programmes and includes details such as associated subject names, credits, contact hours, self-study hours, assessment methods, and related learning outcomes. Module handbooks for two specialisations (E-tourism, Health tourism) and optional modules within the first cycle RT programme were requested by the review panel to verify how the modules are designed and presented to the students.

Figure 1 (p. 13) and Figure 2 (p. 14) of the SER present the logical structure of the first and second cycle study programmes. Table 3 in the SER (p. 15) summarises the student workload in 2020-21 for achieving study objectives and learning outcomes.

In relation to study methods, as Point 47 of the SER (p. 16) indicates, the teaching staff ensures the possibilities of achieving the programme's intended learning outcomes by using a range of teaching activities. The same study methods are used in different cycles, but the staff has clear understanding requirements at different cycles. Regarding the assessment methods used in the two programmes, Point 48 of the SER (p. 16) indicates the assessment system includes various assessment methods and they correspond to the nature of the different subjects. Point 52 of the SER (p. 17) explains how the teaching staff need to follow the programme's intended learning outcomes to develop the subject descriptions, study methods and assessment methods.

In relation to the first cycle study programme, Point 53 and Point 54 of the SER (p. 17) provide insights to its teaching and assessment methods. Annex 3 Figure 1 provides details on how different learning outcomes are taught and assessed in different methods for the first cycle RT programme. Points 55 to 57 of the SER (p. 18) shed light on teaching and assessment considerations which the programme team has for the second cycle study programme. Annex 3 Figure 2 presents methods used in the evaluation and achievement of the learning outcomes of the second cycle RTM programme.

During the meeting with the teaching staff, the teaching staff confirms that they need to explain how the programme intended learning outcomes are achieved through relevant course learning outcomes in their module handbooks. They claimed that they continuously updated their teaching materials and reading system regularly. The Administration team at KU normally reminds the teaching staff to ensure they will have new materials in their teaching. They also need to ensure their assessments are planned to achieve relevant programme learning outcomes.

During the meeting with the students of both cycle study programmes, they were fully aware of the aim and learning outcomes of their respective programmes and where they can find them. They also confirmed that their lecturers normally explained different assessments at

the start of the modules in relation to the module learning outcomes. They can also find different module information (teaching topics, assessments, reading materials etc) from the module handbooks.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

To analyse the aim and the learning outcomes of the first cycle RT programme listed in Annex 1, they are generally well defined and comprehensible. However, reviewing relevant course learning outcomes of the modules in two specialisations and optional modules, it is apparent that different formats are used to develop learning outcomes (i.e., some statements are developed as sentences, but others are developed as action orders which start the statements with verbs). Furthermore, different tenses are used to prepare the module learning outcomes as some statements are developed in future tense, but others are developed in present tense. Therefore, the review panel **recommends** that the first cycle RT programme team systematically reviews the learning outcomes of associated modules to ensure a consistent format is used to prepare the learning outcomes of all the modules at the first cycle.

Figure 1 of the SER and Annex 2 provide insights into how the first cycle RT programme is constructed. The same set of optional modules is available at the 2nd and 5th semester. Both the people who are responsible for the SER and the students confirmed that the students could not choose the same optional module at different semesters, and they would not mix with different cohorts. Although the review panel was informed these five modules were developed in line with Level 6 standard, a review of the aims and the learning outcomes of these five modules reveals that some modules (e.g. Sustainable tourism, Rural tourism, City tourism) are more in relation to Level 4 standard as the aims of these modules are emphasised in the related module handbooks as to introduce relevant concepts and theories to the students. Furthermore, the meeting with the students, the first cycle students who are in the second year, commented on their experience of the optional module in the 2nd semester of the first year as easy. This does raise the concern whether the optional module is developed at the Level 6 if a student at Level 4 thought it was easy to study. Moreover, although the Entertainment Industry module is offered in the 2nd semester, the students will be unable to choose in consideration of prerequisites of these modules as the students are only taught one of the prerequisites in the 4th semester. Subsequently, the review panel **recommends** that the first cycle RT programme team reconsiders the design of the optional modules to ensure their module aims, the learning outcomes and prerequisites are fit for purpose.

A review of references and additional literature for the two specialisation modules and optional modules reveals that although some modules (e.g., Rural Tourism, Tourism Management Systems, Health Tourism Ethics, E-tourism marketing) include up to date literature sources, references and additional literature sources for other modules published in 2017 and earlier. Therefore, the review panel **recommends** that the first cycle RT programme team reviews their references and additional literature recommendations for their modules to ensure up-to-date literature sources are included and so the students can gain the newest knowledge and practice.

In consideration of Figure 1 of Annex 3, the teaching staff replies, the students and alumni comments and the reviewed module handbooks, it is clear that the study methods and assessment methods for the first cycle RT programme are well thought of in relation to the programme and module intended learning outcomes. The students are also well informed.

Table 3 of the SER (p. 15) and Annex 2 Study plan for the first cycle RT programme provide inconsistent information of contact hours and independent work hours (self-study hours). Information for the first cycle RT programme in the Table 3 is incorrect as numbers listed in independent work hours should have been contact hours information and total information should have been independent work hours. An analysis of Table 3 and Annex 2 indicates that credits for each semester are equal and student workload is well balanced. Contact hours and self-study hour information listed in Annex 2 for the first cycle RT programme are correct. Such information is consistent with the nature of modules and gradually more independent study the students should have at later stages of their study.

Regarding the second cycle RTM programme at KU, the second table of Annex 1 indicates that the aim and the learning outcomes are well developed and clearly presented. Figure 2 of the SER (p. 14) and Annex 2 table 2 provide insights of the second cycle RTM programme and it is clear that the programme adopts an integrated approach to design the programme which develops and deepens cognitive and analytical competences of the students.

In consideration of Figure 2 of Annex 3, the teaching staff replies, the students and alumni comments, the review panel **commends** that the study methods and assessment methods for the second cycle RTM programme are well thought of in relation to the programme and module intended learning outcomes. The students are also well informed.

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 structure and organisation of the first cycle RT programme are explained in Point 50 of the SER (p. 16), Figure 1 of the SER (p. 13) and the first table of Annex 2. Point 50 explains the RT programme structure and purposes in relation to different study years. Figure 1 of the SER visually presents the composition of the RT programme in relation to the nature of the subjects (study subjects, general university subjects, elective subjects and specialisation subjects, and practical training and final thesis. The first table of Annex 2 illustrates the structure of the programme in relation to the associated subjects at different years and how they are organised in relation to the programme learning outcomes.

As for the second cycle RTM programme, Point 51 explains the purpose and the structure of subjects in relation to different semesters. Figure 2 of the SER (p. 14) provides a visual summary of the RTM programme from the perspective of the nature of subjects in the programme. Annex 2 Table 2 explains associated subjects in relation to the RTM programme learning outcomes.

The alumni during the meeting were satisfied with what they learned from KU overall. However, some suggestions for further improvement such as changes in the environments and innovations in the industry were mentioned. The social partners and employers also indicate that adding and emphasising topics such as coastal tourism and maritime tourism, innovations, expanding health tourism offers and destination management and marketing might make the first cycle RT programme more attractive in the competitive tourism related education market as shown in point 25 of the SER (p. 9).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Both cycle study programmes consider professional competences and general competences of the students. All the modules are clearly stated in Annex 2 how they are related to different learning outcomes. A review of Annex 2 indicates that there are a wide range of subject specific contents for both cycle study programmes. Health tourism and E-tourism specialisations in the first cycle RT programme are gradually introduced and well-integrated with the overall programme. Point 50 and 51 provide clear explanations to the programme design at the first and second cycle level and they demonstrate that both study programme teams have clear plans to develop the competences of the students.

The students from both cycles recognised the benefits of undertaking research projects and involving research projects of their lecturers in relation to the development of their competences. The students' achievements from the two cycle study programmes are recognised nationally and regionally as indicated in Point 62 (p. 19). Their achievements are associated with final theses. Especially, the second cycle RTM programme students, during the site visit, when asked, they appeared well aware of their research opportunities and demonstrated keenness in pursuing their research topics. Point 92 (p. 26) also confirmed the second cycle students are actively engaged with internationally funded projects. The review panel, therefore, **commends** that it is an excellent practice that the second cycle RTM programme actively engages the students to develop their research and analytical skills through international funding projects.

Based on the above available evidence, the review panel concludes that both study programmes are developed to ensure consistent development of competencies of the students.

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

As indicated in Point 58 of the SER (p. 18), possibilities of KU students in two study programmes to individualise their studies are regulated by Klaipėda University Study Regulations (edition of 2018), Rector's Orders Regarding the description of the procedure of the autumn / spring semester examination session of Klaipėda University for the study year 2020–2021 (the document is prepared every semester) and other internal documents (faculty and department resolutions).

At KU, the students at the two programmes have the following five possibilities to individualise their study plan (Point 58, SER, p. 18) and they are clearly documented in different articles of the Study Regulations:

- An individual plan - a list of compulsory, alternative and freely chosen study subjects provided for in the study programme, additional study subjects in individual cases are compiled by each student.
- Possibility to change the time of examination session / the defence of the final thesis (to advance or postpone it); Chapter VII of the Description of the Procedure of the Examination Session (7.1.1., 7.1.2.);
- The defence of the final thesis (project) may be postponed by the order of the dean of the faculty due to justificatory reasons, i.e., illness. No fee shall be charged in the case of postponed defence of a final thesis for justified reasons;
- Change of study subjects / credits;
- Participation in exchange programmes, traineeships or internships not provided for in the study plan

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Although the first cycle RT programme has five optional modules as shown in Annex 2, due to the small number of the students in each cohort, in reality, the students are not free to choose but influenced to follow whether it is by their peer group or advice of their lecturers. The meeting with the students confirms that all the students in the same year chose the same optional module and a small number have been perceived as one of the reasons from the students. For the first cycle RT programme, the students can also choose one of the specialisations (Health tourism or E-tourism) (see Figure 1 in p. 13 of the SER) which the students were positive about. For the second cycle RTM programme, there is no optional module as shown in Annex 2, but the students need to develop an independent individual project which is worth 30 ECTS.

As for other possibilities, the students at both cycles are fully aware of them and procedures to apply if they need them. The intended learning outcomes should be considered which seem to be well understood by the students. Some have used some opportunities during their study due to work commitments. The meeting with the students at both cycles indicates that the students are satisfied with different opportunities to individualise their study plan.

Based on the available evidence and the visit, the review panel concludes that although the first cycle RT programme has options for the students to individualise their study, it needs to increase its recruitment and honour options for the students to choose. The second cycle RTM programme has sufficient opportunities for its students to individualise their study according to their learning needs and in consideration of the intended learning outcomes.

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

(1) Factual situation

As indicated in Point 59 of the SER (p. 18), the principles of preparation of final theses, defence and formation of the commission at KU are established in the Description of General Requirements for Independent Written and Artistic Works of KU Students (Senate Resolution No. 11-56 of 9 April 2010).

The principles of forming the final thesis defence commission are also regulated in the KU Study Regulations (2018). The final thesis defence commission of the first cycle RT programme consists of a chairman, who holds the position of an associate professor or a professor, and two members, teachers of the study field, who hold at least the position of a lecturer. The qualification commission of the second cycle RTM programme consists of 5 competent specialists of the study field: scientists, practitioners, representatives of social partners with scientific degrees or pedagogical titles. At least one member of the commission (preferably the chairman of the commission) may be from another research and study institution.

Annex 5 presents a list of topics for the final thesis of students in the field of Tourism and Leisure field studies from 2018 to 2021 at KU. Point 61 of the SER (p. 19) reports that during 2018 to 2021, many of the tasks of the development of tourism and recreation in Western Lithuania became the field of research, but a number of works were also focused on the context of the whole of Lithuania.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

An analysis of the topics of the students' final theses listed in Annex 5 and organisation of final thesis defence commissions of both cycle study programmes, the review panel concludes that the final theses comply with the requirements of the Description of General Study Requirements and the Description of Study Degrees.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The study methods and assessment methods for **the second cycle** RTM programme are well thought of in relation to the programme and module intended learning outcomes. The students are also well informed.
2. It is an excellent practice that **the second cycle** RTM programme actively engages the students to develop their research and analytical skills through international funding projects.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Learning outcomes for **the first cycle** RT programme subjects are developed in an inconsistent format.
2. The design of optional modules for **the first cycle** RT programme lack clear consideration of the module aims, learning outcomes, prerequisites and suitability of the timing of the delivery.
3. References and additional literature recommendations for the subjects in **the first cycle** RT programmes are not up to date in consideration of rapid development of associated areas (i.e. E-tourism, Health tourism, Sustainable tourism, City tourism, MICE).

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

As demonstrated in Table 4 of the SER, the level of research activities measured as full-time equivalent of day time in the University have remained fairly constant throughout the observation period. This constant investment in research by faculty has produced steady results in terms of publications (Table 5). It is particularly noteworthy that the number of publications in highly ranked outlets (Scopus, Web of Science) has been on the rise, reaching 7 items in 2021. The topics of the publications, as presented in Annex 4, are mostly within the subject field of tourism and thus well-aligned with the field of the study programmes. Additionally, some research in the field of education is undertaken, complementing the scientific discovery of the institution. In point 78 of the SER, four international forums organized by the University that focus on topics relevant to the field of study are also named.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The evidence provided by KU is compact while it simultaneously presents an excellent level of detail on the research activities during the period in question. The increasing number of publications, clearly divided between different types and levels of publication, is commendable. It also supports, without a question, the adequacy of research activities in the institution. The example provided on the inclusion of this knowledge in the curriculum similarly supports the notion that not only is knowledge produced within the institution, but this knowledge is also employed in the education the University offers.

During the remote site visit, the meetings with the management and faculty of the programmes aligned well with the information provided in the report. The enthusiasm of faculty members toward science and discovery of new knowledge was clearly evident, further supporting the positive evaluation of the programmes in this sense. The answers from the faculty members also gave an impression of an institution that is supportive of research, with a recent email asking for research support that the faculty would like to have as an example of this.

The SER (point 4) names three research vessels that the University owns. While these are discussed in the SER for these two programmes, the remote site visit revealed that they are not available for the faculty members of these programmes to use, or their use is perceived too expensive. Lowering this barrier could create truly innovative research in coastal tourism not only on national but also international scales.

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

(1) Factual situation

Table 6 in SER presents research projects that the institution undertakes together with industry partners. Many of the themes align with recent trends in sustainable tourism, for example nature-based tourism. Furthermore, they feature topics such as innovation and generation Z perceptions among them. Points 68-73 in the SER provide supporting evidence to the argument that this scientific knowledge is incorporated in the study programmes with detailed examples of where such inclusion takes place in both the bachelor and master studies. While the report is condensed, it provides detailed and relevant facts about the activities implemented by the university.

The university included a health tourism specialization within the bachelor program. This addition corresponds to the increasing number of publications in the field, as described in points 81-84 in the SER. The university has also invested heavily in research of coastal tourism, as demonstrated through participation in EU projects and faculty exchange abroad (points 86 and 87 in the SER).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The industry-university cooperation in research and the prominent inclusion of research findings supports the notion that the content of the studies feature the latest developments in the field, for example through the establishment of the health specialisation in the first cycle study programme. Furthermore, the topics of research by faculty members, particularly sustainability and nature-based tourism, reflect recent trends in the field.

When asked, the field of developing tourism experiences through experience design and design thinking did not appear familiar to the institution, nor does it prominently feature in the module names of either study cycle programme. As design thinking and experience design are central to the tourism business of today, the programmes would benefit from adding at

least basic aspects of experience design in the first cycle programme, possibly connecting this with the sustainability themes already evident in the curriculum. The second cycle RTM programme could, subsequently, take this experiential approach to tourism deeper, further supporting the standing of the two programmes as forerunners in Lithuanian tourism research and application of scientific knowledge in first and second cycle programmes.

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

The SER (points 91 to 94, p. 25-26) KU provides ample evidence of student participation in research competitions and publication and implementation of research results with notable achievement. Examples include the publication of the proceedings of the KU annual student conference, second cycle student Goda Sakalauskaitė being awarded the Klaipėda City Municipality Prize for her master's thesis "Perspectives of Accessible Tourism Development: The Case of Klaipėda Old Town", and a group of first and second cycle students together winning the Game of Goals by the Sustainable Tourism Excellence Network for Youth. Specifically among the second cycle students there are examples of their inclusion in funded research projects, for example Eglė Baltranaitė in the BaltCoast project in 2016-2018 and Simona Mikalajūnatė in the project "Youth Networking for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Baltic Sea Region" during 2020-2021. During the remote site visit, when asked, students appeared well aware of their research opportunities and demonstrated keenness in pursuing their research topics.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The short but informative bullet points 91-94 in the SER contain plenty of facts that support the evaluation that students are engaged in research activities extremely well in the institution. The reputation of KU as a research-focused institution that came across during the site visit may explain this, as it is likely that students with research interest apply for these two programs. However, this does not in any way diminish the value that the institution is creating in developing and executing student research activities. Furthermore, both faculty and students comments during the site visit corroborated this very positive evaluation of inclusion of research activities in the study programmes.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The breadth and depth of research activity in the university, as demonstrated by the number of publications (particularly in internationally ranked, high-level academic journals)
2. Incorporation of research by faculty members in the curriculum, as demonstrated by the multiple examples of how this has been achieved.

3. Second cycle student inclusion in international, funded research projects.

(2) Weaknesses:

None found.

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

The admission process at KU as well as the entry requirements are consistent with national regulations. Admission rules are discussed internally by the academic bodies and, upon approval by the University Senate, published on the University's website as well as the information system of the Lithuanian Higher Institutions Association for Organizing Joint Admission (LAMA BPO). The competitive score is determined and additional points are awarded in accordance with the established procedure (Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, orders of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania and rules of admission to KU approved by the KU Senate (SER, p. 27).

Average competitive scores for the RT programme are considered high (5,59 in 2018 and 6,34 in 2020), but fluctuating demand for this first cycle RT programme is of concern. In 2019, no students were admitted to the programme, in 2021 only 2 foreign students signed study agreements with KU. In the remaining years of the reporting period (2018 and 2020), the number of signed study contracts is very low, raising issues about the University's ability to deliver a good study experience to students which - at University level - often build on discourse and discussion.

Regarding the very low number of students for the first cycle study programme at KU, the social partners and employers do not see this is a big problem in consideration of the nature of the recreation and tourism industry, the size and the total population of the country. However, for sustainable operations, of a first cycle study programme, continued low student admission are of a serious concern.

From the SER and meetings with Programme management during the evaluation, it becomes evident that KU is aware of the difficult recruitment situation. One countermeasure reported in the SER (p. 6) is the establishment of a double degree diploma (first cycle) with the University of Zadar, Croatia, starting in 2022. Another double degree option is planned with the Pamukkale University, Turkey (SER Appendix 7). Some marketing activities are outlined in Appendix 7 to the SER.

The admission numbers for the second cycle RTM programme remain relatively stable over the years.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The student selection process, admission criteria and process are in line with the legal requirements for higher education institutions in Lithuania. The process is transparent and all relevant information is made available to prospective students via the institution's website and recruitment documents.

The review panel raises concerns about the declining interest in the first-cycle RT programme. The attractiveness and positioning of the RT programme needs a thorough evaluation in light of existing and looming competition, particularly colleges and Universities of Applied Sciences. At the same time, the programme management is well advised to build on the strengths the University provides as an institution. The marketing plan provided in Appendix 7 of the SER lists a range of valuable activities which are very likely to underline the quality of the study programme in the eyes of its stakeholders. The programme management credits the current situation to outside factors such as the demographic change and the pandemic. However, the expert team felt it is necessary to question the fundamentals of the programme and design an alternative to the current programme that builds on the legacy of KU. The current admission numbers are considered a major factor for this programme evaluation as they reflect the attractiveness and perceived usefulness of the degree. Whilst the expert committee recognized the efforts presented in terms of marketing activities and enhanced internationalisation, more substantial approaches are required.

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

The procedure for recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning, as well as their respective underlying regulations are detailed in sections 113-118 of the SER. Applications for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning have not taken place at KU during the reporting period. Above that, no information is provided on the number and scope (as in ECTS) that has been credited towards studies from external higher education institutions.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The procedure for the recognition of formal and non-formal qualifications gained outside of KU seems to be well defined and implemented in the study programmes management.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER, 14 students went to study under the Erasmus+ scheme, 3 students spent their internship abroad. Not surprisingly, the numbers of student mobility decreased during the pandemic in 2019 and 2020, another factor is the small size of the cohort. Unfortunately, the SER does not provide a break-down of student mobility activities for first

and second cycle programmes. During the meeting with students, the expert team learned that none of the present students undertook academic mobility - mainly because of work obligations that prevented them from spending a longer time abroad. Processes are in place for informing students about the possibility for academic mobility, the selection of suitable candidates as well as the management of credit applications upon completion of the mobility - all of which was confirmed by the student representatives of KU. Over the reporting period, there is a positive balance of incoming versus outgoing students for partial studies (p. 14 to 16, SER).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The processes in place all suggest a professional integration in the study programmes management. Given the small student numbers in the programs under review, an acceptable share undertakes academic mobility. In the wake of the pandemic, but also driven by new possibilities through the Erasmus+ scheme, short-term mobilities, e-mobilities and other forms of collaborative learning are applied. The expert team positively notes the activities undertaken to encourage students and staff to participate in mobility activities and thus drive the internationalisation of the study programs.

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

The University provides funding for students with a high entrance average. Information and consultations on admission issues are provided (www.aikos.smm.lt). Offered support: academic information and counselling, career services, information technology services, library and information services, financial support, accommodation, cultural and leisure services, access to student activities, psychological services; support and special services for students with special needs. With high grades, an incentive scholarship is awarded. University uses Moodle as the Learning Management System, which is widely and actively used. All information related to the study process is collected. Requests are sent, consultations are provided. Student input is considered. Students have committees and meetings with administration. The University has a Student Council and an Academic Council, where students are the parts of it and can make important decisions for the community.

Student feedback is collected through surveys. Students are involved in many management processes. This University has active involvement of students in projects and other activities. Students are given the opportunity to combine study and work. Students are encouraged to engage in University community activities and events. For example - participate in social activities, engage in voluntary activities outside the University. Students can visit social partners places. Students receive all the information related to studying in time (p. 35, SER).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Students are informed and aware of their support options. This information can be found on the University's website and social networks. This information is also shared with the students during consultations (p. 28, SER). These opportunities are actively and often used. The quality and quantity of support is evaluated, filling out surveys sent by the University (p.33, SER). Surveys are completed in order to properly improve support for students.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

Various consultations are provided as needed about the support, admission, ect. The students themselves expressed the opinion that it is convenient and suitable to work in small groups, although there are a few (5 students - Bachelor's program). All information is sent to both University staff and students in a timely manner. The accuracy and quality of the information sent is ensured. If there is a need and questions about the information sent by the administration, an agreement is made to send the request through communication channels and means, such as e- mail, phone ect. Communication channels and tools used by the University include e-mail, telephone, consultation, Moodle system, and personal meetings. The topics of the consultations are varied and depend on the needs of the students. For example, consultations are provided on admission issues, support, materials for taught subjects, and more. Consultation time is agreed in advance. If the situation changes, the agreed consultation can be cancelled.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The community receives all the information in time. The ability to clarify certain aspects of the received information is often used by both sides. This process is quick as the institution usually responds to inquiries within a few business days. Students also turn to teachers for consultations about the lectures. Consultations are provided willingly. Quality is also ensured by completing the surveys and meetings with administration. Consultations are provided regarding assessment, misunderstanding of the taught subject, inability to participate in lectures and other issues. Quality is ensured by the result, the solution of a problem or question, the ability to help students. When students' suggestions appear and are received, they are actively and accurately analysed and applied. The information sent is clear and understandable. Students enjoy the communication process.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Learning management system is implemented and widely used for communication;
2. Students' involvement in the community life, activities and research of the University.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Difficulties in attracting a reasonable number of students to the current first-cycle RT programme.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The KU study process is regulated by the Klaipėda University Study Regulations (2018). According to the SER, the KU develops a student-oriented and motivating study environment.

The study process at KU is managed using the KU Academic Information System (https://web.liemsis.lt/kuis/stp_prisijungimas), and the course material and interactive relationships with the students are ensured through the Moodle system.

According to the SER and the KU Study Regulations, studies in the field are conducted on a full-time and part-time basis. Study subjects are certified for 3 years and are prepared taking into account the learning outcomes of the study programme. Every year, teachers have the opportunity to supplement/update the subject description with new literature, etc. It was found during the remote site-visit meeting with the lecturers that they have the opportunity to develop the subject description and change its content by no more than 30 % before each semester (updating the literature, adding new topics or assessment tasks). The structure of the course descriptions provided is clear (e.g., Tourism Management System or Health Tourism Project Management), but in the area of assessment, only the assessment methods, total hours, influence on grade, and assignment period are listed. Cumulative assessment is applied in all the study subjects in the field.

The SER (p. 38) and the course descriptions record a wide variety of teaching and assessment methods. It is worth noting that the authors of the SER, after comparing the study and assessment methods used in the first and second cycles, conclude that the second cycle focuses more on inclusive, problem- and solution-based learning and independent research.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The interview with the students and the analysis of the SER confirmed the fact that the University develops a student-oriented motivating study environment expressed through the active involvement of students in the educational process, the variety of teaching and

assessment methods used in the educational process, the qualification of lecturers, the support of lecturers to students, student access to the Academic System, the use of the Moodle environment etc. The variety of teaching and assessment methods encourages students to be active participants in the learning process and to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

When analysing the procedure for the development of course descriptors, it is worth considering the use of mid-term evaluations of course descriptors. In view of the statement made by the lecturers at the remote site-visit that no more than 30% of the course description can be changed each year, which is not a low number, it should be considered whether it would be worth introducing a control mechanism requiring additional approval of the course description if, for example, the content of the course description or the assessment tasks change. It is also recommended that the content of the assessment tasks be detailed in the course descriptions, linking them to the objectives and assessment criteria of the course.

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

(1) Factual situation

Based on the SER and the remote site-visit with the representatives of the institution, the following support measures have been identified for students with disabilities or socially vulnerable groups or students with special needs: elevators and wheelchair lifts have been installed; special workstations have been set up in the library; Moodle has the function of changing fonts for the visually impaired or dyslexic; there is a possibility of distance learning; a possibility of suspending the studies; a possibility of developing an individual study plan, etc.

Socially vulnerable students have an opportunity to reduce their tuition fees, receive social scholarships, and apply for discounts in the dormitory. If necessary, an assistant (volunteer) can be assigned to provide individual assistance (to accompany, to overcome existing physical obstacles, to teach to orientate in a new environment, etc.).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

KU has planned a package of measures to ensure access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.

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

At the University, the study progress of the students in the field is monitored at several levels (based on the SER):

- 1) Subject. Students' progress is assessed by the subject teacher(s), who provides feedback on the completed tasks, evaluates the student's progress, and advises what to

pay attention to. The Moodle features (forums and comments on students' work) are often used for feedback. SER states (p. 41), that the feedback is based on the presentation of the benefits of the work, followed by the disadvantages and areas for improvement. However, during the site-visit with the students, they pointed out that the lecturers tend to focus on the shortcomings, the things that need to be corrected, where mistakes are made, while the good things are mostly ignored.

- 2) Study year. The progress of students in the study year is monitored by the study staff responsible for the administration of the studies. The results of student achievement are discussed with the administration of the units conducting the studies and the study programme committee.
- 3) Study programme. At the level of the field study programmes, the progress of the students is monitored by the Department. Once a year the Department organises discussions of the information collected on internships (assessments and feedback) and the results of final theses; the members of the Department identify problems and provide solutions; determine the level of students' underachievement in the study subjects; and assess the number of students enrolled in the study programme and the number and reasons for their study suspension or withdrawal. During the site-visit with the administration, an additional indicator for monitoring students' progress was mentioned: the comparison of their achievements with the entrance results.

The feedback collection process is regulated by and based on the Description of Klaipėda University Study Feedback Organisation approved by the KU Rector (2019). Feedback is provided anonymously and is organized by the faculty (in SER p. 41). According to the SER, the results of the students' feedback are presented to the teachers. At the site-visit, the lectures confirmed that they improve their teaching (update content, methods, etc.) based on the feedback results. SER states that the results of the feedback are used during the certification and competition of the teachers, as well as for the improvement of the quality of studies, marketing, strategic planning of KU and other purposes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The analysis of the information in the SER and the information received during the meeting with the institution representatives suggests that the feedback system set up by the KU is effective and includes a variety of different management levels. Feedback is provided to and received from students on a periodic basis, in accordance with the procedures laid down in the regulating document, and the feedback received is used in the certification and competition of the teachers, as well as for the improvement of the quality of studies, marketing, strategic planning of KU and other purposes. It is recommended that more attention to the principle of evaluation as stated in the SER be given and not only the shortcomings of the work being evaluated or the points for improvement when providing feedback be highlighted, but also the benefits of the work be pointed out.

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

(1) Factual situation

Graduate career monitoring is performed with the help of the tools in the Career Management Information System *www.karjera.lt*. Additionally, the Department of Sports, Recreation and Tourism regularly conducts graduate surveys on employability by interviewing the graduates of study programmes online. The main task of this survey was to ask graduates about their employment within the 12 months after graduation and the adequacy of the acquired competencies for performing professional duties. According to the SER, around 50% of Master's graduates are employed in their profession. Surveys of graduates at the programme level show that about 90 % of the graduates agree that the studies were beneficial to their professional and personal development (SER, p. 42). The alumni at the remote site-visit confirmed positive attitudes towards studying and the benefits of the studies in their professional careers. SER (p. 42, paragraph 187) also provides examples of the direct career benefits of the studies.

SER states that an employer survey shows that students have a strong theoretical background but lack of practical skills. Employers recommended adding more practical activities to the bachelor's study programme in the future. The social partners at the site-visit agreed that the need for practical skills continues, but the self-assessment group members on the site-visit presented changes related to strengthening cooperation with social partners and involving them in meetings, practical activities, etc.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The analysis of the above facts suggests that KU systematically collects data on the employability of graduates and the tracking of graduate careers in the study field. At the site-visit, the alumni expressed positive attitudes towards the study experience and the career benefits. The social partners confirmed that there is still a need for practical skills, but that this is being addressed through the institution's close cooperation with the social partners.

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

(1) Factual situation

The KU Code of Academic Ethics (2019) is a key document to ensure the implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination. Other additional measures are also in place. The students who begin their studies at KU sign an agreement committing themselves to the requirements of academic discipline and student ethics set forth in the KU documents. SER (p. 42) also emphasises that students must follow the principle of academic integrity in their written assignments (the requirements are provided in the Description of General Requirements for Independent Written Papers of Klaipėda University (2020)). At the remote site visit, the lecturers mentioned that the authenticity of written works is verified in the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library Information System.

SER also added that in order to ensure fair study, teachers and students can use the free plagiarism recognition system *www.plag.lt*.

The representatives of the institution stated (in SER and during the site-visit) that there have been no cases of violation of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination during the last 3 academic years.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The process of the implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination is clear and regulated.

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

The KU procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within field studies are regulated by the Klaipėda University Study Regulations (2018). At the remote site-visit, the students confirmed that they were aware of the right of appeal, but that there was no need to exercise this right.

SER states (p. 44) that during the reporting period, no appeals regarding the examination and thesis defence procedures and assessment were received from the students of the bachelor's and master's study programmes in the analysed field.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

KU has a procedure for appeals and complaints, and the students are familiar with it.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. A variety of teaching and assessment methods encourage students to be active participants in the learning process and to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
2. The feedback system at KU is effective and includes various levels of monitoring.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The assessment system provided by the descriptions of the subject is very generalised, making it difficult to assess how the content of the assessment tasks is related to the objectives and assessment criteria of the course.

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

Point 205 of the SER (p. 46) explains that in the 2018-2020 academic years, an average of nine teachers worked in the study programmes of the field, they held 7.30 of the pedagogical staff, in the 2019-2020 nine teachers held 4.97 of the pedagogical staff. In 2020–2021, six lecturers worked in the programmes of the field, they held 3.50 pedagogical and 1.65 research staff. Table 12 in the SER (p. 46) presents the number of teachers of the two programmes by positions and the share of the positions occupied in the field studies in 2018-2021.

Table 14 and Table 15 (p. 48, SER) present the composition of the academic staff in the first and second study cycle of the study programmes.

- For the first cycle RT programme, nine teachers of the study field teach in the study programme and six of them are researchers (SER, Table 14, p. 48).
- For the second cycle RTM programme, there are nine lecturers with a scientific degree and more than 80 percent of the study content is taught by researchers. Out of nine teachers in the field of the study, three professors work in the second cycle RTM programme. Moreover, one professor from the Sports University participated and chaired final theses evaluation commission (see Table 15, SER, p. 48).

Annex 4 provides a list of full-time teachers of tourism and leisure field subjects and gives more details of all the teaching staff which includes key information such as years in pedagogical work, research interest, three the most significant work in the last five years, taught subjects and years of practical years.

Point 206 of the SER (p. 46) explains that during the academic years 2018 to 2021, the ratio of the number of the teachers of subjects in the field of tourism and leisure to the number of students studying was approximately 1: 6.52, i. e., there were 6.52 students per teacher. Teachers of other study fields in the teaching of tourism and leisure subjects account for 6.6 per cent.

Point 208 of the SER (p. 47) indicates that during the analysed period (2017–2020) four teachers-practitioners also worked in the programmes of the study field of tourism and leisure, and these teachers help to connect the scientific basis of studies with the real practice of recreation and tourism.

Furthermore, there is a Council of Social Partners for Tourism and Leisure, whose members are leaders and managers in the field of recreation and tourism (SER, p. 47). The members of

the Council of the Social Partners at the meetings of the Council and at the meetings with the teachers and students of the field of study provide valuable proposals for the improvement of studies in this field, participate in the commissions for the evaluation of students' final theses.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

An analysis of the available evidence indicates that the positions of the teachers of the department (professor, associate professor, lecturer, assistant) comply with the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania and Resolution of the Lithuanian Science Council No. V-340 (June 28, 2018) which regulates the composition of the positions of higher education teachers and the qualification requirements for the positions of the first and second cycle programmes. The number of the teaching staff, their qualification and positions also comply with the general requirements set by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (2016) for the provision of the first and second study cycle programmes.

In consideration of the number of students in two programmes, the number of teaching staff reported in Table 12, the ratio of the number of teachers of subjects in the field tourism and leisure to the number of students studying in Point 206, the two programmes have adequate staff to teach the students. All lecturers of the programmes participate in project activities, conduct research, and organise events (point 204, SER, p. 46). Evidence from Annex 4 confirms their participation and their competence.

The meeting with social partners and employers confirms that the two programme teams have the formal engagement of social partners through the Council of Social Partners. Compared with other higher education providers of tourism and leisure programmes in Lithuania, the Council of Social Partners is an excellent and formal arrangement in engaging social partners. Such formal engagement benefits not only the regular and sustainable programme development but also provides the students useful industry insights. Furthermore, the meeting with the students also indicates that the students believe their teaching staff are experienced and qualified to teach them.

Based on the above analysis of the available evidence and the visit, therefore, the review panel concludes that two programmes have sufficient, qualified and competent teaching staff. The review panel also **commends** that the formal regular engagement with social partners through the Council of Social Partners is a good feature of the programmes.

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

As indicated in point 209 of the SER, at KU, teaching visits abroad are funded by the ERASMUS + programme. Study visits and internships are usually funded by project funds or special programmes or funds. Table 13 summarised the mobility of teachers within the study of the field in Lithuania and abroad last three academic year (2018-2019, 8 visits within the country,

14 visits abroad; 2019-2020, 4 visits within the country and 7 visits abroad; 2020-2021, 5 visits within the country and 3 visits abroad). Among these academic years, 2018-2019 has the highest number of activities. Furthermore, during the reporting period, nine visiting foreign professors or doctors worked in the programmes of the study field as shown in Point 207 of the SER.

The meeting with the teaching staff indicates that the teaching staff are fully aware of the procedures on how to apply for funding in relation to academic mobility programmes. According to them, the application process is straightforward and easy. Although there are competitions among the applicants to secure the grants for the mobility, they agreed that the process is apparent and fair.

The positive impacts of academic mobility are recognised in relation to professional development of teaching staff (e.g., scientific research skills and English capability) as shown in point 212 in the SER. The staff outgoing and incoming academic mobility are also beneficial for study programmes as the teaching staff will share more new information, experience and new opportunities for cooperation.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are a healthy number of the teaching staff who take part in academic mobility. The lower numbers in two academic years are explained in relation to the Covid pandemic and staff capacity. The staff are fully aware of the procedures and recognise different positive impacts to their professional development and their courses. Therefore, based on the available evidence and the remote site visit, the review panel concludes that conditions for ensuring teaching staff's academic mobility are favourable and well recognised by the teaching staff.

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

(1) Factual situation

Training for the development of pedagogical competence is organised annually for the teachers of KU. Most of the teachers of the department participate in pedagogical competence development programmes. Some examples are shared in point 211 of the SER.

At KU, there are peer support activities. From the additional answers provided by KU, it is clear that the team supports young teachers by inviting them to attend lectures of colleagues, professors, to consult, participate in training, seminars, ect. The peer support is also applied to research aspects as young teachers are invited to cooperate in scientific research area, joint publications, project activities, ect. It is voluntary and collegially supported.

From the additional answers provided by senior management and faculty admin, there is a clear KU staff appraisal system which based on key documents: Klaipeda University Teachers and Researchers wage (salary) setting and performance appraisal system _ "Klaipėdos universiteto darbuotojų darbo užmokesčio sistemos ir veiklos vertinimo tvarkos aprašo 1

priedas: PEDAGOGINIŲ IR MOKSLO DARBUOTOJŲ DARBO UŽMOKESČIO NUSTATYMO TVARKA “.

Annually, the wage (salary) depends on the academic results (publications, studies support activities, marketing activities, etc.). All information teachers uploaded themselves, then the Head of Department approves and the Special Committee calculates points. Teachers are motivated to seek high results. At the Departmental level, annual Departmental Reports, the progress and future goals are discussed. Certification is carried out **every five years** in order to determine whether the qualifications of the teaching staff/requirements correspond to the current position following System of Certification and Competition for the Positions of Klaipėda University Teachers and Researchers (<https://www.ku.lt/personaliskyrius/konkursas-atestacija-pareigoms-uzimti/>). Point 199 of the SER indicates that a range of objective requirements and student feedback are considered in the process of certification. The requirements are stimulating permanently to develop academic activities.

The meeting with the teaching staff indicates that the teaching staff received a range of support from KU to develop their pedagogical, subject and research competences. Different examples are readily shared by the staff such as teaching training, how to improve English, how to use different IT facilities, how to apply EU projects and prepare research publications etc. The support can be time allowance and financial support. Overall, they know there is different support available to develop and improve their competences, and they know where to ask for the support. They are satisfied with what they received from KU.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

An analysis of the additional information regarding KU's staff appraisal system indicates conditions for improvement of competences of teaching staff are clearly documented and well publicised among its teaching staff. The conditions are perceived favourably among the staff. Therefore, the review panel concludes that the conditions for improvement of competences of teaching staff are adequate at KU.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The formal regular engagement with social partners through the Council of Social Partners is a good feature of the programmes.

(2) Weaknesses:

None found.

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

The University provides all possible learning resources to ensure the completion of the study programmes. The available tools are of high quality and meet the needs of the community. The administration, departments and classrooms of the Faculty of Health Sciences are located in the faculty building. Tourism and leisure study field programmes have 27 classrooms, two of which (rooms No 313 and No 215) have 95 seats each, and the remaining have 23-35 seats. All classrooms, laboratories and reading rooms have wireless internet access, the large auditoriums have modern multimedia and video conferencing equipment. In addition, the building has four specialised computer classrooms (p. 49, SER). A virtual learning environment and collaboration system Moodle is implemented for KU students and faculty. The university has some potential training places (Table 16, p. 51, SER). The University community can use the library and other means of publicity and information (p. 53-54, SER).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The University receives suggestions and requests from students regarding learning resources. The community can access the resources they need at any time. The available auditoriums are actively used for lectures. Students use the available library resources when doing research or writing reports. When physical defects are noticed, repairs are carried out.

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

(1) Factual situation

Available learning resources are used purposefully and appropriately. Community suggestions to upgrade resources are considered and taken seriously. In order to respond to the needs of the community, the University purposefully updates the available learning resources. The renewal process varies and depends on the community group. When it is noticed that there is a lack of information, other sources are used for scientific research – financial resources are provided to purchase or update them. Staff, students and the rest of the non-administrative community can submit suggestions for resource renewal to the administration. The administration can also prepare an order or order for the library or responsible bodies to buy the specific resources or their supplements. Proposals are accepted through the channels and means of meetings, calls, e-mails.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The community is satisfied with the available resources. The community is informed about changes and improvements by communication channels, like e-mail, calls, and personal meetings. The update process is being followed. In ensuring quality, the community maintains a feedback relationship with the administration. Information about changes and their use is published. A separate budget is allocated for the renewal of learning resources.).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Selection and updating of learning resources and student's active use of resources.

(2) Weaknesses:

None found.

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

KU was recognized as complying with the ISO 9001 quality management system standard: it received the certificates in 2015. The internal quality assurance system of the studies at KU operates in accordance with the descriptions of the Quality Management System (The 10 processes identified in SER, p. 57). The periodicity of the internal evaluation is set at one year. The internal quality of studies is determined by the strategy for the implementation of the resolutions of the KU Council and Senate and the Rector's orders. The quality assurance of the study programme is guaranteed by the Business and Public Management Study Field Group Committee.

The Department of Sports, Recreation and Tourism and the Head of the Study Programme are directly responsible for the implementation of the Bachelor of Recreation and Tourism, and the Master of Recreation and Tourism Management programmes.

The SER states that the system of quality indicators and criteria for the study programmes of Tourism and Leisure field studies was approved (22/12/2017), and the quality assurance plan of the study programmes in the field of Tourism and Leisure is approved every two years. Periodic meetings are held in the Department to make decisions on the improvement of study programmes and quality assurance of studies (Annex 6).

For quality assurance, KU collects feedback from students. According to the Klaipėda University Study Feedback Procedure (20/11/2019, No.1-041), the following surveys are organised: subject survey, internship survey, reasons for discontinuation of studies survey, and alumni survey. Additionally, in accordance with SER, in order to achieve the quality of studies, the Programme manager conducts an additional anonymous qualitative survey of students at the end of each semester. At the site-visit, the lecturers confirmed that the results of the feedback are discussed and analysed in departmental meetings, and that changes are made in the course or programme frameworks (e.g., adding new topics, changing teaching or assessment methods) in the context of the results obtained. At the remote site-visit, the students stated that they are involved in the development of the study programmes because they have an opportunity to participate in questionnaire surveys on a voluntary basis and to express their opinion on the subject or the educational process. The members of the self-assessment group at the site-visit stated that students are involved in various administrative activities and represented in committees.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The analysis of the SER and the data obtained during the site-visit meeting shows that the KU process to ensure the internal direction of the studies is regulated and clear. The institution uses various forms and methods to ensure this process. The quality management process involves all participants from different managerial levels (the Senate, Business and Public Management Study Field Group Committee, Department, teachers and students).

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER states that all social stakeholders are involved in the evaluation and improvement processes of studies in the field. First, it should be noted that the University has a Social Partners Council with 20 members. At the meeting with the social partners, the members of the Social Partners Council approved the activities of this structural unit as outlined in the SER: provides suggestions for the improvement of programme content and the study process, analyses the level of students' competences, the need for the new ones, etc. The Council meets once a year.

The social partners are involved in the improvement of the study process through activities such as feedback maintained with the social partners on the results of the internship or the bachelor's and master's thesis research.

Despite the fact mentioned in the SER that 19 bachelor's and master's theses were prepared during the reporting period (Annex 5) and the results were presented to the institutions / social partners, none of the social partners present at the remote site-visit could confirm this fact.

Students are also involved in the evaluation and improvement of the study process. During the meeting, students indicated that they have the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of the study process by completing questionnaires, their representatives participate in the study programme committees and the results are presented during discussions. This correlates with the statements in the SER (p. 60): “students are invited to participate in the discussions organised at the Department on academic issues; in the meetings of the Department, during the pandemic - in remote discussions.” According to the KU regulation, the standardized quantitative assessment of study quality and the qualitative assessment of study quality organised by the programme head at the end of each semester contribute to the improvement of study quality.

According to the SER, feedback is given directly to social stakeholders through meetings or responsible representatives, and annual activity reports are prepared and made publicly available on the university website.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Social partners' support is formalised; the Social Partners' Council makes a significant contribution to the development of degree programmes. In the SER and at the site-visits with the lecturers and social partners, a very close and comprehensive cooperation was emphasised in all the areas related to the implementation of the field of study, but the facts related to the implementation of research activities or direct involvement in the supervision or evaluation of these were not confirmed. The specific examples provided by SER of the involvement of the social partners in the above-mentioned activities (projects, conferences, participation in thesis committees, etc.) suggest that the social partners may have been more passively involved during the pandemic period, and therefore could not have confirmed the statements presented in the SER. It is also recommended that the institution consider the suggestion made by the partners to involve the social partners more in the promotion of the study programmes. This is likely to further increase the popularity of the study programme, especially the bachelor's degree.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER states (p. 61) that the following internal research is carried out at KU: (1) content of the study subject and evaluation of the quality of teaching (assessed by students); (2) evaluation of the KU activities by the graduates (evaluated by graduates); (3) practical training assessment (assessed by students); (4) the efficiency of the study process (assessed by graduates); (5) implementation of study programmes (assessed by administrative staff and lecturers); (6) other one-time quantitative and qualitative studies to obtain information relevant to the study. The summarized results of the research are discussed with the stakeholders and are reflected in the departments' reports.

Other forms, mentioned in the SER that ensure the dissemination of information on the improvement of study programmes are scientific and practical conferences, forums, departmental initiatives, and round tables. Feedback from students, teachers and employers about their studies and career opportunities is provided in 10 videos posted on the Facebook account.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

KU systematically collects and compiles a wide range of information on the study process. It is evaluated, reported, and presented to the students and social partners. The SER states that KU website publishes requirements for admission to study programmes, results of the study programme, descriptions of study subjects, acquired qualifications, career opportunities and other information related to the organisation of studies, legal acts and documents regulating the study process at KU, etc. However, there is a lack of publicly available evaluation results of Tourism and Recreation study programmes, student satisfaction or feedback results, or feedback from students, alumni, and social partners on the official website.

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

During the remote site visit with the students, it was found that, at the end of each semester, they participate in surveys on the subject they are studying. The SER and the Description of Klaipėda University Study Feedback Organisation approved by the KU Rector (2019) state that the feedback collection is regulated. The students confirmed this during the meeting.

According to the SER 2018-2021, two times in the academic year, at the end of each semester, the head of the programme conducted anonymous surveys of the first and second cycle students, in which they were asked to evaluate three aspects: 1) what is good and should be continued; 2) what needs to be improved; 3) what are the biggest issues that need to be said "STOP" to. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students were satisfied with their studies. In the survey, the most important aspects were the variety of methods used, the advantages of working in teams, the quality of collaboration with the lecturers, the opportunity to participate in projects and events, etc. They also pointed out some weaknesses (mainly related to the administration of the study process, p. 62 in SER) which, according to the authors of the SER, have already been dealt with.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

According to the SER data, students are satisfied with their studies. The results are obtained by collecting feedback, which is regulated and systematic. However, despite the SER and the students' confirmation of their satisfaction with their studies during the visit, it is recommended that the summarised results of the survey be made available to the public. No publicly available student satisfaction surveys were found during the visit.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The internal quality system of the KU programmes is ensured through different forms and methods.
2. The University's close cooperation with the social partners is formalised through the Social Partners Council.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient use of cooperation with social partners to promote and increase the visibility and popularity of Tourism and Recreation Studies.
2. The summarised results of the feedback from the Tourism and Recreation field of study are not published on the KU website.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

None found.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first cycle RT programme team should systematically review the learning outcomes of associated modules to ensure a consistent format is used to prepare the learning outcomes of all the modules at the first cycle. • The first cycle RT programme team should reconsider the design of the optional modules to ensure their module aims, the learning outcomes and prerequisites are fit for purpose. • The first cycle RT programme team should review their references and additional literature recommendations for their modules to ensure up-to-date literature sources are included and so the students can gain the newest knowledge and practice.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of the University's research vessels in creating multidisciplinary and internationally unique research projects should be explored.
Student admission and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first cycle RT programme team should conduct a thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme in light of existent competition. The team should consider repositioning and increase marketing activities. • The first cycle RT programme team should consider intensifying the practical components in the program, e.g. by extending the duration of the internship.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the content of the assessment tasks in the course descriptions, linking them to the objectives and assessment criteria of the course.
Teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Learning facilities and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should be further encouraged to actively engage in quality improvement mechanisms (as students are one of the most important parts of the university, it is important to motivate them to make suggestions for learning resources, because they use them themselves and it is necessary that their needs are met).

Study quality
management and
public information

- The social partners should be involved further in the promotion of the study programmes. This is likely to increase the popularity of the study programme, especially the bachelor's degree (first cycle).

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field of Tourism and Leisure at Klaipėda University:

The first cycle and second cycle programmes under review can be considered well-functioning, well-managed programmes. Both address adequately the needs of the society by contributing to the education of recreation and tourism specialists and the development of the professional field in the region, the country and wider society.

The aims and learning outcomes of both programmes conform to the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of KU. More importantly, both programmes are developed in line with the description of learning outcomes of first and second cycle programmes set by Order of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on Approval of the descriptor of study cycles (2016).

The campus, premises, technical facilities and library services support the students in their studies and research projects. The department's teaching and research activities, including amount and quality of their publications, the number of conferences and trainings/exchanges attended etc., is now on high level and is oftentimes conducted in collaboration with social partners.

The industry-university cooperation in research and the prominent inclusion of research findings supports the notion that the content of the studies feature the latest developments in the field. Furthermore, the topics of research by faculty members reflect recent trends in the field. The increasing number of publications, clearly divided between different types and levels of publication, is commendable.

Social partners' support is formalised; the Social Partners' Council makes a significant contribution to the development of degree programmes. However, these existing partnerships could be better utilised for the promotion of the study programmes.

The expert team raises concerns about the declining interest in the first-cycle study programme. The programme management is well advised to devise appropriate strategies to counter steer this development. The expert team recommends building on the strengths the University provides as an institution.

The review panel concludes that the two programmes have sufficient, qualified and competent teaching staff. It also commends that the formal regular engagement with social partners through the Council of Social Partners is a good feature of the programmes.

The University develops a student-oriented motivating study environment expressed through the active involvement of students in the educational processes. Policies are in place to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.

Students are satisfied with their studies. The results are obtained by collecting feedback regularly and systematically. However, it is recommended that the summarised results of the survey be made available to the public in order to showcase the achievements.

Expert panel signatures:

Dr. Florian Aubke, (panel chairperson), member of academic community.