



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of TOURISM AND LEISURE

at Viešoji įstaiga Lietuvos verslo kolegija

Expert panel:

1. Associate professor Detlev Remy (panel chairperson), *academic*;
2. Senior lecturer Kristina Henriksson, *academic*;
3. Senior lecturer Anders Johannes Justenlund, *academic*;
4. Mrs Zita Krūkonytė-Teryaeva, *representative of social partners*;
5. Mr Mantas Jonas Vilimas, *students' representative*.

Evaluation coordinator – Ms Evelina Keturakytė

Report language – English

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Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	<i>Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry</i>
State code	6531LX031
Type of studies	College studies
Cycle of studies	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)
Credit volume	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	25 June 2002

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

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS	4
1.2. EXPERT PANEL.....	4
1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION	5
1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD POSITION/STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HEI.....	5
II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	7
III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS	8
3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM	8
3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES	12
3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT	14
3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT	17
3.5. TEACHING STAFF	20
3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES.....	23
3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION	24
IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE	27
V. RECOMMENDATIONS*	28
VI. SUMMARY.....	29

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 is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (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 site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on *10 May, 2022*. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Site Visit was organised online using video-conferencing tool (Zoom).

Associate professor Detlev Remy, *Expert panel's Chair Person; Associate Professor & Deputy Cluster Director (Vice Dean DSB cluster Design and specialized Businesses) at Singapore Institute of Technology, Singapore;*

Mrs Kristina Henriksson, *Senior Lecturer at Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland;*

Mr Anders Johannes Justenlund, *Business Developer/Senior Lecturer at University College Northern Denmark; Director of Marketing, International Council on Hotel, Restaurant & Institutional Education (ICHRIE), Denmark; External Professor at Institute Paul Bocuse, Lyon France;*

Mrs Zita Krūkonytė-Teryaeva, *Representative of Social Partners; Human Resources Management Consultant at HR Hint Online, Lithuania;*

Mr Mantas Jonas Vilimas, *Student's Representative; Studies of Administration of Institutions and Companies at Kauno kolegija, 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.	5 study subject descriptors: Computer-Based Ticket Reservation System; Arranging of Accommodation and Catering; Planning and Organization of Travel; Methodology of Preparation of Excursion and Rhetoric of a Guide; Basic of Tourism (in English)
2.	Description of the Procedure for the Preparation and Defence of the Bachelor's Thesis Remotely (in Lithuanian)
3.	Description of the Procedure for the Preparation and Defence of the Bachelor's Thesis (in Lithuanian)
4.	Code of Ethics (in Lithuanian)
5.	An explanation regarding internal regulatory documents that ensure prevention of potential conflicts of interest at Viešoji įstaiga Lietuvos verslo kolegija (in English and Lithuanian)
6.	Description of the Organization and Evaluation of Professional Internship (in Lithuanian)

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

Viešoji įstaiga Lietuvos verslo kolegija (hereafter referred to as the College, LVK) established by decree № 1028 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 28 of August, 2001. LVK is modern, open to the society, non-governmental institution of higher education preparing specialists of social and physical sciences oriented towards the Lithuanian and European labour market. LVK delivers in total 11 professional bachelor degree programmes to full and part time students in the city of Klaipėda. LVK is offering 11 study programmes under 6 study fields: Management study field – Administration of enterprises and institutions, Smart Management, Sales and Logistics Management, Construction business management study programmes; Accounting study field – Accounting study programme; Law study field – Law, Law and enforcement authorities study programmes; Informatics study field – Applied informatics and programming and Digital Design Technologies study programmes; Economics study field – Business economics; Tourism and leisure study field – Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry study programme.

On 9-12 of October, 2012 an institutional assessment was carried out by a group of international experts approved by the Centre for Study Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC). By SKVC decision No. IV2-10, dated 21 December, 2012, LVK's performance received positive evaluation and by SKVC director's order No. SV6-5, dated 14 January, 2013, LVK was granted accreditation for 6 years.

On 27–29 April, 2021 an institutional assessment was carried out by a group of international experts; referring to the conclusions of the assessment, by SKVC director's order No. IV2-1, dated 12-08-2021, LVK's performance received positive evaluation and LVK was granted accreditation for 7 years.

The *Recreation and Tourism Business Management* (state code – 653N80005) study programme of Tourism and Leisure study field was registered with the *Register of Study, Training Programmes and Qualifications* on 25-06-2002, No. 1181 and in 2002-2003 academic year its implementation has been started in LVK.

On 18 March, 2014 its assessment was carried out by a group of international experts and by SKVC director's order No. SV6-43, dated 11-08-2014, the study programme was granted accreditation for 6 years.

In response to suggestions of the social partners and to address the needs of rapidly changing labour market, the content of the study programme was updated by resolution No. 2.12-27, dated 19-12-2016, of LVK's Academic Board and since 2017 having changed its title, the study programme has been implemented as *Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry (state code - 6531LX031)* (hereafter referred to as the study programme, the programme, SP).

The study programme is carried out in the Department of Tourism and Communication (hereafter referred to as the Department). The programme is offered in Lithuanian and English.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Tourism and Leisure study field and **first cycle** at Viešoji įstaiga Lietuvos verslo kolegija 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	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	27

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

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

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

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

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER (p. 8) mentions that “the aim of studies of Tourism and Leisure study field – to enable students to acquire solid knowledge and skills of tourism and leisure business, to apply them in a constructive way in academic and professional activity, to develop general competences of students. The level of complexity of the learning outcomes of the programme corresponds to level VI requirements according to the European and Lithuanian National Framework of Qualifications and addresses the cognitive, functional and general competences required for professional performance of a student.”

Furthermore, the SER provides a table covering the field aims and learning outcomes. It specifies that students should be able to make research and analyse the market of tourism and entertainment business, business environment and its development trends, to create packages of services and to organize their sales, to establish and manage enterprises that provide tourism, entertainment, beauty and wellness services. These professional activities will serve the needs of society and the labour market.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel is satisfied that the study programme is structured to provide an education in the field of tourism and leisure. The expert panel has no concerns, especially as the study programme is well aligned to the societal needs 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

According to the SER (p. 10), the aim of the *Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry* study programme is stated in the Statute of the College. The aim and purpose is linked to the core areas of LVK activity: “1. To prepare high qualification specialists for science, culture, education and national economy sectors of Lithuania; 2. to develop applied research on the basis of the principle of unity of science and studies; 3. to provide conditions for persons to acquire higher education and professional qualification relevant to the needs of Lithuanian economy and the latest level of science and advanced technologies; 4. to foster educationally and culturally driven society, which is able to work under conditions of rapidly changing technologies; 5. to prepare specialists for practical work who are able to work independently in the fields of education, culture, economy and other sectors.” As stated in SER the above stated aims align with the mission of LVK – “to prepare well-qualified specialists with higher education, awarding them a qualification degree of professional bachelor, who are able to socialize in various fields of social and professional activities of the society in the constantly changing environment, to provide conditions for life-long learning, organizing professional

development, conducting applied research required for development of the region.” Thus, the study programme is well aligned with the mission of the HEI.

Furthermore, the SER states that “LVK’s *Strategic Action plan for 2020-2025* provides that in the area of sustainable growth LVK shall foster students’ ability to sparingly use resources and to strive for minimization of the effect on climate change.”

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The programme offers studies for students who wish to work in the field of tourism and leisure after graduation. The expert panel recommends that more international experiences could be provided for the students which, subsequently, help the students to improve their language skills.

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

(1) Factual situation

The description of Tourism and Leisure field studies in the group of study fields of Business and Public Administration is not currently approved; therefore, the special requirements for the programme of this study field are not regulated yet.

According to the SER (p. 10) the *Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry* study programme conforms with the requirements set out by the Law on Science and Studies (art. 53), since the study programme plan comprises 180 credits (60 credits per year in a full-time study mode and 45 credits – in part time modes). Pursuant to order No. V-1012, dated 16 November, 2016, of the minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, Re: Approval of Descriptor of Study Cycles (TAR, 2016-11- 17, № 26908) the implemented Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry study programme corresponds to level VI qualification according to the Lithuanian National Qualifications framework, because the learning outcomes of the programme are described according to the following structural elements: knowledge and their application, ability to conduct research, special competences, social competences and personal competences. The Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry study programme corresponds with the prescribed scope of the first-cycle programme (order No. V-1168, dated 30 December, 2016, of the minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania Re: Approval of Descriptor of General requirements for study implementation// TAR, 2016-12-30, № 30192), since 163 credits (of the total 180 credits of entire study programme are assigned for the study field subjects including practices and preparation of final thesis); practical assignments within the study programme makes one third of the total scope of the programme, the total scope of the practices – 30 credits and 9 credits are allotted to final thesis (see the Table No. 1).

Order No. V-1168, dated 30 December, 2016 of the minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania General Requirements for Study Implementation stipulates that the volume of contact work of the part of the first-cycle study programme corresponding to the first cycle of studies, shall be at least 20 %, and at least 10 % of in-person contact hours of teachers and students (non-remote contact work); the scope of individual work of a student shall make at least 30 %. Individual work (self-study) in the Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry study programme accounts for 60,73 %.

Table No. 1. Programme's compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes of college level*

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180 or 210 or 240 ECTS	180
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	138
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	54
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	~ 34 % (1654 hours = 61 (+/-) credits);
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	~ 38 % (1875 hours = 70 (+/-) credits);

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

After visiting the LVK and analysing the SER expert panel confirms the LVK compliance of the Tourism and Leisure studies field with Lithuanian standards, Law on Science and Studies and higher education rules.

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 SER (p. 12) explains that the programme strives to reach the learning objectives designed to generate knowledge and competences. The College employs teaching that follows the development of science and methods that are student-focused. Students are actively involved in their learning.

Assessment focuses on a broad range of criteria including, eg. visibility, style, contents. "Cumulative assessment is applied in examinations, i.e., evaluation of performance of practical assignment during the semester makes 40 % of the score, and examination work – 60 % of the score."

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on the information received in the SER and during the site visit, the expert panel concludes that interactive learning opportunities are utilised in teaching and learning sessions as well as other methods, to support the learning process of students. Students are satisfied with the teaching provided.

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

According to the SER (p. 13), the content of the programme provides students with the learning outcomes foreseen. The study subjects follow a logic where the fundamental knowledge of tourism and research methodology is studied in order to create a base for

students' knowledge. In addition to these, additional mandatory and elective subjects are studied to deepen the learning outcomes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study programme offers education for students in the field of tourism and leisure. However, the expert panel recommends that the College should strive to make sure that both staff and students acquire a good knowledge and skills in the English language as it is crucial in the field. In addition, during the site visit the students did not recognize Service Design or Design Thinking concepts which are practical methods employed to develop services.

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

According to the SER (p. 13), students in the second year can select a specialisation among the three offered, which are: *Travel and excursion management; SPA and wellness tourism management; Event management*. There are also two foreign languages offered, and optional subjects are provided in the *List of freely-chosen (optional) subjects*.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The site visit and the SER have provided information about the possibilities to individualise one's study choices. More languages could be offered, for example, by sharing extra language courses as open college courses with other colleges (online or on site).

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER (pp. 13-14) explains that the "final thesis for a professional bachelor degree is aimed at disclosing a student's ability to apply theoretical knowledge of the tourism and leisure study field and practical skills in a creative manner, to analyse phenomena and processes of the tourism and entertainment business. 9 credits are assigned for preparation of final thesis. By means of the final thesis, a student has to show his/her competence and ability to conduct applied research in business management, to apply theories and research methods of management science, to apply methods of applied research, to formulate conclusions of analysis and empirical research, to find and justify solutions for problems of tourism entities, to gather, systemize and analyse data, to make assessment of business activities of tourism and entertainment business entities, to analyse and evaluate the processes and phenomena of the tourism business, to process and evaluate tourism-related information."

To sum up, the College has a comprehensive policy on thesis procedures though only in Lithuanian language, outlining in detail the procedures requested.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The final thesis covers the minimum of 9 ECTS. The College has defined procedures in place, though the expert panel could not evaluate any involvement of social partners. During the site visit, it was informed that 15-30% of hits in plagiarism are accepted. This needs to be reassessed since plagiarism hits should be avoided.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

- 1. Students are satisfied with their study programme at the College.*
- 2. Teachers apply varying methods in their teaching sessions.*

(2) Weaknesses:

- 1. Some of the staff and students have English language skills that are not good enough to work in the field.*
- 2. There are not enough of training opportunities in foreign languages offered.*
- 3. The College has not offered studies in Service Design which is at present a needed subject to study and learn in field of tourism studies.*
- 4. The percentage of accepted hits in plagiarism is too high.*

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

In the SER pp. 16-17 LVK states that a great deal of efforts have been put into boosting the area of applied research. This was a keystone in the latest Action plan for improvements of LVK performance from 2013-2019. The results of these efforts are highlighted in SER table 2.1 where academic research publications and other activities are highlighted together with the areas of research interests within the Department. Highlighted areas are: Sustainability, trends/tendencies in tourism business, Efficiency of tourism business management and practical philosophy. Furthermore business communication and personal competence development is mentioned. Areas are aligned with the content of the study programme. Published articles have quadrupled since 2018; however conference contributions have decreased (due to COVID-19 limitations for participating in conferences). LVK is participating in international conferences and research reports that go beyond the scope of tourism and entertainment business management. Research active faculty members mainly publish via LVK own scientific journal. Topics in publications such as trends/up-to-date tourism/Business development very much aligns with the intention of publishing applied research that can be used in relation to social partner projects (or data collection are being based on such data) and/or as contemporary/up-to-date literature for tourism/entertainment related classes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

LVK College is making great progress when it comes to developing the field of R&D activities. During the online site visit it was revealed that Department members are doing a lot of research related to Spa tourism. It is highly recommended that the research collaborations that have been established with Finnish partners within this area are developed. The expert panel was very impressed by the work that was being done in relation to a Department member taking his Ph.d in Finland. The Department member has great potential to develop more and relevant research within the Lithuanian spa tourism. These activities can easily be transformed into few courses/programmes and projects together with social partners. Examples of this could be stand-alone courses related to Spa-tourism with a value of 5 ECTS or more. Furthermore there are great opportunities to work together with the local spa

business and link this to e.g. tour guiding or similar. It is recommended that Department members become more involved in international tourism and hospitality networks to develop tourism/hospitality contextual research understanding and competencies and form partnerships and personal relations with members of the international tourism and hospitality research community. It is further recommended that Department members make efforts to get their work published in international recognised tourism/hospitality journals.

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

(1) Factual situation

It is stated that LVK College as an institution has a focused effort in keeping Department members up to date on the latest trends and tendencies within their area. More focus has been given to broader perspectives within tourism and entertainment management and some activities have an even broader management, business, finance focus. The institution has been given focus to research methodologies in a pandemic era as part of access to recognised international research databases (incl. remote access).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel is generally impressed by the efforts taken by LVK College to keep a strong link between the latest developments and the content of studies. Again the panel will highlight Department members being active in Finnish doctoral programmes within the very relevant area of SPA tourism. This has a high potential for new developments for LVK College. It is recommended that the institution supports Department members taking a Ph.D. abroad, beyond flexibility in teaching schedules. To make sure that the institution can benefit from this it is vital to support these efforts financially as well.

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 states that students are highly involved in R&D activities during their time studying. Students are active participating in student conferences within the areas of generic economics, management, law and technologies. Furthermore, LVK has a wide variety of agreements with social partners within the tourism and leisure field. During the pandemic students have also been encouraged to collect data via online channels. Students are taught to conduct literature reviews, use proper scientific methods and structure proper research questions to help and support practical business challenges.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During the online site visits the expert panel was further informed that students worked actively with field research alongside Department members. The data collected by students was both used in scientific publications and final theses. It is recommended to perform more of these activities going ahead.

Furthermore, it is recommended that there is a clear model/framework for how Applied research, industry partners and students are linked in order to create projects that can benefit all three areas.

The panel recommends that Department members with a doctoral degree within the tourism/hospitality field should play a vital role in the future development of institutional R&D activities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

- 1. Strong focus on further applied research activities, led by Ph.D., Department and including student involvement.*
- 2. Department research activities within Spa Tourism are strong.*
- 3. Department members are continuously focusing on being up to date with the latest developments within their area.*

(2) Weaknesses:

- 1. LVK should focus more on international publication than they currently do. There is a great potential for faculty members to get their research published and promoted. This is not a weakness, but a strong recommendation to improve even further.*
- 2. A clear framework for how Applied research, students involvement and industry partners work together for future R&D activities. Recommendation to reflect on how new projects could be developed by re-thinking relationships between the three mentioned parts.*

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

According to the SER report (p. 22), it is stated that the requirements for admission to study at the College are specified in the Rules for Admission of Students to the LVK. Admission to the first-cycle study in LVK is carried out pursuant to the general procedure for admission. The general admission is organized and coordinated by the Association of Lithuanian Institutions of Higher Education for General Admission (hereafter referred to as LAMA BPO) authorised by order of the minister of Education, Science and Sport.

For those applying to the *Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry* study programme, the competitive score is formed from 4 day maturity exams or annual marks. Students are awarded additional points to the competitive score based on their achievements. Admission information is published on the College website, LAMA BPO, in the annual publication „Kur stoti“. Students who want to get even more information can participate in events organized by the College. International students can find admission information on the College’s website as they are admitted in a different order. During the 4-year period, the number of students applying for this study program increased, but the number of students admitted decreased, and the competitive score of eligible students increased.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel found that information about this study programme and selection criteria is offered publicly through several information channels, making admission transparent. Nevertheless, the number of students admitted has decreased, although the competitive score of admitting students has increased, so the College should monitor these indicators, identify causes, problems and address them.

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

According to the SER report (p. 24), the credit process of students studying abroad with the ERASMUS program is not complicated. The College also credits education that has been completed in other higher education institutions if it corresponds to the subjects of the study programme and the student has all the necessary documents. LVK carries out assessment and recognition of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning, which is an officially recognised practice in the EU countries. Based on this practice, relevant subjects were credited to several students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is indicated that the College carries out the crediting of qualifications and higher education subjects acquired in other institutions. The crediting process is straightforward. However, the results of the student survey (SER p. 28) show that little information is provided to students about this process.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

(1) Factual situation

LVK is granted the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) 2014-2020 (extended in 2021 until the year 2027), which confirms that LVK's strategy for modernization and internationalisation, which also encompasses the objectives of Erasmus+ programme, is suitable and that the higher education institution – holder of the charter undertakes to conform with all requirements set for implementation of Erasmus+ programme as well as to follow the principles of European collaboration.

Students are provided with full information about the ERASMUS programme on the College's website, and meetings are held to encourage them to join the ERASMUS programme.

LVK carries out admission of international students to full-time bachelor studies.

In the process of implementation of its study programmes LVK promotes international mobility and creates favourable opportunities for students to go to foreign schools of higher education under Erasmus+ programme for studies and/or for practice placements. Since before engaging into international mobility the students often are not sure about their foreign language skills, LVK encourages them to join Erasmus student network (ESN KUK) community, where they not only improve foreign language skills, but also develop intercultural competences.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel assessed that the students of this study programme are especially well acquainted with all the necessary information about studying and internship abroad with the ERASMUS programme. Students have relatively easy opportunities to go on study or internship abroad, and they are encouraged to do so by joining special groups where they can gain more experience about language and other things that are important while studying abroad.

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

According to the SER report (p. 26-27), academic support is available in the College as all necessary and additional learning tools are freely available to students. The College provides flexible conditions for students to pay for their studies. Well-educated students can receive commissions for their studies. Students have access to social scholarships. The College takes care of students who want to live in a dormitory and directs them to other higher education institutions that provide these services. Students have the opportunity to consult a psychologist free of charge and confidentially. LVK also provides opportunities for students to attend sport clubs free of charge – thereby promoting a healthy lifestyle among the students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In general, the support provided by the College to students is effective as all the problems that students face are addressed. One of the hallmarks of excellence was that students were given free access to the gym to ensure good physical activity and well-being.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER report (p. 28), various adaptation events are organized for freshmen in the first week of studies, where they get acquainted with teachers, administration, and students. At these events, they are provided with all the necessary information about their studies and the study programme in the tourism and leisure study field.

Students are introduced to the objectives, goals, and results of each study subject. Teachers publish all information about bibliographies, subject syllabus. Quality research is conducted, in which the College's communication about studies and the study programme for students is evaluated. Teachers are encouraged to mentor and share their living experiences with students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel determined that the College should provide more information about the goals and results of the study programme, the possibility of crediting the subject taken in another educational institution and the conditions for retaking the exam. In general, other important information is provided to students and monitored. It is worthwhile to note that teachers are engaged in student mentoring activities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

- 1. The internationalisation of students and the implementation of the ERASMUS programme are well developed.*
- 3. Students have free access to the gym.*
- 4. Teachers participate in student mentoring programs.*

(2) Weaknesses:

- 1. Decrease in the number of students admitted.*
- 2. Students are provided with too little information about their studies and student opportunities.*

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

According to the SER report (p. 31), the SP in Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry runs for full-time students during weekdays and for part-time students during weekends. The study subject description provides details on the teaching and assessment methods. The College's SP employs a variety of learning methods to provide an environment that supports critical thinking, creativity, social responsibility, problem solving skills, and flexibility towards challenges. These learning methods include modern and traditional ones such as presentation, reports, case studies, brainstorming, and mindmapping. Teamwork skills are developed during the studies.

Individual work and skills develop during students' individual learning tasks, papers, and thesis. The subject description indicates the hours for individual work. In the SP, approximately 61% of study time is devoted to individual work. The course description states the point given for individual work performance. Individual work is designed to help students to learn on their own, to develop and deepen knowledge learned previously, and to become an independent professional with self-assessment skills, for example. At the beginning of a semester, students are informed about evaluation procedures, also cumulative evaluations, and how individual assignments are evaluated.

After graduation, graduates can continue to second-cycle studies in the field of tourism and leisure in higher education institutions in Lithuania. It is also possible to continue in another field, depending on the requirements of additional studies to gain admission.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The College employs modern teaching methods and promotes teamwork skills and modern learning possibilities. The expert panel received during the site visit policy documentation in Lithuanian on internships. Social partners offer internships to College students though there are no records of internships leading to permanent positions in the labour market.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER (p. 33) and the site visit, the College provides both face-to-face and remote counselling to students with special needs. Lectures are recorded and materials and resources are available in Moodle. The College building in Klaipėda is equipped to welcome people with reduced mobility and visual impairment. The building has CCTV to monitor any acute needs. The building has, to mention some equipment, special lifting equipment, computer keyboards and driveways to meet people with special needs.

The SER also specifies financial support that is provided to the disabled. Staff in the SP participates annually with one staff member in the State Studies Foundation's project "Increasing the accessibility to studies." The premises in Klaipėda old town are fully adapted

in terms of access and use for students with special needs, and the premises in Vilnius city are also planned to be adapted for the disabled.

If for whatever reasons a student with special needs is not able to continue the study process together with all other students, they are provided with an opportunity to study under specially established individual conditions for learning. For students who encounter learning difficulties, suffer from anxiety, loneliness, sadness, lack of motivation, have disagreements with others, find it difficult to make decisions, or feel emotionally overwhelmed, LVK provides free access to psychological counselling. To that effect, agreements are concluded with psychologists, and students studying in Klaipėda and in Vilnius may benefit from this possibility.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel believes that the premises are properly equipped for people with special needs in Klaipėda's branch of the College.

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

The College carries out systematic monitoring with internal surveys. These cover the assessment of a study subject's contents and the quality of teaching once per semester, by students; an overall assessment after graduation on the College's performance; internship assessment by employers, company's internship supervisors and by students after the internship is completed; the study process efficiency by graduates; how study programmes have been carried out by teachers and staff; and any additional surveys when needed. The results of these surveys are utilised when teachers' jobs are filled, to improve the quality of studies, development of strategy of the College etc. Both self-evaluation and evaluation are used in the assessments of internships. Teaching and subject survey results are shared also with the alumni (SER, pp. 33-34).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel learnt during the online site visit that the College regularly monitors quality assurance in the study progress. Social partners also are involved in this process. They call that the College organises a "quality day" once per year to discuss issues in a wide circle of the stakeholders. The expert panel asks for improvements of the collaboration with stakeholders, though many social partners did not have any concerns. They said they are happy with what they have.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER report (p. 34), LVK monitors student employability and graduate career annually with a survey since 2012. The College provides a questionnaire on their website for graduates to respond to. Annual alumni days are events where former graduates can stay in touch with the College community. Approximately 83% of the SP graduates were employed in the period for reporting.

The College carried out a survey in 2020 among employers. The main part of them was from the service field (54%), while 40% represented budgetary institutions, and the remaining 6% represented public institutions. The survey results revealed that employers find the graduates of the College to possess enough professional knowledge both in theory and general

knowledge and competence, including personal skills. The survey also revealed that the employers noted that the graduates need better practical professional skills.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel drew the main information from the SER report, as during the site visit there were not many examples provided on the College's tourism and leisure students' employability in the tourism sector in Lithuania or abroad. Based on the information received, 83% amounts to a reasonable employment figure, considering the period for reporting that was during the pandemic when many jobs in the field of tourism were vacated.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER (pp. 34-35), The College embraces values based on "academic integrity and freedom, equal opportunities, freedom of thought and belief, tolerance of different race, nationality, religion are defined in the *Statute* of LVK." The College focuses on their academic community with all members being equal, regardless of their role. LVK ensures full "transparency of performance, openness, accountability to the academic community and the society as well implementing the policy of the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination." The College is clear also in the requirements of teachers' role towards students. The teachers have a transparent, academic collaborative relationship with students; non-academic relationships are not recommended. This leads also to fair and impartial assessment of student's learning.

The College advocates also for equality at work. There are rules and regulations concerning harassment and bullying.

The College does not allow dishonesty in the work produced by students. The Academics Ethics Commission of the College has dealt with plagiarism of some students' work at Vilnius campus in 2020. The case resulted in written warning and documentation of the case in the student file. There was another case in a thesis in 2020 as well. The College employs the Oxsico and Google Classroom software systems to scan student work.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The College has sound practices concerning equality, transparency and non-discrimination. The expert panel learned that there have been a couple of incidents with plagiarism which the College has taken care of according to their policies.

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

According to the SER (pp. 36-37), the College operates following the director's order No. 1.5-163, dated 11 December, 2014, *Re: Corruption and examination procedure*, to ensure transparency and maintain a high reputation. The order forbids any gifts from students to teachers and any other kind of corruption.

The students are allowed to appeal with the Appeal Commission if they find reason to contest assessment of their work, following LVK director order No. 1.6-52 (1.5), dated 20 December, 2020, Regulations of Appeals (https://www.ltvk.lt/file/repository/Apeliaciju_nuostatai.pdf),

revised (adopted by resolution of the Academic Board No. 2.12-6, dated 15 December, 2014). During 2017–2020 no appeals were presented concerning assessment of subject knowledge.

The Regulations of Commission for settlement of disputes between the Administration and Students (https://www.ltvk.lt/file/repository/Gincu_komisijos_nuostatai.pdf) were revised in 2021. The regulations direct how disputes that cannot be negotiated are settled between the LVK staff and students. No disputes were brought before the Commission between the approval year until the end of year 2020. The Commission is represented by three administration staff members and three members nominated by the Student Council. LVK also has a Labour Council that represents the employees of the College and protects their rights. One dispute has been brought before the Council in 2020. There is also a Dispute Settlement Commission. Furthermore, there is the Academic Ethics Commission that is represented by four College members and one external member from another institution.

“The Regulations lay out the guidelines for work of the Academic Ethics Commission (https://www.ltvk.lt/file/repository/AKADEMINES_ETIKOS_KOMISIJO_S_NUOSTATAI.pdf).” There were no complaints brought forward to the Commission in the Tourism and Leisure study field during the reporting period.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel finds that the procedures for appeals and complaints are in order, based on the information received. The ethical values are in place.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. *The College has clear procedures for monitoring the activities and studies taking place, as well as excellent regulations concerning potential risks and unwanted incidents, and values, such as equality and non-discrimination policies to create a genuinely open community.*

(2) Weaknesses:

1. *There are not many bright examples of international tourism companies having employed students from the College's study programme in the field of Tourism and Leisure.*

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

According to the SER report (p. 37), the academic staff is recruited pursuant to the requirements of art.11 of the Law on Science and Studies (2016-07-14, No. 2016-20555), and the requirements provided in the Procedure for attestation of LVK's teachers and researchers and for staff recruitment through open competition.

In 2018/2019 academic year there were 25 teachers in total, including 2 professors, 10 assoc. professors, 12 lecturers and 1 assistant; in 2019/2020 academic year there were 22 teachers: 2 professors, 11 assoc. professor, 8 lecturers and 1 assistant; in 2020/2021 academic year the number of teachers increased even by 7 teachers, at present the teaching staff comprises 29 teachers, including 3 professors, 13 assoc. professors, 13 lecturers.

According to the SER report (p. 37), number, qualification and competencies of teachers of Tourism and leisure study field are adequate to achieve the learning outcomes and to facilitate implementation of the strategic aims of LVK. The number of permanent teaching staff (at least half-time position): In 2018/2019 academic year teachers at the position of at least half-time accounted for 84 %, in 2019/2020 academic year – 90 %, in 2020/2021 academic year - 79 %. Over the last three years the balance between teachers working at more than half-time position and non-permanent teachers has significantly shifted towards the permanent teaching staff.

With regards to the faculty-student ratio, the SER report states that “during the reporting period, there were 85 students and 25 teaching teachers in 2018/2019 academic year, i.e. one teacher per 4 students. In 2019/2020 academic year there were also 85 students, 22 teachers, their ratio being 4,5. In 2020/2021 the number of students remained the same, there were 29 teachers, one teacher per 3 students. Greater number of teachers per one student ensures a more diverse range of the study process and allows giving more individual attention to each student.

According to the SER report (p. 38), the dynamics of lecturers-practitioners who have been teaching the field subjects for the last 3 years: in 2018/2019 academic year even 56 % (14) of the total number of teachers were lecturers-practitioners, in 2019/2020 academic year – 54 % (12) lecturers-practitioners, in 2020/2021 academic year – 48 % (14) lecturers practitioners. The major part of teachers teaching in the Tourism and leisure study field are lecturers-practitioners. Furthermore, the SER report (p. 38) states that “the teaching staff turnover in the field is minimal. Composition of the teaching staff is stable, new teachers are invited upon the need“. The expert panel did not find any contradicting evidence to the above claims, and believes the teacher composition is well aligned with the required regulations.

Thus, the teaching staff comply with the requirements of the *Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies* (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016).

Table No. 2. *Tourism and Leisure* field lecturers’ compliance with the general requirements for the first cycle studies of college level

Requirement stated in Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies	In the study programmes of the first cycle of college level
No less than 10 % of the first cycle of college level of study field subjects’ volume must be taught by scientists or recognized artists	2020 - 38%
More than a half of staff of college level study field should have no less than 3 years practical experience matching to the subjects they teach	2020 - 80%

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel is satisfied that the adequacy of the number, qualification and competence of teaching staff within the Tourism and Leisure field study programme at the College in order to achieve the learning outcomes is given. The only concern would be some lack of English skills by a few teachers. The College indeed, provides adequate training and support.

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

According to the SER report (p. 39), LVK has over 120 foreign partners – universities. All teachers of LVK may apply for a visit to them by taking part in an open competition for mobility under *Erasmus+* programme and to benefit from its opportunities, such as teaching in foreign HEI and development of the internationalisation competences.

Mobility visits are very important both for LVK and the staff, since they ensure lifelong learning, new ideas for projects are generated during visits and communication with project partners, teachers get acquainted with teaching in a foreign country and research, their methodologies and equipment. Upon return, the aim is to apply the acquired good practice in the activities of the College. The international mobility process has been largely affected by the pandemic situation, which considerably reduced the number of mobility visits, however has not fully disrupted the mobility process.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel learned that teachers are not only aware of the offerings in terms of academic mobility, but also utilise these. Moreover the industry brings in professors from other universities for short stints, guest lectures etc. Although the expert panel found that despite the overall number of international partners, not all of them are active.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER report (p. 39), starting from 2006, every academic year LVK has been organising Quality Day, where the academic staff of tourism and leisure study field can enjoy a possibility to participate in methodological seminars conducted by guest teachers from various educational institutions of Lithuania. LVK also provides an opportunity to improve English language skills by taking LCCI tests. Every semester, Moodle environment seminars, Google education training are organised for the teachers. In the reporting period, 35 teachers of LVK were upgrading their qualification and during the reporting period LVK assigned 4552,78 EUR for qualification upgrading.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel heard from the teachers, attending the on-site visit session that they receive support to improve their competencies. The expert panel learned at the online site visit sessions that there are some college-initiated initiatives to improve the competencies. Thus, the expert panel is happy with the outcome.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

- 1. Teachers appear to be very enthusiastic, and many of them master the English language very well.*
- 2. Many of the teachers interviewed have a touristic industry background, thus, the required business practice, important to ensure adequate touristic education.*

(2) Weaknesses:

- 1. There is some lack of academic mobility amongst teachers, which should be addressed.*

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

According to the SER report (p. 41), LVK implements studies in modern, contemporarily equipped premises.

The total area of Klaipėda branch is 1583 m², and Vilnius branch – 446 m². There are 13 classrooms in Klaipėda branch where 550 students in total can work at a time and 12 classrooms with 220 places in total in Vilnius branch. Klaipėda branch has five IT classrooms, Vilnius branch – three IT classrooms, with 75 and 42 computerised work stations, respectively, equipped with the latest software. Optical cable is installed in both Klaipėda and Vilnius premises, capacity of which is 1 Gbps in Klaipėda, and in Vilnius it has been upgraded to 10 Gbps. Students and teachers also use the Self-study centre and an online reading room. The main task of the self-study centre – to ensure technical support of the implement study programmes in terms of the information technologies, to make available internal and external resources, to render the services meeting the needs of LVK's students, teachers and administration. In view of the needs, the reading room of the Self-study centre is open 50 hours per week thereby ensuring that students and teachers could have access at convenient time to the information available in electronic space as well as to learning/teaching materials and scientific literature required for studies.

The SER report does not indicate any provision of premises, classrooms and equipment for students with special needs, though the technology and equipment offered at the premise does allow it to cater to the needs of students with special needs.

According to the SER report (p. 43), the College ensures proper conditions for student practice outside LVK 49 agreements with companies of Klaipėda and Vilnius. In terms of student practices, close relationships have been established with Klaipėda Tourism Information Centre; Public institution Klaipėdos šventės; UAB Linksmasis lagaminas and other companies of Klaipėda and Vilnius regions, where students have a possibility to acquire hands-on work experience. During practice placements at hotels and SPAs, students of the Tourism and leisure study field can learn how to use a hotel reception booking system, to develop their social skills when communicating with customers; similar practice is applied to internships at travel agencies and tourism information centres.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert panel has seen the learning facilities in Klaipėda and Vilnius and found these suitable, and adequate. The Vilnius branch campus has no library though the expert panel learnt that there is a collaboration with another college to ensure students have access to library resources. The Klaipėda library is spacious, and seems well stocked, having both tourism-related textbooks in Lithuanian and English language.

The expert panel has also seen samples of final theses, though only written in Lithuanian language. The Klaipėda branch campus has a so-called tourism-lab, equipped with business simulation software, and well-equipped learning facilities.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER report (p. 44), LVK upgrades its infrastructure and software on an annual basis. Over the analysed period, assignments for technological equipment intended directly for studies and research have increased by 1,92 times, for purchase of computers (hardware) and software – increased by 2,17 times.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel found the campus facilities in a modern and up-to-date status.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. *LVK has modern, and adequate teaching and learning facilities.*

(2) Weaknesses:

1. *Vilnius branch lags the learning facilities as assigned to the Klaipeda branch campus such as library and tourism-lab.*

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

According to the SER report (p. 46), it says that “In pursuance with the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (2016, Nr. 2016-20555), the Quality Assessment Standard was approved (LVK director’s order Nr. 1.6-30, dated 18 November, 2020), which lays down the procedure for attestation of already employed teaching staff. The composition of the teaching staff, which is described in more details in Section 5.1.1., is in compliance with the provisions of order Nr. 30192, dated 30 December, 2018, of the minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania Re: Approval of the descriptor of the general requirements for studies.

The issues of study quality management are analysed and respective decisions taken at regular meetings held in LVK. Meetings of the managing staff are held once a week (every Tuesday) to discuss the main issues of LVK’s performance. Meetings of the Department are held once a month or on as needed basis to discuss the implementation of the supervised study programme, where the range of the discussed issues includes: organisation of self-study, content of practice placements, quality of written works, staffing strategies, directions and topics of research work, prospects for communication and collaboration with social stakeholders, topics and problems of preparation of student written works, academic and research ideas of teachers. Meetings of committees of Study programmes are held twice an academic year and *Round table* discussions with social partners – once a year; the purpose of such meetings – to improve the study programme in order to meet the needs of the labour market as closely as possible.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel found that stakeholder management for better quality of studies fields is organised at a good proficiency level. Well established communication plan process supports a cultural path as well for the better teaching staff and students' cooperation to not just meet but even exceed the planned quality assurance in the tourism and leisure field studies at LVK College.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER report (p. 49), students are involved into the evaluation and development processes of the field studies by conducting regular (every semester) surveys on study quality. In view of the results of the conducted survey and proposals of the committee of the study programme, the measures of improvement of the study programme are discussed at the Department and the changes in the study programme are submitted for approval to the Academic Board.

Moreover, the SER report states that LVK organises annual *Quality Day*, where LVK's director presents *Management report* to LVK's community (<https://www.ltvk.lt/lt/m/apie-mus/vadovybines-ataskaitos/>) on achievements in the reporting academic year and the current strategic directions of LVK's activities, vice-director for Studies and Quality presents the results of regularly carried out students' opinion survey to the community, also, a methodological seminar is conducted on the issues of study quality improvement. Such a system of internal study quality management enables to carry out constant monitoring of both the studies and the activities and factors determining their quality in order to further improve the study quality; it allows to coordinate and consolidate the efforts of the community and external stakeholders for rational planning and allotment of human and material resources in the study quality assurance process. LVK flexibly responds to changing environment and regularly updates the contents of study programmes. To assure the quality of studies, attestation of descriptions of study subjects is regularly carried out as well as attestation of teachers and competition to vacancies, the results of examination sessions are analysed.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel learned at the site visit social partners and other stakeholders have been advocating about effectiveness and efficiency in improvement of internal quality assurance.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER report (p. 49), aiming at improvement its performance and ensure high quality of implementation of the study process, LVK analyses publicly available data published by the Government's Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA) in order to gather the latest information reflecting the status of study in Lithuania and the changes in the areas of financing of higher education, human resources, accessibility of studies, internationalisation, and compares them with the results achieved by LVK. Monitoring of implementation of the Strategic action plan is also ensured through conducted internal surveys. At the end of each semester, a student opinion survey is conducted.

Since 2012, LVK has been carrying out continuous and systematic monitoring of student employability and graduate career tracking. In 2018-2020, the average employability ratio of

LVK students amounted to 78 %, and in the Tourism and leisure field – 83 %.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Since 2020, LVK has been conducting employers' opinion surveys on the professional preparedness of LVK students, where employers evaluate the professional preparedness of the students by specific competences and skills, within the following scale: excellent, good, sufficient, satisfactory, poor, don't know /have no opinion. The obtained results show that employers give excellent and good evaluation to the students' competences and skills, particularly their striving for knowledge, diligence, communicability and ability to work in a team, however there still is a room for improvement in terms of the students' practical skills.

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

According to the SER report (p. 51), it says that it should be noted that a student opinion survey (including the students of Tourism and leisure study field) was carried out at the end of autumn semester in 2020-2021 academic year in order to find out how the actual performance of LVK aligns to its mission, vision and values and thereby ensures the quality of management of studies. It can be maintained that in average 87 % of the students consider LVK's mission, envisaged vision and values as viable and capable of being implemented in practice, – i.e., LVK's aspirations to prepare creative, competent specialists, provides conditions for lifelong learning, offers a variety of international opportunities, conducts applied research indispensable for the development of the region, flexibly responding to changes in the labour market and satisfying the needs of the society. 83,8% of students are of the opinion that the administration and teaching staff of LVK try to take into account opinions of students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel learned at the virtual site visit that there were some very good examples of Lithuanian Erasmus students' performance in studying in Spain. Moreover, the expert panel heard that students are happy to be part of the College community and happy they chose the Tourism and Leisure field to study at LVK College.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

- 1. The College has a very good stakeholder management for better quality of studies fields, which is organised at a good proficiency level.*

(2) Weaknesses:

- 1. In terms of quality management, there is a lack of monitoring of the quality of internships by the representatives of the programme in the College.*

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

LVK provides opportunities for students to attend sport clubs free of charge – thereby promoting a healthy lifestyle among the students.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS*

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both students and teachers could study more languages and languages more. If one college cannot offer more courses, these could be jointly offered by many colleges as “open university studies” to share the expenses. Service Design could be introduced as it provides key perspectives for both teachers and students into developing services. • The accepted percentage of plagiarism in the final thesis should be reconsidered and reformulated.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LVK is doing well in relation to its scientific endeavours. In order to take the next step towards international, recognized scientific activities it is strongly recommended that LVK Department members join an international, recognized tourism/hospitality network that focuses on educational/research activities. This will help to get more international collaborations, publications and higher the quality of the research performed within the tourism area. • It is recommended that LVK has a clear framework for how applied research, student development and industry development projects complement each other.
Student admission and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the curriculum more and take advantage of the social partners who would recommend this College, thus attracting more students. Provide more information about career opportunities accordingly and show good examples of students who are employable.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is worthwhile encouraging both staff and students to go abroad for teaching, learning, studies and practical training. This will also develop the national job market and students can find better jobs after graduating.
Teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teachers are very committed and passionate about their jobs, although the College should encourage and support them in improving their language skills.
Learning facilities and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the Vilnius branch lags the learning facilities as assigned to the Klaipeda branch campus such as library and tourism-lab, some investments should be considered.
Study quality management and public information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study quality management assurance is established well. A very proper LVK stakeholders management process is in place. Although internships should be monitored to ensure adequate learning outcomes. More credits for placements could be allocated as well.

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

VI. SUMMARY

In the following, a summary of comments regarding the *Tourism and Entertainment Business Industry* study programme (hereafter referred to as the programme) in the field of Tourism and Leisure implemented at Viešoji įstaiga Lietuvos verslo kolegija (hereafter referred to as the College, LVK) in Klaipėda and Vilnius, is given. The process of evaluation follows the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) system for the evaluation of study fields and is based on the Self-Assessment Report provided by the College and the assessment agreed upon by the expert panel during its online visit on the premises and following discussions.

The programme is offered in full-time and part-time modes. The programme prepares graduates for careers in the tourism and leisure study field.

The expert panel formed the opinion that the College places quite good attention to newer developments and trends in the tourism & hospitality industry, which in fact, may attract more prospective students to join the programme.

The learning outcomes of the programme are quite well developed, and demonstrate the College's willingness to adapt to new technologies and developments such as digitisation, data analytics etc.

The curriculum of the programme meets the requirements of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania and the requirements of the labour market. Although the expert panel recognized a lack of research rigour and knowledge within the interviewed students. Hence, the expert panel recommends reviewing and strengthening the curriculum in terms of research capabilities. The area of language should be strengthened for the benefit of students and teachers.

The staff members of the College are enthusiastic and meet all the legal requirements for their appointments as teachers. However, there are some weaknesses that need to be addressed. Some staff members need to improve their competency in the English language. Secondly, staff members should be encouraged to conduct more applied research. The internationalisation strategy of the College is of great benefit in terms of possible collaborations. The expert panel would also recommend that the Department of Tourism and Communication (hereafter referred to as the Department) encourages their students to conduct more research based projects.

The learning facilities seem to be sufficient and adequate. Although one branch campus, Vilnius, has no library facilities but a collaboration agreement with libraries in the town, the library at the Klaipėda campus seems to be well equipped with modern textbooks. Furthermore, the expert panel recommends recording the usage of electronic databases, both, students and Department, which would be beneficial for future investment decision-making for library resources, as well as identifying research efforts of Department and students.

The admissions requirements are in line with the requirements and regulations of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, but there has been a drop in student numbers in the recent past and this is a cause of concern.

The Expert panel wishes to thank the College for their preparation of the SER report and for taking their time to attend the online visit sessions.

Based on the evaluation, the Expert panel advises to focus on:

- Regarding the curriculum, it is recommended that more than 5 credits should be allocated to the English language, or other courses should be taught in English to compensate for more credits and improve English language abilities.
- To offer more languages, for example, by sharing extra language courses as open college/university courses with other higher education institutions (online or on site).
- To focus more on English skills development.
- To provide more international experiences for the students which subsequently helps the students to improve their language skills.
- College should encourage teachers to improve their language skills.
- To involve Department members in international tourism and hospitality networks to develop tourism/hospitality contextual research understanding and competencies and form partnerships and personal relations with members of the international tourism and hospitality research community. It is further recommended that Department members make efforts to get their work published in international recognised tourism/hospitality journals.
- To support Department members taking a Ph.d. abroad, beyond flexibility in teaching schedules. To make sure that the institution can benefit from this it is vital to support these efforts financially as well.
- To have a clear model/framework in place for how applied research, industry partners and students are linked in order to create projects.
- To let Department members with a doctoral degree within the tourism/hospitality field play a vital role in the future development of institutional R&D activities.
- Business simulations at the College should be integrated as a subject with a particular allocated credits (minimum 10 credits).
- The internships should be monitored to ensure adequate learning outcomes.
- To ensure that information about this study programme and selection criteria is offered publicly through several information channels, making admission transparent.
- To monitor indicators, identify causes, problems and address them, such as competitive score due to the decrease in admissions.
- To provide more information about the goals and results of the study programme, the possibility of crediting the subject taken in another educational institution and the conditions for retaking the exam. In general, other important information is provided to students and monitored.
- To have a procedure in place that makes sure that there are no conflicts of interest. Such conflicts can be, for example, a teacher who is a social partner also hiring students as interns.

Signature of expert panel chairperson:

Associate professor Detlev Remy