



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of Design
at Vilniaus kolegija

Expert panel:

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2. **Prof. Julia Kühne**, *academic*;
3. **Ms Ilona Gurjanova** *academic, representative of social partners*;
4. **Mr Saulius Valius**, *representative of social partners*;
5. **Ms Ignė Astrauskaitė**, *student representative*.

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Report language – English

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Fashion design</i>	<i>Image design</i>
State code	6531PX013	6531PX012
Type of studies	Professional bachelor college studies	Professional bachelor college studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle studies	First cycle studies
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years)	Full-time (3 years)
Credit volume	180	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Arts	Professional Bachelor of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Entrance examination (drawing and composition)	Entrance examination (drawing and composition)
Registration date of the study programme	26 June 2002	22 December 2011

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on 25 April 2023.

1. **Prof. dr. José Teunissen** (the Netherlands), panel chair, director of the Amsterdam Fashion Institute (part of Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences), former Dean of the School of Design and Technology at London College of Fashion;
2. **Prof. Julia Kühne** (Germany), panel member – academic, professor at Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Head of the Competence Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning;
3. **Ms Ilona Gurjanova** (Estonia), panel member – academic, representative of social partners, design lecturer at Tartu Art College, President at Estonian Association of Designers;
4. **Mr Saulius Valius** (Lithuania), representative of social partners, artist, curator, art director at EKSPOBALTA Ltd.
5. **Ms Ignė Astrauskaitė** (Lithuania), student representative, third-year Professional Bachelor's student of study programme Interior Design at Vilnius College of Technologies and Design.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the SER and annexes, the HEI provided the following additional documents before, during and/or after the site visit:

No.	Name of document
1.	Examples of final theses.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF DESIGN FIELD STUDIES AT VILNIAUS KOLEGIJA

Vilniaus Kolegija (hereinafter VIKO or the College) is an accredited state higher education institution of the Republic of Lithuania, which provides college studies, develops applied research and professional art. The mission of the College is to provide modern higher education studies that meet European standards, to ensure the development of nationally and internationally recognised applied research and professional art.

The College has seven faculties: Faculties of Electronics and Informatics, Economics, Business Management, Health Care, Pedagogics, Agro Technologies, Arts and Creative Technologies. The Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies (hereinafter, the Faculty) has four departments: Fashion Design, Cultural Management and Dance Pedagogy, Rhythmic Music, and Performing Arts.

The Faculty offers seven study programmes (Management of Cultural Activity, Image Design (hereinafter, ID), Fashion Design (hereinafter, FD), Fashion Technologies and Business, Musical Theatre, Popular Music, and Dance Pedagogy) in six fields of study: management, design, polymer and textile technology, theatre, music and pedagogy. The Faculty also offers applied research and artistic activities.

The College has collegial governing bodies: the College Council and the Academic Council. The Director of the College is the sole governing body of the College.

The interests of students at the College are represented by the autonomous, non-profit, public Students' Representative Office. The College participates in the activities of national and international organisations.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of *Design* at Vilniaus kolegija is given a positive evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	5
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:		29

*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 society and/or the labour market

VIKO strategy is based on Lithuania's Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030" aiming "to create conditions for the development of a creative and open-minded personality, as well as to develop high-quality cultural services throughout the country, to ensure the diversity and accessibility of culture, to promote partnerships between culture and different spheres of life through the use of creative products and cultural services" (SER, p. 6).

The College and the Faculty have implemented this strategy into the content of the ID and FD study programmes: they aim to train highly qualified designers who are able to create an inclusive and sustainable environment, contributing to positive changes to cultural, material and social well-being. VIKO believes that apparel/fashion and image design are essential life conditions for human beings regardless of their age or education.

According to VIKO, there is an urgent need to transform the harmful fashion industry into a far more sustainable industry. Therefore, the College is focusing on educating (sustainable) designers who can offer sustainable solutions and make consumers aware of this, whilst, on the other hand, it is also implementing the newest digital tools, next to professional and practical skills, since the College is aware of the current digital transformation of the fashion industry. Around these topics, VIKO is actively involved in various projects.

The College is also a full member of the Lithuanian clothing and textile sector united by the Lithuanian Apparel and Textile Industry Association (LATIA), which is providing opportunities for cooperation with apparel and textile companies in the training of professionals for this sector. Social partners are regularly consulted about the future job roles they need via an annual review and informal talks. Companies are also involved in final internships. Annual data highlight 100 per cent employability of students. The aims and outcomes of the study programmes are very up-to-date and in line with the needs of the labour market and society. The panel appreciates the focus on digital and sustainability and endorses VIKO's decision to restructure the design programme into 2 areas: Image Design and Fashion Design to have more focus.

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

According to SER (p. 7-8), VIKO's vision on the design study programmes is to provide an innovative and international higher education institution, actively participating in the creation of a socially responsible society. The programmes provide modern higher education studies that meet European standards with nationally and internationally recognised applied research and professional practice. There is a close collaboration with the world of business to entail a successful professional career for students and the well-being of the Vilnius region and the State of Lithuania.

VIKO provides student-oriented studies and lifelong learning activities creating a modern, creativity-oriented study environment. The competencies of teachers are permanently improved through applied research and artistic projects, involving students and social partners in applied sciences with the aim to strengthen innovation-oriented strategic partnerships and to develop socially responsible community citizenship enhancing the competencies of community members and creating an environment open for self-expression of community members.

During the visit the panel was impressed by the innovative and up to date study programmes with a strong focus on digitalisation and sustainability and the quality of the teachers who are actively involved in innovative research with innovative oriented partners.

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

Table No. 1. Design study field compliance to general requirements for first cycle study programmes of College level (professional bachelor).

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	ID 153; FD 156
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	ID 27; FD 25
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	ID 30; FD 33
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	12 ECT
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one-third of the programme	ID 36,5 %; FD 46 %
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	ID 53%; FD 54%

The study programmes demand an extra 3 ECT on top of the 9 ECT which is legally required for the final thesis, underlining VIKO's aim that research/artistic practice is seen as important. More than 40 % of the contact hours are dedicated to practical training. On top of that, the studios have long opening hours and weekend openings which offer the students independent practising time. All criteria are compliant with the general requirements.

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

The ID and FD study programmes content is coherent, meeting the outcomes at the levels of knowledge, understanding, analysis and application necessary for a Professional Bachelor of Arts. The different study methods are adequate as well as the assessment through art reviews or creative projects, which enables the students to acquire the essential subject knowledge, practical skills, the ability to summarise and analyse the results, and the ability to creatively use the acquired knowledge and skills.

The study programmes are compatible with the goals, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods of the field and are in line with market needs.

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

The Image Design (ID) and Fashion Design (FD) programmes aim to develop both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field of fashion and image design. The curricula for both programmes cover a wide range of subjects and are organised in a coherent way so that each subsequent subject builds on the previous one. The subjects in the ID and FD programmes are divided into blocks, and each block focuses on the development of specific competencies. The FD programme has five blocks, including Fashion History and Aesthetics, Visual Expression, Technical Design of Models, Practical Activities and Digital Technologies and Fashion Business. The ID programme has seven blocks, including Art History, Visual Expression, Technical Image Design, Practical Activities, Organisation of Activities, Hairstyle Design and Wardrobe Design. The curricula for both programmes also include internship opportunities and prepare students for the changing digital skills and business developments required by the fashion market, since digital technologies for creating fashion are implemented in the programme. It appears that curricula are well-structured and organised, and are designed to provide a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The programmes are comprehensive and the learning outcomes seem to cover the whole professional field of a fashion or image designer. The ID and FD curricula meet the requirements set out in the description of the Design field of study.

During the site visit, and particularly in discussions with the social partners, it was impressively demonstrated that the consistent development of students' competencies results in very well-trained fashion and image designers that are ready for the market. In particular, the integration

of sustainability into the curriculum prepares graduates for a changing world and equips them with the necessary skills to make a significant contribution as fashion or image designers.

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

VIKO creates several opportunities for students to personalise their study programme in order to better meet their needs. One such opportunity is choosing a specialisation, although it is only available to ID students. It grants students with an interest in Hairstyle Design or Wardrobe Design, to increase competence in those fields and create more possibilities for their future. Another chance to personalise studies is introduced starting the 3rd semester for ID students and starting the 4th semester for FD students, which is a possibility to choose 3-credit free elective courses. Finally, students are invited to attend lectures of other study programmes, however, these do not give them any credits. Overall, students have several opportunities to personalise their study programme to their individual needs but an introduction of specialisations for FD might be an improvement. Also, a reward system for students who attend extra lectures of other study programmes on top of their studies would help motivate them by gaining recognition.

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

The evaluation process of final works in VIKO fully meets the requirements of the field direction and cycle. The committee of final project defence and evaluation is composed of very competent specialists in the field of Design, including teaching staff, famous professionals and social partners. Also, the College often invites specialists from other institutions to review final projects.

The College is focusing on presenting the high professional skills of graduates. A strong side to mention is a good balance of final theses in theory and practical work, where attention is given not only to the level of practical skills but also to creativity and presentation of developed artist individuality as well as an understanding of market demands.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Strong focus on sustainable and digital innovations very relevant for the fashion industry.
2. Strong link with social partners in innovative projects which provides an excellent ecosystem in collaboration on research and student projects.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified in this evaluation area.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

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

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

The College allocates at least 10 percent of their basic funding for research and experimental development and artistic activities which underlines that, for VIKO, research, experimental development and artistic activities, are priority areas. The teaching staff is involved in applied science and professional art activities in the design study programmes and there is allocated time for staff to undertake and execute (practice based) research. Annex 6 provides a list of peer-reviewed articles in the area of smart textiles and digitalisation of fashion followed by other publications and participation in talks, events and symposiums.

Teachers are also involved in professional artistic activities presenting their artistic work to the public by organising solo exhibitions not only in galleries but also (during and after Covid-19) in digital space. Between 2018 and 2021, the Faculty produced 19 exhibitions of original creative works and created images and costumes for 24 performances of television, plays, musicals and other public events (Annex 5).

The research knowledge and output of teaching staff feed directly into the content of the design study programmes where new and advanced artistic, scientific and practical knowledge is constantly implemented.

At the visit, the panel was impressed by the number of projects with social partners which bring in substantial amounts of money and opportunities. The College has been awarded extra research funding from the government and plans are in the making to further develop a research focus strategy. In order to succeed, the panel recommends further development of the research strengths in the areas of sustainability and digitalisation and active participation in more Erasmus mobility opportunities. Therefore, it is recommended to provide English training for staff in order for them to feel more confident to travel abroad, to take part in international seminars and events.

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

The content of the design programmes is reviewed and updated regularly with digital tools (such as Gerber and other applications) led by industry innovations. Also, other needs of society, the fashion market, and social partners are taken into account such as Intellectual Property. Course descriptions are updated every year by including the latest developments in digitalisation of the fashion industry, innovations in the teaching methodology, and by introducing new relevant topics such as sustainability. Social partners are also actively involved

in the study process, informing staff and students about innovations in their professional fields (Annex 7).

Teachers are regularly visiting foreign higher education institutions and teachers from foreign universities are hosted by VIKO. During these visits, teachers and students of design study programmes learn about new teaching methodologies, technological and creative professional innovations. The panel would like to recommend more teachers to take part in mobility, providing opportunities for staff to improve their English skills.

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

Students are actively participating in artistic projects in which VIKO is involved and are encouraged to participate in events and professional competitions. Quite a few students have won awards. Students are invited to workshops and regularly visit external stakeholders.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The College achieved extra funding through contract research Horizon 2020 and government support.
2. Design study programmes deal with relevant research topics such as digitalisation and sustainability.
3. Allocated research time for staff.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. English and presentation skills to accommodate international mobility.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

The Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for General Admission (LAMA BPO) is leading in the admission process of VIKO'S design studies. Applicants are allowed to indicate their preferences (up to 9) in order of priority. On top, the College publishes on LAMA BPO admissions conditions for the entrance examination.

For the FD and ID programmes, the admission examination consists of two parts: drawing and composition described in more detail in the SER (p. 22). The minimum requirements for admission to the College are a secondary education in 2019-2020. To be eligible to be admitted

to a state-funded place “2 state matura exams - Lithuanian language and literature and the state matura exam in any other subject must be passed, the arithmetic average of the best annual marks in the five subjects must be no lower than 6, and the competition score must be no lower than 4.3. For admission to a non-state-funded place, the candidate must have passed one state matura examination and have a minimum competition score of 4.3” (SER, p. 22).

As positive position should be mentioned additional points, which are awarded for both state-funded and non-state-funded places via different trajectories (defending a matriculation thesis in the first or second subject with a mark of at least 9), completing military training, winning prizes or graduating with honours from vocational training in the field of Design and having an additional year work experience in the qualifications obtained also international volunteering projects. The procedures for state funding, non state funding places and the overall admission process are thorough, inclusive and in line with LAMA BPO.

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

VIKO has three policies in place (SER, p. 24). A *Procedure for Crediting Study Results* for students who have graduated, studied or are studying in higher education institutions of Lithuania or foreign countries in HEI and who wish to continue their studies at Vilniaus kolegija either in the same or other study programmes of the College. The second policy Description of the Procedure for the Recognition of Competences Acquired in Formal Education applies to students who have acquired or have been recognised with a qualification of at least level four (4) of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and who have been admitted to study programmes conducted by the College. Thirdly, there is a Procedure for the Assessment and Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Study Results which applies to candidates who have at least 3 years of work experience in the field being assessed, with acquired competencies in work activities, volunteer activities, non-formal education programmes, self-learning, etc. Since 2018, 8 students have been awarded: 4 based on a level 4 qualification and 4 via Erasmus Exchange.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

The College has 300 cooperation agreements with international partners from 46 countries (SER, p. 5). The College is focused on Erasmus+ international exchange programme as a way to promote academic mobility for students. VIKO students are invited to apply to Erasmus+ programme twice a year which would provide students with an opportunity to visit foreign higher education institutions and gain experience there. Internationalisation is also promoted through interactions with foreign exchange students and students returning from the programme. The Department of Fashion Design offers a 30 ECTS design degree in English which allows foreign students to enrol.

The Faculty is on the right track when it comes to ensuring student academic mobility but there seems to be a need to better promote and further encourage the students to use the opportunity as well as come up with some ideas to make the programme more accessible to some of the

students, possibly by providing a chance to accept shorter term internships abroad which would be a smaller commitment to the students. Moreover, not that many students are able to benefit from the mobility opportunity because the offered funding does not cover all the costs. Therefore, the panel would like to recommend the College to explore other funding opportunities for students to enable them to increase their scope and opportunities. Also, English language lessons are beneficial, it makes students more confident to dare to travel and to go 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

VIKO offers adequate and effective support to its students in multiple categories. There are scholarships, allowances, disability benefits and state-funded loans for students. There is also a possibility for students to live in the College's dormitories and have access to classrooms for their individual work (SER, p. 26). These benefits add up to solid financial and social support. There is also a possibility to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, which include basketball, volleyball, handball and other sports, or be part of art collectives. Psychological and moral support, on the other hand, is achieved through communication and cooperation, where teachers and other faculty members try to get to know the students, listen to problems encountered by them and help them become part of the academic community. Another important aspect is that students have access to free psychological support. Overall, VIKO offers solid support to their students from several different perspectives.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

There are several methods that are used by VIKO to deliver information about studies. First, there is an electronic information system for students. This offers a convenient way to share academic and study organisation information. Second, during their studies, students are allowed to consult the Department of Fashion Design, the Department of Studies and the Department of Organization of Studies. For new students, there is also an Introduction to Studies course which introduces students to study programmes' content and requirements (SER, p. 26). The Faculty also organises an annual meeting with the Dean of the Faculty and the Vice-Dean of the Faculty during which elected student representatives discuss expectations and difficulties encountered by students.

When it comes to student counselling, an important topic is career counselling. VIKO offers an opportunity to make use of a Career Centre where students and graduates can make use of career planning tools. Overall, the Faculty has the necessary tools to provide study information and student counselling is in place.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Inclusive student admission.

2. Great support for students
3. Career advisory service for students and graduates.
4. Psychologist and counselling are in place.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Not a great uptake of students' mobility due to budgetary reasons.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

The Design field offers full-time studies lasting three years, with 60 credits per year (180 credits total). Each subject's scope is measured in credits, with one credit equal to 25-30 hours of student work. The study plan outlines the credits and workload for each subject, including contact work (lectures and practicals) and independent work. The workload is evenly distributed, with a limit of 8 academic hours per day and 26 academic hours per week, and 30 credits per semester. The Study Achievement Assessment Framework regulates the evaluation of study achievements, and teachers provide regular feedback on learning progress. Extended meetings are held annually with students to discuss their satisfaction with studies and proposals for improving quality. Independent work assignments are distributed throughout the semester, with course assignments introduced during the first lecture. The assessment of exams and projects occurs during a 4-week examination session, with a timetable approved by the Dean. Graduates can pursue postgraduate studies at Lithuanian or foreign higher education institutions in related fields.

Based on the information provided, the teaching and learning process of the programmes take into account students' needs and enable them to achieve intended learning outcomes. The study plan outlines the workload and credits for each subject, and the evaluation of study achievements is regulated. Regular feedback is provided to students, and meetings are held with the Dean to discuss satisfaction with studies and proposals for improvement. The distribution of independent work assignments and the introduction of course assignments during the first lecture enable effective learning. Graduates have opportunities to pursue further studies in related fields at various institutions. In the meeting with the teaching staff, the process was again explained in detail: course objectives are discussed in detail by teachers with students at the beginning of the course. Interim feedback during the semester allows students to review their goals and keep track of progress. The criteria for assessing performance are transparent and can be viewed online by students at any time.

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

According to the information provided in the SER and the on-site visit, the conditions for ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs are quite good. The Faculty's infrastructure is well-equipped with lifts, ramps, accessible classrooms and toilets for disabled students. In addition, the library reading room has adapted spaces for students with special needs, including technology such as video magnifiers and screen readers. The College also provides financial and academic support for students from vulnerable groups or with special needs, with individualised study processes and flexible forms of payment available. Overall, the programmes appear to provide accessibility and support for students with special needs. A psychologically trained contact person is available for students struggling with personal, mental or family problems. The procedure for dealing with problems was described as very good and helpful by all stakeholders, especially the students.

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

Learning achievements are assessed based on the *Framework for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes*. The following principles are applied in assessing students' learning outcomes: relevance and validity, reliability, and inclusiveness. The formula for the assessment of each subject is individual. Teachers have to make sure there is parity in the feedback to every student.

VIKO is providing regular and continuous constructive feedback (written or verbal) to students of the design programmes enabling them to anticipate prospects, reinforce progress, and encourage them to analyse their achievements or gaps.

Due to the fact that the groups are small, there is an informal feedback culture with immediate feedback during the process of projects where students engage with teachers. This learning-by-doing principle is leading to good results. Monitoring student's study progress and feedback loops to promote self-assessment and planning of study are very well provided according to the panel.

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

Ensuring graduate employability is an important topic and VIKO takes several measures to ensure that. One such measure is Career management services which include publicising jobs, internships and volunteering offers. The Faculty develops students' competencies when it comes to exploring their career opportunities through career networking events, seminars, lectures and similar events. An example of such development opportunities is visits or lectures by representatives of companies from the textile, clothing or beauty industry. These interactions with social partners can later result in a better choice of internships which often

lead to future employment. Students are also encouraged to attend off-site educational seminars to further explore their career opportunities.

The Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour collects information about the careers of the graduates which is one of the indicators used by the Faculty to evaluate their graduate employability, which is 100 percent. To conclude, the Faculty provides a wide range of opportunities for students to explore and better choose their careers. Opinions from alumni and social partners indicate that graduates are well prepared for the labour market, however, some of the students indicated that they are not confident with how well they are prepared to communicate with their future clients.

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

VIKO holds at the College level a *Code of Academic Ethics* which lays out the core academic values of justice, fairness, respect for human beings, tolerance, and professional, scholarly and civic responsibility. Academic integrity is not only core to the teaching staff but also of the student academic group and the student representation. The Code is overseen by the Academic Ethics Committee with members of staff and students. There have been no cases of violation of the principles of academic integrity in the study programmes of the Design field in the last 3 academic years.

All first-year students sign a *Declaration of Integrity* and are introduced to the norms of academic ethics, plagiarism and consequences of non-compliance in the Introduction to Studies course. Since 2021, the College has been implementing a checking system to assess that there is no plagiarism in academic essays. According to the panel, all policies around academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are in place.

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

Appeals are heard and decisions are made at the College in accordance with the *Regulations of Appeals of the Vilnius University of Applied Sciences*. When an appeal has been received, a 5-member Appeals Committee is brought together to assess the appeal. In the last 3 years, there have been no appeals or complaints submitted by students of the field of study under assessment.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. informal feedback based on 'Learning by doing principle' helps students to strengthen and become independent learners.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Distrust within some students that they do not have sufficient communication skills which will be important in their future careers.

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

Based on the information provided, the adequacy of the number, qualifications, and competence of the teaching staff in the design studies seems to be good. There are 26 teachers in total, consisting of 2 professors, 3 associate professors, 17 lecturers, and 4 assistants. Six teachers (23%) hold a PhD, and 78% of teachers in the programmes have more than 8 years of teaching experience. The teachers' directions of creative interests are related to fashion design, image design, hairstyling and photography. Additionally, there are 6 lecturers-practitioners who integrate their practical experience into the content of various study subjects.

All teachers have at least three years of experience, and their pedagogical and/or scientific degree, teaching experience, areas of artistic and/or scientific interest, practical work experience in the field of the subject taught, and the subjects taught appear to be sufficient to ensure the intended learning outcomes.

The ratio of students to teachers in lectures and practicals is very good, with one lecturer having a group of four students on average. Teachers organise training courses for colleagues, non-formal education programs, and educational activities aimed at general education and other educational institutions.

Teachers are evaluated annually to ensure systematic development, and young teachers are provided with basic training courses on didactic competence development. Teachers are recruited through a competitive recruitment procedure, taking into account their educational qualifications, practical work experience, academic degree, and/or teaching title. The academic staff of the programmes is formed by the Head of the Department, presenting the planned candidates to the Dean of the Faculty.

Overall, the programmes appear to have an adequate number of qualified and competent teaching staff to provide high-quality education to students.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staff's academic mobility

Based on the information provided, it seems that the conditions for ensuring academic mobility for teaching staff in the study field are quite good. The College encourages academic mobility and provides opportunities for teachers to participate in various international mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+ and Nordplus, and offers funding for short-term international mobility activities. Furthermore, the College provides clear guidelines and selection processes for teachers who wish to participate in mobility programmes. The selection process takes place annually, and information about it is published on the College's website and sent to teachers directly by email.

The College also appears to have a track record of supporting academic mobility for teaching staff. During the period under analysis, five teachers in the Design field of studies went on teaching visits and internships in foreign institutions, and twelve visiting foreign teachers came to the College to give lectures. The College also hosts annual International Week events, which attract foreign institutions and provide opportunities for teachers to network and share knowledge.

Overall, it seems that the College is committed to promoting academic mobility for teaching staff in the Design field of studies and provides good opportunities and support for such mobility. Although the College's mobility programme has been expanded, it is still not fully utilised by the teaching staff. The lack of English language skills is a major obstacle, and this was made clear to the expert panel during the site visits. The expert panel's recommendation is to create more opportunities for teachers to improve their English language skills and to encourage them to spend time abroad.

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

Based on the information provided, it seems that the conditions to improve the competencies of the teaching staff in the Design field of studies at VIKO are good. Teachers are encouraged and provided with opportunities for systematic and comprehensive development through qualification improvement events such as conferences, courses and seminars, both locally and internationally. The College also allocates funds for the development of competencies and publishes an annual plan of competence development events that are free of charge for all teaching staff. Additionally, didactic training, computer literacy, and Moodle training are available, and during the pandemic, remote training was also organised. The College has even provided its staff with a 12-month VIP membership of the distance learning platform (<https://www.egu.lt>) that allows free and unlimited access to training for the entire duration of the membership (SER, p. 34). These initiatives suggest that the College is committed to continuously improving the competencies of its teaching staff in the Design field of studies. Teachers are also trained in new technologies and software. The induction of young, inexperienced teachers works well through a mentoring programme and regular feedback. The atmosphere among teachers is supportive and friendly, allowing for collegial exchange on both didactic and professional challenges.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. adequate and competent teaching staff constantly improved by an active research practice
2. free of charge trainings

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Staff mobility, already strong, could be more utilised and English language proficiency are areas for improvement for the teaching staff at VIKO.

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

Based on the information provided, the physical, informational, and financial resources seem to be suitable and adequate for an effective learning process in the ID and FD study programmes at the Faculty. The Faculty has ample space and technical equipment, including lecture theatres equipped with stationary computers and multimedia projectors, student work and rest areas, and a dining area. The computer network has 132 computerised workstations, all with high-speed internet access, and the Faculty has a wireless internet zone.

Modern software and technological equipment are used to achieve the results of studies. Lectures are delivered remotely using Microsoft Teams and Moodle systems, and students and staff can install Office ProPlus on their personal computers free of charge.

The Faculty's classrooms, laboratories, studios and Practice Centre are used to hold design studies and practical skills development activities for ID and FD study programmes. The Practice Centre has industrial universal sewing machines, special-purpose industrial machines, household sewing machines, and various small mechanisation devices needed for practical work. Female, male, and children's tailoring mannequins are used for creative projects, and there are display mannequins for exhibitions. The College also has facilities for students with special mobility needs, including ramps, stairlifts, and disabled-friendly sanitary facilities.

The library collections of all faculties of the College are used for the implementation of study programmes. The library consists of the Central Library and seven faculty libraries staffed by 20 professional specialists. The library collection has over 140 thousand copies and 45 thousand titles, including electronic periodicals available remotely, and 159.9 thousand euros were allocated for the acquisition of library resources in 2021 (SER, p. 37). Overall, the resources are sufficient to ensure an effective learning process for students in the ID and FD study programmes. The library is up-to-date and a popular place for research. It is regularly

used by the teachers for workshops with the students. The workshop leaders and the library staff make a very motivated and committed impression. Students can use the workshops even late in the evenings and on the weekends.

During the on-site visit, the expert panel was able to convince itself of the good teaching and learning conditions. The College is equipped with all relevant devices and technologies. Particularly noteworthy is the very modern digital design and editing process in the Fashion Design department.

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

Based on the information provided, the planning and upgrading of resources for the Department is done on an annual basis, with both long-term and short-term plans being prepared. The needs of both students and teachers are taken into account during this process. Additionally, the College follows public procurement legislation in Lithuania in order to ensure that contracts for the purchase of goods, services or works are concluded and funds are used rationally (SER, p. 39). Overall, it appears that there is a structured process in place for planning and upgrading resources for the departments and that the College is taking appropriate measures to ensure transparency and accountability in the procurement process.

The expert panel recommends the creation of financial resources to enable more students to go abroad. This could include short stays or digital exchange formats. An international perspective is very important for Lithuanian design students and ensures their employability.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Digital facilities and a lot of space
2. Workshops open for students all the time

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Planning and upgrading resources could facilitate the international aspect of student mobility, necessitating additional funding.

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

Internal quality assurance of studies takes place through the College, Faculty, Department, Study field and Study Programme Committees. The Academic Council approves the internal

quality assurance system of the College and monitors its implementation. The administration of the College and the Faculty supervises the implementation of the quality of studies and makes proposals for study quality assurance. The Study Field Committee aims to ensure the quality, sustainability and development of the study field, taking into account the strategic objectives of the College. The main document of the College's internal study quality management system is the Quality Manual. Based on the visit, the panel found evidence that there is a good general quality management system in place. The quality assurance measures provided are sufficient and appropriate to maintain and improve the internal quality of studies.

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

Students and social partners are actively taking part in the internal quality processes. They provide proposals and participate in feedback and decision-making on all programme evaluations, on recruitment of teaching staff as well as on other quality assurance issues.

Stakeholders also participate in the Study Field Self-Assessment Preparation Group. Social partners and potential employers are involved in the evaluation process of the programmes as members of the Final Project Defence Committees resulting in an evaluation report, identifying strengths and weaknesses of the competencies demonstrated by programme graduates.

Student involvement in quality assurance is carried out through student surveys at the end of each semester. The summarised results of the student and graduate surveys are published on the Faculty's website and submitted to the Faculty's Competition and Attestation Committee. Students also actively participate in various social and educational activities in cooperation with social partners and are encouraged to learn by doing.

During the visit the panel was impressed by the close collaboration and mutual exchange with social partners. The panel recommends that it could be beneficial to align them directly to the SER.

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

Data on the implementation of studies are collected and compiled by the following units of the Faculty: the Department of Fashion Design, the Department of Studies, and the Department of Organisation of Studies. Aggregated data is provided by the units to the Field Committee, which oversees the quality control functions of the programme delivery and envisages opportunities for its further improvement. The process of quality monitoring and programme improvement is reflected in the Department's annual quality monitoring reports, progress reports on the implementation of external evaluation recommendations and the Department's annual activity reports. Students are given the opportunity to informally express their viewpoints on their studies. Discussions on feedback results are organised with students and teachers and also are

discussed at Dean's Office meetings, and the summarised survey data are published on the Faculty's website.

The content of some courses has been adjusted to include relevant topics related to fashion product development in response to these opinions. The panel considers it a strength that there is a feedback loop and a clear system for managing and publicising the quality of studies.

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

Student and alumni surveys are *carried out in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Improving the Quality of Study Feedback of Vilnius University of Applied Sciences*. The results of these surveys show the actuals around the student study process and help to identify the positive aspects of the study programmes and the aspects that can be improved.

The panel is convinced that the right student evaluation processes are in place, although it has to be underlined that a higher percentage of students participating in the feedback surveys would be beneficial. Redesigning the format of the feedback survey might make it more attractive.

Summarising the results of the surveys of students and graduates during the last 3 years, it can be stated that the quality of studies in the field of Design generally meets students' expectations: the vast majority of them indicate that they are well informed about the studies, they find almost all the subjects in the field of study useful, the system of evaluation of study results is clear to them, students feel that they are evaluated in an objective way, and the practical training corresponds to their future professional activity.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. A clear system for managing and publicising the information on the quality of studies.
2. Close involvement of social partners in the quality system.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The unsatisfactory level of student participation in feedback surveys.
2. Low participation of social partners in development of the SER

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

VIKO provides an excellent example in student-oriented studies and lifelong learning activities in a modern, creativity-oriented study environment with an up-to-date focus on the current innovations in the fashion industry; digitalisation and sustainability. VIKO allocates research time and money and generates research income that enhances competencies and knowledge of teachers, the students and social partners in an amazing ecosystem.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is recommended that the school considers introducing specialised tracks within the Fashion Design study programme to cater to students' specific interests and career goals. Additionally, implementing a reward system for students who attend extra lectures from other study programmes might contribute to motivation and provide recognition. <li>2. Combining the two programmes into a one, would result in being even a stronger field of studies in VIKO.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The school should consider allocating resources to provide English training for staff members to enhance their language proficiency, enabling them to confidently participate in international seminars, events, and Erasmus mobility opportunities, thus furthering the success of the research focus strategy and maximising the benefits of the additional research funding.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Greater uptake for student mobility should be encouraged by finding solutions for shortcomings in the funding.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The College should consider investigating deeper what skills graduates of the Design programmes are missing. Moreover, the school could explore the possibility of enhancing its curriculum by incorporating practical communication training and interactive workshops to better equip students with the necessary skills for effective client communication in their future careers.
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More English language skills to improve mobility.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial support systems should be explored that would enable a larger number of students to participate in international experiences, which may encompass brief visits or digital exchange alternatives.

Study quality
management and
public information

1. Students should be more encouraged to participate in feedback surveys.
2. Although there is a strong relation with social partners their involvement in the SER could be beneficial.

VI. SUMMARY

VIKO has implemented the Lithuania Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030” into the heart and content of the ID and FD study programmes aiming to train highly qualified designers who are able to create an inclusive and sustainable environment, contributing to positive changes to cultural, material and social well-being. Therefore, VIKO is actively involved in various projects and is a full member of LATIA as well as consults regularly with social partners and involves them in final internships and the programmes’ curricula. Annual data highlight 100 per cent employability of students. According to the panel, the aims and outcomes of the study programmes are very up-to-date and in line with the needs of the labour market and society. The panel appreciates VIKO’s decision to restructure the design program into 2 focused areas: Image Design and Fashion Design.

The programmes provide modern higher education studies that meet European standards with nationally and internationally recognised applied research and professional practice. The competencies of teachers are permanently improved through applied research and artistic projects, involving students and social partners in applied sciences with the aim to strengthen innovation-oriented strategic partnerships and to develop socially responsible community citizenship. With 12 ECTS for the final thesis, the College underlines research/artistic practice and substantial teaching time is allocated to train practical skills complemented by long open studio access.

The different subjects addressed in the ID (Image Design) and FD (Fashion Design) provide coherent study programmes’ outcomes for a Professional Bachelor of Arts. The study programmes are compatible with the goals, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods of the field and are in line with market needs. Both study programmes develop theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field of fashion and image design covering a wide range of subjects organised in a coherent way so that each subsequent subject builds on the previous one. The ID and FD address all relevant areas in the field and the curricula which meet the requirements set out in the description of the Design field of study. During the site visit, it was impressively demonstrated that the consistent development of students’ competencies results in very well-trained fashion and image designers that are ready for the market. In particular, the integration of sustainability into the curriculum prepares graduates for a changing world and equips them with the necessary skills to make a significant contribution as fashion or image designers. Finally, VIKO creates several opportunities to personalise the study programmes to the individual needs of students. Overall, VIKO’s intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum are impressive and in line with the regulations.

Science and (art)studies are very well embedded at VIKO. By allocating at least 10 per cent of the basic funding for research and artistic activities it is evident this is a priority area for the College. The research output and the output of teaching staff who have been visiting other institutions feed back into the content of the study programmes such as the latest knowledge on sustainability and the digital transformation of the fashion industry. The panel encourages the College’s ambition to further develop and deepen the research which is College’s strength.

The panel was impressed by the research activity, the number of projects with social partners involved in the study process and sharing of innovations. The panel would like to recommend more teachers to take part in international mobility and international seminars. Therefore, English language skills are recommended.

The procedures around the overall admissions are in line with LAMA. VIKO has policies in place for recognition of foreign qualifications and other exceptions such as level four qualification students.

Regarding student mobility, VIKO is making a serious effort to promote academic mobility for students via Erasmus+ exchange with 300+ partners in this programme. The panel is appreciating the effort of VIKO but has some concerns about the low uptake from students and would like to encourage the College to think about alternative solutions (by solving financial issues of the students or providing shorter periods of internship abroad). VIKO is also offering solid and extensive financial and social support for students with a need.

An elaborate study information dissemination system is in place through a formal electronic information system, followed by informal consulting options and an on-arrival *Introduction to Studies*. It is remarkable and exceptional, according to the panel, that VIKO offers a Career Centre for students and graduates for their career planning tools. All offered support is of great additional value to the student journey. The panel is convinced that the Faculty is very inclusive and has all the necessary tools to provide study information and student counselling. VIKO is trying actively to enhance employability through career networking events, seminars, and lecturers. These interactions with social partners lead to internships and in a later stage, future employment.

The teaching and learning process of the programmes does take into account students' needs and enables them to achieve intended learning outcomes. A clear study plan outlines the workload and credits for each subject, and the evaluation of study achievements is regulated. During the first lecture, the distribution of independent work assignments and the introduction of course assignments are shared which enables effective learning. The learning-by-doing principle is leading to good results according to the panel.

The Faculty's infrastructure for accommodating access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs is excellent with lifts, ramps, accessible classrooms and toilets for disabled students. For students struggling with personal, mental or family problems a psychologist is available. Stakeholders and students confirmed the procedure for dealing with problems was very good and helpful and this is endorsed by the panel.

Monitoring student's study progress and feedback loops to promote self-assessment and planning of study are very well provided according to the panel.

Teachers are evaluated annually, and young teachers are supported with a course in didactics. Overall, the programmes appear to have an adequate number of qualified and competent teaching staff to provide high-quality education to students.

The College encourages academic mobility. Although mobility is a focus area, the panel noticed it is still not fully utilised by the teaching staff due to a lack of English language skills. The expert panel's recommendation is to create more opportunities for teachers to improve their English language skills and to encourage them to spend time abroad.

The panel was impressed by VIKO's excellent equipment providing the latest digital design and editing tools in the Fashion Design department. Overall, it was noticed that the College holds all relevant software and facilities for the study programmes. The library is up-to-date and a popular place for research and students have access to the workshops late in the evenings and on the weekends. The planning and upgrading of resources for the study programmes is done on an annual basis incorporating both the needs of students and teachers.

Internal quality assurance of studies at VIKO takes place on a College, Faculty, Department, and Study field levels and through the Study Programme Committee. Students and social partners are actively taking part in the internal quality processes. The panel was convinced the quality assurance measures provided are good and appropriate to maintain and improve the internal quality of studies.

VIKO has a policy for improving the Quality of Study Feedback for students and alumni. The panel is convinced that the right student evaluation processes are in place, although the experts underline that a higher percentage of students participating in the feedback surveys would be beneficial, although the experts realise this is difficult. Redesigning the format of the feedback survey, might make it more attractive.

Expert panel chairperson signature:
Prof. Dr. José Teunissen