



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of LAW

at Lietuvos verslo kolegija

Expert panel:

1. **Dr. Archil Chochia**, panel chairperson, *academic*;
2. **Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Reinhard**, *academic*;
3. **Dr. Donatas Murauskas**, *representative of social partners*;
4. **Ms. Raminta Sangavičiūtė**, *students' representative*.

Evaluation coordinator – Ms Miglė Palujanskaitė

Report language – English

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Vilnius
2023

Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Law	Law and Law Enforcement Institutions
State code	6531KX002	6531KX003
Type of studies	College cycle studies	College cycle studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)
Credit volume	180	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor's Degree in Law	Professional Bachelor's Degree in Law
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	No. SV6-15 of 25-FEB-2003	No. SV2-69 of 15-JUN-2016

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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 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 (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 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 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 2 October, 2023.

Dr. Archil Chochia (panel chairperson) *Senior Researcher, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia;*

Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Reinhard, *Professor at Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Germany;*

Dr. Donatas Murauskas, *Litigation Lawyer at „Ellex Valiūnas” Law firm, Lithuania;*

Ms. Raminta Sangavičiūtė, *Master student in the Criminal and business law programme at the Faculty of Law, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	
2.	
...	

1.4. BACKGROUND OF LAW FIELD STUDIES AT LITHUANIAN BUSINESS COLLEGE

The Lithuanian Business College (LBC) is a private University of Applied Sciences establishment in 1994. Originally focused on further education for secretaries and assistant managers, it evolved into a higher education institution and was renamed to Lithuanian Business College. The Strategic Action Plan for 2020-2025 underscores the LBC's commitment to training creative, competent specialists and conducting applied research for regional development. Operating in the EU area, the university concentrates its activities in the Klaipėda and Vilnius districts, maintaining close ties with companies to analyse labour market trends and ensure the competitiveness of its graduates. The LBC, recognized with the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, facilitates student and staff mobility, international partnerships, and Erasmus+ projects. Offering 12 study programs across 6 fields, including Law, Management, Accounting, Informatics, Economics, and Tourism, the university expanded its reach with the establishment of a Vilnius branch in 2013. The organizational structure of the LBC involves key bodies like the General Meeting of Stakeholders, the Academic Board, the Director, the Labour Council, and the Student Council. Academic divisions include the Department of Studies, Distance Study Centre, and Business Information Centre. A reorganization in 2020 aimed at achieving strategic goals led to the creation of the Strategic Development and Communication Department, contributing to improved study quality and financial optimization. The LBC aligns its strategy and professional skills with EU principles, emphasizing harmonious development, equal opportunities, regional development, and innovation society. Students in Law programmes are encouraged to engage in international experiences, promoting lifelong learning, mobility, equal opportunities, social cohesion, civic engagement, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship in line with EU higher education regulations.

Accredited by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CQAHE), the university has received positive evaluations, securing accreditation for 6 and 7 years in different instances. Two Law study programs, accredited until 2019 and 2020, are offered by the Law Department.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the Law study field at Lithuanian Business College 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	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	2
3.	Student admission and support	2
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	2
	Total:	18

*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. AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND CURRICULUM

Aims, learning outcomes, and curriculum are evaluated according to 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)

Factual situation

The College offers two programs in the field of law: a program in Law with a general approach and a more specialised programme on Law and Law Enforcement Institutions. Both programmes have a duration of 3 years in full-time study and 4 years in part-time study. Students earn 180 ECTS credits and a Bachelor's Degree in Law. Both programs are simultaneously provided in Klaipeda and Vilnius and are taught in Lithuanian language. The primary aim of the programs is to form staff for legal professions. Various sources reveal that in Lithuania there is a strong demand for legal experts on the labour market. The degree also qualifies for further legal studies at university level.

The study program *Law* wants to qualify for high-level legal professions (*e.g.*, lawyers) whereas the programme *Law and Law Enforcement Institutions* aims at training specialists with basic legal knowledge, who are able to work in law enforcement institutions and the civil service, and who are able to implement the norms of the EU and Schengen legal framework and the methods of operation corresponding to them (SER p. 9). It has thus a limited scope of employability.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study programme in Law addresses the labour market for law professionals. In the past, it has shown that students can easily find an appropriate occupation. The curriculum that provides a deeper insight view over various fields of law and enables students for different professions and many public and private institutions. The strong and close cooperation with social partners and practice stages in institutions foster the employability. Moreover, changes in civil servants' law now require an adequate qualification also for civil servants being already in the labour market.

The study programme Law and Law Enforcement Institutions has a narrower approach to law and mainly qualifies only for a certain type of professions and institutions. There were doubts whether there is sufficient demand on the labour market for such a program limited to some areas of law. During the expert meeting social partners confirmed that there is also a huge demand for qualified experts in the field of law enforcement.

In addition, social partners appreciated for both programs that students are a valuable support for them during their practical stage and many of them are employed in their institutions after

having finished their studies. These statements were convincing for the expert panel that both programmes meet the needs of 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

Factual situation

The College's key areas of activity aim at training highly qualified professionals, developing applied research, creating conditions for a person to acquire higher education and professional qualifications that meet the needs of the Lithuanian economy and the level of science and the latest technologies; developing an education- and culture-intensive society capable of working in conditions of rapid technological change; training practitioners who are able to work independently. The mission of the College is to train qualified specialists with higher education, awarding Professional Bachelor's qualification degree, able to socialise in changing conditions in various areas of society, creating conditions for continuing education, organizing qualification improvement, conducting scientific applied research necessary for the development of the region (SER p. 10-11). The College aims to contribute to the achievement of the European Commission's initiatives to create a European Education Area by 2025.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The College's key areas and the mission are very ambitious. Indeed, study programs in law have a strong impact on society and the College awards a Professional Bachelor's Degree for highly qualified trained specialists. According to the curricula, recent advancements of latest technologies are included. It is also essential for legal professionals that they work independently. The college enables students by sending them to practitioners where they can acquire first experiences in independent work.

The College supports both students as well as teachers to spend some time in another EU-country. In the end, this might lead to better understanding of foreign legal systems and the chance of working abroad so that this might be a possible contribution to create a European Education Area by 2025.

It is part of the College's strategy to open a branch in Vilnius. However, the expert panel got no evidence on the real situation in Vilnius since there were no personal interviews. It had to rely on Klaipeda staff's explications which were sometimes unclear and contradictory (e.g. with regards to their travelling obligations and their factual interaction or cooperation with their counterparts in Vilnius). It was also not so transparent how the simultaneousness of teaching is organised.

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

Factual situation

Both study programmes comprise 180 credits and at least 120 credits are allocated for the achievement of the outcomes of studies in the field of law (including internship, preparation of final thesis and final examination). Both programmes have 91 subjects in the field of study, 14 specialisation subjects, 18 general subjects of college studies, 9 optional subjects, 30 credits of practice (SER Annex 4). During the semester, no more than 7 subjects in full-time form and 5 subjects in part-time form are studied.

Table No. 1 Study programme's in Law 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	120
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	9
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	15
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	34,58%
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	20,58%

Table No. 2 Study programme's in Law and Law Enforcement Institutions 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	120
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	9
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	15
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	33,75%
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	21,79%

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

According to the relevant regulations legal requirements are met.

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

Factual situation

Teachers use different methods to achieve the learning outcomes, e.g. case studies, practical exercises or fictitious labour law disputes. In addition, the learning outcomes are reflected in practical field trips to social partners. The College is a permanent subscriber of INFOLEX, a database on Lithuanian law, namely jurisprudence. For each course a description of the study module exists (SER Annex 8). The description is updated regularly by the Study Programme Committee. Before teachers can upload their courses in Moodle a Certification Commission certifies the material. The assessment of the achievements is split. 40 percent consist of the practical performance and 60 percent are for the examination work.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is appreciated that students have a very practical experience. It is noteworthy that the College is a permanent subscriber of INFOLEX. Such database provides students with the most recent developments in law and especially in jurisprudence. It is also highly estimated that up-dated descriptions of the study courses exist that give students some orientation and plan for organizing their study. Spitting as such in the assessment is reasonable, however the percentage for practical performance seems to be relatively high. Both programmes are meant predominantly as a scientific and academic study and not only as a sort of professional training for the practice.

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

Factual situation

Both programmes start with general topics and then switch to the general subjects in law. In a third stage courses are divided in special subjects of law which are important for the respective programme, in particular for the Law Enforcement Institution Study. Moreover, there are three professional practice placements.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The concept of dividing the study in three stages sounds suitable for the programmes. Maybe special courses for the Law Enforcement Institution Programme could start earlier. In general, it makes sense that lectures start with more general topics and shift to specialisation for each programme.

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

Factual situation

Students may draw up an individual study plan. It is possible to study full-time or part-time. In semester 4 or 5 they may choose their suitable specialisation.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is positive that students can study on a full-time and a part-time basis. In the interviews, a student complaint that the College does not always fulfil its obligations for a part time study. The expert panel took notice of this complaint but could not make evidence of this accusation. Nevertheless, the College should ensure that part-time study is possible under the conditions stipulated in the study programme.

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

Factual situation

Before writing the thesis students attend the Research Methodology course. The topics of the thesis respond to regional issues and analyse issues important for the region (SER Annex 7). They are related to the activities of the company in which the student performed its final professional practice. The College emphasises that the final thesis is very closely linked to the professional practice and has a real object of study (SER p.15).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

A certain shortcoming is research which in most cases seems to be closely linked to previous work in an institution and less answering a theoretical research question. On the other hand, this is not really surprising, since the College and the study programs focus on an intensive cooperation between theory and practice. Nevertheless, the strong emphasis on the demands and necessities of the region might limit the attractiveness for students from other parts of Lithuania and bears the danger that students study in a regional “bubble” with low stimulations from outside.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The curriculum has a reasonable structure to guarantee the intended outcome.
2. Opportunity to study full-time or part-time.
3. Students have permanent access to INFOLEX law-database.
4. Intensive cooperation with practice.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low transparency of the factual cooperation between Klaipeda and Vilnius branch.
2. Complaint that part-time study is inadequately possible.
3. Strong focus on the demands of the region, even in the topics of the thesis.
4. Intensive cooperation with practitioners might bear the risk that the qualification for practice prevails to the detriment of the academic approach.

5. The social partners have a certain influence on the topics of thesis and the expert panel had at least some reservations whether the thesis is always the result of an intrinsic scientific approach or is more the result of demands in practical work.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

Links between science (art) and study activities are evaluated according to 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

Factual situation

Applied science activities at LTVK in the field of law are conducted by the Department of Law in cooperation with the Department of Scientific and Applied Research. These activities are carried out in accordance with the several official documents of LTVK, such as Regulations of the Division of Applied Science Research, Publication Regulations of the Applied Scientific Research Division, Regulation on Scientific-Experimental Activities, Methodology of Assessment of Scientific Development Activities of the College, etc. (SER, p. 17). Furthermore, LTVK's Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025 sets priority strategic directions for applied science activities at the college, including internalisation of such activities. Once in two years, LTVK organises international conference, together with Klaipėda Chamber of Industry foreign educational partners. With local focus, LTVK has organised annual conferences, as well as one-day seminar with Kazimieras Simonavičius University on the issues of labour law. In past three years, LTVK has delivered 13 applied research projects (SER, p. 19). In order to encourage its academic personnel to conduct research activities, in 2019 and 2020, LTVK signed agreement with Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, allocating 131000 Euros for necessary actions.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In accordance with the feedback received from the previous external evaluation, LTVK has demonstrated to the expert panel to have implemented several actions in order to improve its research output. Specific incentive system to motivate and reward academic personnel involved in the research activities has been established and academic personnel, which has met with the expert panel, have demonstrated sufficient knowledge about the system, as well as priority to publish internationally. However, there is a lack of provided resources to the personnel in terms of seminars on publishing, how and where to choose international journals, clarity on priorities within international publications, and relevant important aspects in order to successfully achieve above-indicated strategic goals. There is a lack of research output produced by the academic personnel of LTVK, while in some cases, produced publications have little relevance to the two curricula in the field of law offered at LTVK (SER, pp 16-20).

LTVK has an academic journal Vadyba – Journal of Management (ISSN 1648-7974), which since 2009 has been regularly publishing articles from local and international contributors, as well

as LTVK students, and is clearly great tool in order to increase research output. Dedication of the university management to develop the journal and level of its promotion within LTVK has been evident to the expert panel, however for the journal that has been regularly publishing since 2009 and has international editorial board, there is a clear lack in international databases it is indexed in and more has to be done in order to develop the journal further.

In general, it appears research activities are largely concentrated in Klaipeda and LTVK academic personnel involved in LTVK Klaipeda branch are more involved than those involved in Vilnius branch, it has been unclear to the expert panel how much do the academic personnel teaching in Vilnius branch contribute to the LTVK's research output.

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

Factual situation

LTVK regularly organises international and local conferences, with relevant stakeholders, where partners and LTVK academic personnel listen, present and discuss current actual topics relevant to the two curricula offered at the college. LTVK has been offering subscriptions to the databases INFOLEX and Liteko to its academic personnel and the students, via college library. LTVK has a close cooperation with its social partners, involving them in the process of regularly updating the study programmes in the field of law.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In its efforts to strengthen the link between the content of the studies and the latest developments in the field, LTVK has paid greater attention to the methodology and tools, rather than content and level of the research output (SER, pp 20-21). Furthermore, focus of the research publication presented to the expert panel are not clearly linked to the content of the studies offered (SER, p. 18). As internalisation is a priority for LTVK, internalisation of research output should clearly be linked with the content of the studies, in order to produce desired results.

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

Factual situation

LTVK offers its students variety of possibilities to get involved in the scientific activities. Students can participate at the conferences in Lithuania, including those organised by LTVK and mentioned above, and abroad. Annual student conference "Academic Youth Aspirations: economics, management, law, technological insights" has been organised at LTVK since 2004 and in the past three years, where students of LTVK and other Lithuanian institutions have been publishing continuously. Students of LTVK in the field of law have possibilities to be involved in projects conducted or ordered by the social partners of the college. Four students of LTVK have also participated in Erasmus+ project Digital Entrepreneurs Academy.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Previous external evaluation has recommended to LTVK to expand its research activities to include the students. It has been demonstrated to the current panel that LTVK has taken steps to do so (SER, p. 17). Strong link with the social partners has been a productive option to offer students more possibilities to get involved in research projects. The Funds Use Agreement signed with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, includes encouraging students together with the academic personnel to be more active in research activities and that has played a positive role in this direction. However, it was unclear for the external panel how the balance of student activity is between Klaipeda and Vilnius branch students. Furthermore, in its efforts to encourage more students to participate at the student conference, LTVK has introduced a practice when students presenting their research at the conference, receive additional grade for the final thesis. Even if such system might produce higher interest from the students to get involved, this practice remains questionable in terms for fair and equal grading of the final theses of all students and on the grounds of the quality of the work.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Regular student conferences.
2. Majority of the academic personnel at LTVK have strong practical experience.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Balance between Klaipeda and Vilnius branch when it comes to research activities, involvement of the academic personnel and students, quality of the research output, organisation of the relevant academic events and projects.
2. Quality of the research output and its relevance to the content of the curricula in the field of law offered at LTVK, especially when it comes to international research activities.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

Student admission and support are evaluated according to the following indicators:

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

Factual situation

The requirements for admission to study at the College are specified in the Rules for Admission of Students to the Lithuanian Business College (<https://ltvk.lt/priemimas/>), which are prepared by the deputy director for studies and quality, discussed by the Academic Council and approved by order of the Director of the College. Admission to undergraduate studies at the College is carried out according to the general admission procedure. The general admission is organised and coordinated by the Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for

General Admission (hereinafter referred to as the LAMA BPO), which is authorised by the Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport. Only persons whose academic achievements are at least equal to the minimum indicators approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania may apply for admission to the first cycle of higher education studies. Admission to the College is open to persons who have a level of education which does not lower than upper-secondary education or its equivalent, attested by documented evidence, and who have the appropriate threshold mark for admission to the competition in the year in question.

The requirements for the Law integrated study programme include the results of the state maturity exams of History (0,4 of the competitive score), Mathematics or Information Technology or Foreign Language (0,2 of the competitive score), other subject not coinciding with the first, second or fourth subject (0,2 of the competitive score), Lithuanian Language and Literature (0,2 of the competitive score).

For entrants who have completed their upper secondary education up to and including 2018, points are added for those Olympiads and competitions that were included in the Annex to the Schedule to the procedures for establishing the ranking of secondary school leavers in the year in which the pupil completed his or her upper secondary education.

The following criteria are used to award additional points to applicants for non-state-funded study places: participation in volunteering programmes, work experience in the same area of study as that applied, holders of an ECDL certificate (beginner or basic course), completed higher education, Certificate of graduation from the Lithuanian Junior Achievement secondary education programme Economics and Business, upon presentation of certificates proving the college's participation in live and remotely organised online events, upon submission of certificates proving participation in non-formal education activities, initiatives, projects, training or seminars of the college. 1 point is awarded for the completion of vocational training programmes in the same field of education.

The minimum entrance qualification score for admission to the study programmes of Law, Law and Law Enforcement Institutions at a state-funded study place in 2019-2022 is 4.3.

Student admission rules to the college are published in HEI's website, in the annual publication Kur stoti. The admission requirements and the procedure for awarding additional points, as it is stated in the SER, are presented to the entrants at various events: during national and regional study fairs, open days, annual career weeks organised by the college during the Youth Workshop, visits to progymnasiums, gymnasiums and vocational schools, and visits of schoolchildren and gymnasts to the college.

During the 2019-2022 enrolment period, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania did not allocate any state non-funded study places with a study grant to finance study programmes in the field of Law. Applicants could apply for paid study places only.

The number of first priority applicants during the assessed period in the field of Law was 0, 1 and 2; in Law full-time-online study form was 35, 30, 53. with the remaining priorities

consisting of 246, 156, 223. Out of these numbers the agreements to non-state funded places were signed: 64 in 2020, 65 in 2021, 111 in 2022.

The data reveal that the highest interest in Law study programmes was in 2022. Comparing the number of applicants in the studies of the field of Law in 2019 and 2022, the number increased by 8.7%. The number of applicants for Priority I remained the same, while the number of applicants for the other priorities increased by 10.81% in 2022. The analysis of the number of applicants for the study programmes of Law, Law and Law Enforcement Institutions does not show any significant differences, with an even distribution of numbers.

When analysing the competitive score of the entrants to the Law field study programmes in the 2019–2022 period, when comparing the highest competitive scores of the admitted entrants, uneven trends are observed. In 2019, compared to 2020, the highest competitive scores of the admitted decreased, but this could be influenced only by the admission to the study programme Law and Law Enforcement Institutions in 2019. Compared to 2020 and 2022, the highest competitive scores of the admitted students changed insignificantly: however, the highest competitive score was around 8.4 and the lowest was around 4.3. During the analysed period in 2019–2022 it is noticed that competitive scores of students enrolled in the study programme of Law and Law Enforcement Institutions had higher competition scores than students enrolled in the Law study programme. Comparing the average competition scores of those enrolled in the two study programmes in the studies of the field of Law, those enrolled in the Law study programme had higher average scores.

When analysing the competition score of applicants to the study programmes in the field of Law, in the period from 2019 to 2022 the highest competition scores of those admitted have been declining. Compared to 2020 and 2021, the highest competitive scores of admitted applicants increased, while in 2021 compared to 2022 the competitive scores of admitted applicants remained unchanged. The lowest competition score of those admitted to the study programmes during the period under analysis has uniformly passed the line of 4.3, as the recommendation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport on the competition score was followed during the admission process to the study programmes in the studies of the field of Law. During the period under review, the average competition score of those admitted to the programme ranged from 4.3 to 8.4. When comparing the admission scores between the study programmes of Law, Law and Law Enforcement Institutions, those enrolled in the Law and Law Enforcement study programme had the highest admission scores (the average admission score ranged from 4.33 to 10.54).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The college follows the national guidelines and procedures for student admission that are clear and well outlined. The requirements for the admission score are also in line with the national regulations and the goals of the study programme and pose no specific issues to the applicants. The information is available on the LTVK website.

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

Factual situation

Education acquired in foreign countries is recognised, and subjects studied in foreign higher education institutions are credited, as well as the results of studies achieved, in accordance with the college 's procedure.

Before leaving on partial studies abroad, the student coordinates the study programme with the head of the department. Upon successful completion of partial studies and submission of the academic certificate (Transcript of Records), the subjects of partial studies are recognised and transferred to the student's study database in the academic information system, and at the end of the studies – to the diploma supplement. This procedure applies to students of the college who have returned from a semester of study under the Erasmus+ exchange programme, including courses taken in foreign higher education institutions. Upon successful completion of the study programme at the college, a Professional Bachelor's diploma and a diploma supplement corresponding to the model of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNECSO/CEPES is issued. The subjects attended at a foreign higher education institution and credited to the college is noted in the diploma supplement, establishing the provision on the common EU higher education area.

For crediting the learning outcomes at other higher education institutions, only after the evaluation of the submitted available documents and the level and other information of the institution, the documents are forwarded to the head of the department supervising the study programme, and the relevance of the content of the study subjects and the scope of the study subjects are assessed. The decision to credit learning outcomes is approved by the Deputy Director for Studies and Quality.

For persons who have studied in the same or other higher education institution or in a foreign higher education institution according to the uncoordinated content of studies, the learning outcomes are included in accordance with the procedure established by the college. The total scope of the credited study subjects may not exceed seventy-five% of the scope of the study programme.

The college carries out assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements, which is officially recognised practice in the EU countries. The Assessment and Recognition Committee for Non-formal and Informal Learning Achievements decides on the recognition of learning achievements on the basis of the results of the interview with the candidate.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The college follows the procedures, both set by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, as well as the ones set by the college. The procedures are well outlined, and the criteria are clear.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

Factual situation

The college has been granted an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2014-2020, which was extended in 2021 until 2027.

Opportunities, documentation and the recognition of studies abroad is already provided during the Adaptation Week events for first-year students, during the information seminars organised once a semester and during the first-year students' (Fux) camp. Also, information is regularly updated on the college website and on the college's social networks. The information indicates that the college announces and organises public competitions twice a year for Erasmus+ studies and internships abroad, which are carried out in accordance with the procedures approved by the college, and the selection of students is carried out by a committee set up by the Director. All students participating in the selection process are informed of the selection criteria and the results of the selection. Students are selected for graduate internship before the end of the study period, and graduate internships leave after the study period. After returning from international mobility, students present their experience of participating in an exchange programme on social networks.

College encourages students to join the Erasmus Student Network (ESN KUK). During the last 3 years, 7 students of the Law field left the college for partial studies. During the analysed period 3 students went to practice in foreign companies.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The students appear to have enough opportunities but not information about mobility, and they are not as active as it would be beneficial to the college, the programmes and the students themselves. Exceedingly low numbers of students choose to go abroad. It seems that the college is not capable of attracting its students to go study, to participate in projects, activities or do internships abroad, as well as college struggles to attract incoming students.

There is not enough information reaching the students about the exchange opportunities, as the student survey data shows that only 65% of the students were properly informed about exchange programme opportunities. The evaluation visit revealed that students have difficulty for long-term exchanges due to their everyday responsibilities and job. More effort should be put in promoting not only possibilities to study abroad, since many students are already working, but also to participate in short-term projects, activities, internships etc. Since the college is not capable of attracting that many incoming/outgoing students, it also should bring more effort in encouraging students to get more international experience in the field.

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

Factual situation

Premises located in the Old Town of Klaipėda city are fully adapted for access and use by students with special needs, while premises located in Vilnius city are also planned to be adapted for the disabled. The college staff and students were provided with premises for lunch and a separate play area for children of staff and students was created.

In order to promote academic activity of the teachers and thus contribute to the quality assurance of the studies, the college finances the publication of their research papers in the journal Vadyba/Journal of Management.

Students who have failed an exam, or who have been absent due to illness or other personal reasons during the examination session, are given an additional opportunity to sit the examination during the Consolation Week. Full-time students who, for important reasons, are unable to attend lectures regularly are given a free lecture schedule. If needed, an individual study plan can also be drawn up for the student.

For students who, due to their difficult financial situation, are unable to pay the full tuition fee for a semester at once, the college offers the possibility of deferring the payment until the student receives a state-supported loan. College also allows students to pay tuition fees in instalments. According to the Statute of the Lithuania Business College, students are entitled to a reduced tuition fee if they are disabled, orphaned, or socially disadvantaged.

Social scholarships are available for both state-funded places and those who pay for their studies out of pocket. To qualify for a social scholarship, at least one of the following criteria must be met: 1. are from a needy family or living alone, entitled to or receiving a social benefit under the Law on Cash Social Assistance to Needy Residents of the Republic of Lithuania; 2. have a working capacity level of 45% or less or a severe or average disability level established in accordance with the procedure laid down by legal acts; 3. are not older than 25 years of age and have been placed under guardianship/curatorship before reaching the age of majority in accordance with the procedure prescribed by law or their parents (the only parent they have) are deceased. The social scholarship is currently 299 EUR per month. In 2018, social scholarships were awarded to 5 students of the study programmes in the field of Law, in 2019 – 4, in 2020 – 3, 2021 – 2, 2022 – to 2 students.

For students who come to study from other cities, the college provides an opportunity to live in a dormitory during the study period. The college does not have its own dormitory facilities, therefore, if there is a need for this service, it is sought to conclude contracts with other higher education institutions that have such possibilities.

One of the forms of support for students is the possibility to visit a sports club free of charge.

If, for any reason, a student with special needs is unable to continue the study process with all students, he or she is given the opportunity to study in accordance with the individual learning conditions. College provides the opportunity to apply for psychological assistance free of charge, as the agreements have been concluded with psychologists. Information published on the College 's website. Help is confidential and free of charge.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The social, financial, and personal support is sufficient, and meets the needs of students. It is important to note that free psychological help is offered to the students, which is an admirable form of support for the students of LTVK. But during the meeting with students it was clear that

students are not keen on using the offered psychological support. Perhaps, college could promote the psychological help it offers for the students more efficiently.

Moreover, the evaluation visit also revealed a very concerning aspect of the studies, that full-time students and part-time students have the same study schedules, what results in part-time students' unavailability to attend classes. The college does not solve this problem which is an inexcusable form of act from the management of the college. College primarily focuses on its full-time students, which may reflect a less inclusive approach toward other members of the college community. Part-time students have busy schedules, they are already working in the field, but the college does not consider this when developing study schedules of the part-time students. Moreover, the majority of the students study in non-state funded places and are not able to get the education they need and seek, since they are not capable of attending any classes. It is mandatory for the college to develop separate individual study schedules for the part-time students, as they cannot attend classes with full-time students.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Factual situation

A two-day freshers' camp is held before the academic year. It is organised by the Student Representation with the administration of the College. It introduces students to the College, and includes lectures, sports competitions and artistic performances. Every year in the first week of September, Adaptation Week events are organised, during which students get to know the College environment, new friends and teachers. During the Adaptive Week events, newly admitted students are introduced to the study programme of the field of Law with the aim of the study programme, learning outcomes, organization of studies and other relevant information.

During the first lecture of each study subject, the subject teacher introduces students to the content, objectives, intended outcomes, requirements, literature, tasks, deadlines and assessment system of the subject. Each semester the Management Department approves and publishes the schedule of the consultation time with the specified time and contacts of the teachers, when, if necessary, students can apply to the teachers and the head of the Department for individual consultations.

In order to assess how students are familiarised with the study programme, requirements and other information relevant to students, whether the guidance provided to students in the study process is sufficient, as well as to assess the quality of studies, a student opinion survey is carried out at the end of each semester. Students complete an anonymous questionnaire in which they can express their opinions, preferences and observations.

In order to maintain close links with the region's businesses and to help them to meet the challenges they face, especially young people, the College's lecturers engage in mentoring activities aimed at creating a long-term reinforcing relationship, sharing life and work experience with someone who is seeking to grow in their career or professional field.

Before the final qualification examination of the Law, the students of the Law field of study are additionally consulted from the taught subjects for one hour each in order to properly prepare for the future examinations. Approximately 12 consultations take place over a two-week period, with one academic hour each.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The introduction to the college, the faculty, and the study programme before the start of the studies is sufficient. The students also seem to be happy with the available student counselling and the guidance provided by teachers and staff members. The students receive adequate introduction to their studies at the college, as well as to their study programmes.

Although, as the studies progress, the part-time students are not given a proper guidance and attention from the responsible staff, as it appears as the biggest weakness of the college. Also, the evaluation visit revealed a very high level of subordination and hierarchy in the college. Both full-time and part-time students and other members of the college can only contact the specific persons regarding their complaint and cannot go directly to the person they need. There is a lot of steps to climb to go to the person students need to solve the problem. It affects not only the whole community of the college but also the students themselves, as they can feel misunderstood, not valued and not heard in this hierarchical system. These are fundamental shortcomings that shall be eliminated.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Free psychological help for the students in need.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. International mobility of outgoing students, inability to attract incoming students.
2. The same study schedules for full-time students and part-time students.
3. High level of subordination and hierarchy in the college.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Studying, student performance and graduate employment are 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

Factual situation

Both analysed study programmes are offered in full-time and part-time study formats (SER, p. 31). The teaching staff employs a variety of teaching methods, including engaging lectures, explanations, discussions, case studies, problem-solving, and oral or written presentations of independent or team assignments, as well as out-of-class lectures and the preparation of reports, among others (SER, p. 31).

During the panel's meetings with staff and students, it was emphasized that lecturers are flexible in their use of different teaching methods, and the assessments vary depending on the goals of the teaching subject.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is pleased to note that some students and alumni have shared the practical impact on the development of their professional careers. However, during the site visit, it was observed that although the HEI emphasizes languages as one of its educational features, the practical English language skills could have been more prominently emphasized.

The HEI serves as a prominent business school in the region and maintains strong connections with social partners. Students enrolled in both the *law* and *law and law enforcement institutions* programs benefit from the HEI's strong relationships with social partners. There is clear evidence based on panel's on-site visit that social partners are willing to accept students and graduates of the HEI – it indicates about the relevance of the study programs for the market. However, although the labour supply is reasonable in Klaipėda region, there are no clear indications about the demand of the HEI students and graduates in other regions, including Vilnius, the location of another HEI branch. Therefore, it is unclear whether there is a specific need to conduct study programs in the Vilnius branch, as the only clear rationale seems to be the convenient location for students living in Vilnius.

The HEI would benefit from more comprehensive strategy on developing skills related to regional demands. Although current connections with social partners are rather strong, the HEI could focus more on developing more Klaipėda region focused strategy (including maritime law and / or related specializations).

There is also clear evidence of the HEI's understanding of the importance of international studies. The administrative staff is actively exploring ways to enhance students' willingness to travel abroad.

Furthermore, the HEI has implemented a system of incentives to encourage students to engage in research activities. The provision of an additional point to the final thesis grade for students who write and present papers in the annual conference is noteworthy. However, the Panel suggests that the incentive system could benefit from clearer and more regulated internal regulations regarding how precisely the grade is adjusted based on a student's scientific contributions.

Social partners have also directly requested the HEI to research specific topics. This implies practice-focused research conducted by students, improving the skills actually needed in the market.

The Panel commends the HEI's efforts to establish a comprehensive system of self-assessment. During the site visit, experts were shown the Moodle environment with course examples, clear descriptions of goals, necessary information, deadlines, and self-assessment questions after every class. The HEI's goal to implement this approach in all courses is promising.

The Panel underscores that all members of the teaching staff are required to take a specialized course on educational methods at Klaipėda University. This collaboration between the HEI and the University ensures a more standardized teaching approach among the teaching staff and, consequently, higher-quality teaching.

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

Factual situation

Considering the need to combine studies and work, the HEI students are given the opportunity to choose free lecture attendance (SER, p. 32). The HEI's premises in Klaipėda are accessible to people with mobility and visual impairments (SER, p. 32).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The branch in Klaipėda has implemented the necessary improvements required to support students with special needs. However, the Panel encountered challenges in conducting a comprehensive assessment of the facilities at the Vilnius branch. Despite limited space, the HEI administration has successfully met the basic requirements for accommodating students with special needs. This includes the provision of essential equipment that is actively utilized and a designated children's room, accessible to both teaching and administrative staff, as well as students with older children.

Moreover, the HEI offers financial support measures to students with special needs.

In light of these efforts, the Panel commends the HEI for its commitment to supporting students with special needs and suggests that further assessment and enhancements in the Vilnius branch facilities are necessary to ensure uniform accessibility and inclusivity across all branches.

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

Factual situation

The HEI carries out the following internal surveys: "1. assessment of the content and quality of teaching (assessed by students once a semester); 2. post-graduation evaluation of the College's performance (evaluated by alumni once a year); 3. evaluation of practice (evaluated by employers, placement supervisors in the company and the students who have completed the placement); 4. efficiency of the study process (evaluated by alumni once a year); 5. execution of study programmes (evaluated by administrative staff and teachers once a year); 6. other significant quantitative and qualitative research <...>" (SER, p. 33).

When organising the practices of students, at the end of each of them students are asked to evaluate the organisation and management of the practice, the content, and results of the practice (SER, p. 33).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Although the HEI conducts various surveys concerning student success in both their studies and internships, there is a lack of evidence indicating that the results of these surveys are communicated to interested students with the goal of promoting their academic progress.

Furthermore, the HEI's teaching staff utilizes cumulative grading in their lectures, with up to 40 percent of the final grade attributed to this approach, which encourages increased student engagement.

The Panel acknowledges the regular one-hour meetings between the administration and students to discuss their teaching experiences. However, the current system for supervising and monitoring students' study progress lacks systematic tracking of students who may not be actively engaging in their study programs or who are falling behind. The surveys and communication efforts seem to be primarily focused on students who are already actively participating. There is room for improvement in developing a more comprehensive system for identifying and addressing non-active respondents to provide better support and guidance to all students, including those who may be struggling or disengaged.

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

Factual situation

The College carries out regular monitoring of students' employment and graduates' careers. Every year since 2012, a survey of graduates on employment and career is carried out. A survey is published on the College website, where graduates can express their observations about career opportunities and express their opinion about the study programme. Each year, the Alumni Club organises alumni days to keep in touch with former students (SER, p. 34).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

LTVK has demonstrated a close and active cooperation with its local partners, which includes involvement of the partners via different activities (such as Round Table, Curriculum Committee, etc. (SER, pp 48-49)) in the process of regularly updating the content of the courses offered in the field of law. It has become evident to the expert panel, through the meetings with the social partners, that they are aware and remain active in the following cooperation. However, such cooperation is largely focused on Klaipeda and it is unclear how Vilnius branch of LTVK is involved in this crucial process.

The voluntary surveys of graduates available on the HEI's website are insufficient to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current status of its graduates. While maintaining regular communication with alumni at least once a year is beneficial, it may still provide a partial view of graduates' employment situations, relying heavily on the experiences of active and successful graduates. To enhance the accuracy of their data, the HEI should improve the survey

mechanism to reach a broader audience, including graduate students who may not be actively responding to questionnaires.

It is worth noting that the HEI provides clear examples of successful graduates, both in the SER (SER, p. 34) and during the Panel's on-site meetings with alumni. Furthermore, the HEI actively engages with former students, some of whom have transitioned into becoming social partners and/or working in organizations that are social partners. This ongoing communication and relationship maintenance with alumni and social partners, while commendable, could be further strengthened.

To ensure a more comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of graduates' outcomes, the HEI should consider implementing more effective mechanisms to capture the experiences and employment statuses of a wider range of graduates, including those who may not readily participate in surveys. This will lead to a more accurate assessment of the HEI's impact on graduates and their professional development.

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

Factual situation

The HEI follows the Code of Academic Ethics, which promotes integral and ethical behaviour, objective assessment of students' work, and criticize academic cheating. The HEI pays particular attention to ensuring the transparency of studies and strictly adheres to academic ethics in its activities (SER, p. 35).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The students at the HEI seem to have a limited understanding of academic integrity. They often rely on members of the staff as their primary points of contact for various inquiries, including those related to academic integrity and appeals procedures. For academic integrity matters, students identified the director of the Academic Ethics Committee as the person to approach when facing issues. This suggests that students may benefit from a more comprehensive understanding of the institutional framework and procedures for addressing academic integrity concerns, reducing their reliance on individuals they may know personally.

While the HEI provided examples of its functional academic integrity monitoring mechanisms and shared information about real cases involving breaches of academic ethics and the associated consequences for the violators, there is room for further improvement. The HEI should consider implementing more proactive measures to educate and raise awareness among students about academic integrity, including conducting workshops, creating educational materials, and offering guidance on how to address related issues through the appropriate institutional channels. This will help foster a culture of academic integrity and self-reliance among students.

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

Factual situation

The Regulations on Appeals entitle students of all study programmes and forms of study to appeal to the Appeals Board regarding the session knowledge, objectivity of the assessment of students' practice, procedure for taking the qualification, final examination or the defence of the thesis, the assessment of the qualification, final examination, or the thesis, as well as in relation to other processes of study (SER, p. 36).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The HEI has a regulation in place regarding the appeals process. However, there is a need for improved communication and education for students regarding their rights to appeal exam results and the institutional framework governing such procedures. To enhance the effectiveness of the appeals system, the HEI should focus on providing comprehensive and easily accessible information to students. This could involve the creation of clear, user-friendly guidelines and procedures that explain how to initiate an appeal, what grounds are acceptable, and the relevant timelines.

Additionally, the institution should consider conducting awareness campaigns or workshops to ensure that students are fully informed about their rights and the processes available to them in the event of academic disputes.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Focus on regional labour demands.
2. Strong connections with regional social partners.
3. Practice-oriented teaching methods.
4. Efforts to ensure basic teaching skills (co-operation with the Klaipėda University).

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Need more student awareness about procedures related to academic integrity and appeals – more institutional approach, less informal.
2. Unclear connections with social partners from other regions than Klaipėda, especially Vilnius (referring to the location of Vilnius branch).
3. Unclear reasonableness to support labour demands of Vilnius region.
4. Lack of more comprehensive strategy to develop skills focused on Klaipėda regional specifics.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching staff are evaluated according to 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

Factual situation

The number of lecturers has increased constantly (Annex 18). The Department of Law currently employs 34 lecturers, including 1 professor, 10 associate professors, 23 lecturers (SER Table 5.1). In 2021- 2022, there were 111 students and 34 lecturers – 3 students per teacher and as many as 80% of the teachers have at least 3 years of practical work experience in the field of law. The percentage of PhD-holding lecturers in the studies of the field of Law is reaching 23% (SER p. 38) and thus more than double the legal requirement. A considerable part of staff has language skills in English or other foreign languages.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There has been a significant improvement in the number of lecturers. The low fluctuation rate allows a continuity in teaching. It is worth to mention that the percentage of scientists in the staff is more than required by law. However, it was not quite clear to what extent this scientific staff teaches in a scientific way since the number of practitioners is very high. Obviously, the College has a strong focus on practical work and on intensive teaching staff working in practice.

Since the programs are taught in Lithuanian the knowledge skill of foreign languages is an excellent additional plus but not a necessary requirement for teaching in the programs. The large number of teachers allows a good staff-students ratio which ensures intensive training and mentoring. The number, qualification and scientific, didactic and professional competence of teaching staff within the programs is adequate.

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)

Factual situation

All College lecturers are eligible to go under the Erasmus+ programme to teach in a foreign higher education institution and to develop their competences experience. In 2022 in the law department 8 visits took place. The Strategic Action Plan of the College envisages also the invitation of lecturers from other countries' higher education institutions. Lectures were held in English for 10 days, 2 contact hours per day, and students took an exam at the end of the course. Teachers of the Law field of study visited foreign HEI. The visits are seen as part are part of lifelong learning. They enhance the competences of academic staff and allow for joint publications and participation in international scientific projects (SER Annex 19, 20).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The College vividly supports the teaching staffs' academic mobility and thus the internationalisation of the programs. As already mentioned above, many lectures have language skills that enable them to profit from mobility. Students may profit from guest lecturers from abroad even if they presentations are in English despite the fact that the

programs themselves are provided in Lithuanian. This gives staff and students a good opportunity to improve their skills in English and ensures international cooperation.

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

Factual situation

Every academic year a Quality Day is fixed and the academic staff of the Studies of the field of Law has the opportunity to participate in methodological seminars. Newly recruited teachers have the opportunity to improve their qualifications. According to legislation lectures must qualify every five years for a renewal of their contracts. The Academic Council of the College determines the qualification requirements. In September of each year the Head of the Department has to develop for each lecturer an activity plan which is discussed and is the basis for annual reports and evaluation.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The regular annual meetings organised by the College may help to improve the competences of the teaching staff. Participation in methodological seminars does not seem to be mandatory, but the dependence on the renewal of the contract every five years is a strong incentive for teachers to improve their competences. The special offer for newly recruited staff is certainly an efficient support for beginners.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The College intends to have a good ratio between teachers and students.
2. Despite the fact that programs are in Lithuanian there are incentives for students to make use of English either in special courses or with invited guest teachers from abroad.
3. The annual Quality Day is a good means to improve the methodological skills of teaching staff but should be mandatory for all teachers.
4. It is also positive that staff has to provide a detailed report for the next year that allows an effective planning for students and administration. For staff it is also a suitable opportunity for self-reflection on their didactic concept, personal knowledge and preferences.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There is an intensive cooperation and relationship with practitioners teaching at the College. Some of them are very specialised and a good part of them are also supervisor in internship or even thesis. Having in mind the social partners' high demand for qualified personnel, students are in danger to choose in a very early stage a path into a special field of law. This early choice might prevent students from making valuable experiences in other fields of law and create a sort of "professional idiots" who do not have the broad spectrum of law in view or in mind.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Study field learning facilities and resources are evaluated according to the following indicators:

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

Factual situation

The HEI uses well equipped facilities both in Klaipėda and Vilnius. The Panel was not able to visit Vilnius branch. Klaipėda subdivision has 13 classrooms with a total capacity of 550 seats, Vilnius subdivision has 13 classrooms with a total capacity of 250 seats. The Klaipėda branch has five information technology classrooms, and the Vilnius Branch has two information technology classrooms with 75 and 42 computerised workstations with the latest software (SER, p. 42).

Since 2017, the college has been providing students and staff with the opportunity to install and use Microsoft Office 365 on their personal computers for free for the duration of their work or study. A fibre-optic cable has been installed, and wireless internet access is available in all college premises for the convenience of students and lecturers.

The college regularly subscribes to the INFOLEX database so that students can read legislation free of charge, as well as find relevant case law and various court interpretations. It also provides students with access to electronic sources of literature, which are available in various databases EBSCO, electronic library of other universities – Mykolas Romeris, Kaunas University of Technology, etc.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The facilities at the HEI are quite well developed and efficiently utilized, despite being housed in a relatively small building. The Panel commends the HEI's efforts to optimize room usage, enhancing efficiency.

While the HEI has invested in modern equipment suitable for interactive and hybrid lectures, some of the equipment may not be deemed necessary. For instance, the room with interactive multiple-choice equipment raises questions about the rationale for such an investment, especially when analogous software is available at a lower cost.

Moreover, the establishment of the Forensic Laboratory, equipped with basic tools for class activities, is a valuable addition to the institution's resources.

The HEI's provision of high-quality Wi-Fi and its connection to information networks via fiber-optic cable are notable. However, there is room for improvement in the library, which would benefit from refurbishment, more up-to-date printed sources, and additional resources to enhance the overall learning environment. Additionally, a review of the necessity and cost-effectiveness of specific equipment and technology investments could optimize resource allocation and benefit the institution.

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

Factual situation

The planning, allocation and rational use of financial and material resources is based on the HEI strategic planning. The Strategic Action Plan for 2016–2020 approved 4 strategic programmes, while the Strategic Action Plan for 2020–2025 approved the strategic fields of activities (SER, p 42).

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The HEI exhibits a well-developed approach to planning and resource upgrading, with clear plans and supporting evidence for their financing. While the HEI has articulated clear plans for investing in hardware, it is essential to acknowledge the importance of also enhancing software and library resources. Students' needs are continually evolving, and access to the latest materials is crucial for their academic progress. However, the funds allocated for the renewal of library resources appear to be rather limited (SER, p. 45).

The institution's emphasis on hardware over library resources is evident, and there is a noticeable persistence in this approach. Despite past recommendations from experts regarding the need to increase library resources, the HEI continues to prioritize investments in hardware and computers over bolstering the library's materials (SER, p. 46). To better align with the evolving needs of students and enhance the overall learning experience, it is advisable for the HEI to reconsider its resource allocation strategy and place a more balanced focus on software and library resources alongside its investments in hardware. This approach will better serve the academic community's requirements and facilitate a comprehensive learning environment.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Efficient use of the premises – all space is reasonably dedicated to study purposes (in the Klaipėda branch).
2. Attempts to ensure exceptional accessibility to people with special needs.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The library premises and printed collections seem a little outdated.
2. The financing strategy prioritizes hardware over library sources.
3. No precise data about physical library and quality of study and leisure areas in Vilnius branch.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

Factual situation

Internal quality assurance at LTVK is organised in accordance with the Integrated Quality Manual of the college and is based on the Law on Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania. Strategic development and communication according to the goals set in the Strategic Action Plan of the college are coordinated by the Strategic Development and Communication department, while Study Department is responsible administration of the study process and the internships, and Centre for Distance Learning is responsible for distance learning study process, including Moodle administration. The quality assurance is coordinated by the Deputy Director of LTVK for Studies and Quality. Study programme committees are responsible for the quality and content of the study programmes. An annual internal audit is conducted to assess the compliance with the set standards. Different stakeholders are involved in regular meetings within Curriculum Committee and Round Table events. The students of LTVK are surveyed two times an academic year, however first-year students are additionally surveyed after the first week of their studies.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The management structure and task division among the LTVK structural units, as well as Deputy Director for Studies and Quality, as well as introduced schemes allow LTVK to administer relevant internal quality assurance process. The involvement of the academic personnel, the students, graduates and social partners seems to be productive, however it was evident to the expert panel from the meetings with the different groups that such communication remains often too vertical directly with the LTVK top management, rather than through established mechanisms, which carries risks related to the transparency, anonymity and functionality issues. LTVK has introduced an Academic Ethics Committee, which consists of four members of LTVK and one external member, however it appeared to the expert panel that the students of LTVK lack information about the Committee and mechanisms to approach it, instead opting to contact LBC top management directly. LTVK management has demonstrated to the expert panel its active involvement in the management of Vilnius branch of the college, however it remained unclear to the experts how the difference between academic personnel involved, social partners, organised events, are managed to ensure the harmonisation in quality. Expert panel believes that these aspects are fundamental shortcomings that shall be eliminated.

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

Factual situation

Different stakeholders are involved in internal quality assurance at LTVK through different mechanisms, such as Curriculum Committee, annual Round Table events, Quality Day, specifically organised meetings with the LTVK management. Feedback is collected on how to improve study programmes and implemented accordingly. Programme content-related

suggestions are submitted to Study Programme Committee for the implementation the necessary changes, which analyses those and submits final proposal for the Academic Council for approval.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Top management of LTVK has a strong connection to the different stakeholders, communication through different mechanisms appears to be working and stakeholders are motivated to contribute. Top management of LTVK appears to be very active in the communication with the different stakeholders and academic community, alumni and social partners are eager to contribute. However, even though it produces desired results in communication with social partners and alumni, as it became evident to the expert panel, and is a very positive aspect, at the same time such direct involvement with the students and their lack of knowledge about other mechanisms to approach eventual problems, creates potential risks for transparent, effective and fair resolution.

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

Factual situation

Information is regularly collected from the different stakeholders and communicated in established manner. Furthermore, information is also collected from the Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA), in order to improve the quality and introduce necessary changes to the study process and content. Information on collected data, feedback, as well as implemented changes are made public during the Quality Day, as well as through the Management Report is published annually. Relevant information is shared via the college's website.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

LTVK has established an effective system of collecting, using and publishing the information about the studies, as well as changes implemented. The college has an easy-to-navigate website in both, Lithuanian and English languages, where information appears to be shared regularly related different issues. At appears to the expert panel, after meeting different stakeholders, that they are very active in their communication with LTVK and are well-informed about the implemented changes at the college.

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

Factual situation

LTVK collects the opinion of its students primarily from the student surveys, carried out twice a year, after every semester, while first-year students have additional survey after the first week of the first semester of their studies. Based on the data collected at the end of autumn semester of the 2020-21 academic year, for example, over 89% of the respondents agree that LTVK aims to train creative and competent professionals, over 90% agreed that LTVK offers international opportunities, etc. While based on the feedback collected at the end of the

following semester, spring semester of the 2020-21 academic year, 92% of the respondents agreed that lecturers provide a clear introduction to the subject programme, sources of 92% information and how to find them, in the first session, 89% believed that they are encouraged to work actively during lectures using innovative teaching 89 methods (e.g. case studies, problem-based learning, project activities, group work, creative assignments, etc.), etc.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

From the meetings with the students at LTVK, it appeared to the expert panel that students are largely satisfied with their studies, content and the administration of the study process. The students find direct communication with the LTVK top management to be effective and useful in their studies, as well as future career opportunities, as LBC helps them establish necessary contacts on the labour market. However, despite the fact that students appreciate the direct communication with management, a more structured and transparent mechanism should be implemented.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There is a very active communication with the social partners and their involvement in the study process and implementation of the necessary changes to improve it is evident.
2. Publication of the information related to the changes implemented, as well as its communication directly to the relevant stakeholders.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Very direct and vertical communication with the students and their lack of knowledge on other mechanisms to approach eventual problems, other than simply directly communicating those to the top management of LBC.
2. Lack of balance when it comes to involvement of the different stakeholders, especially social partners, between Klaipeda and Vilnius branch of LTVK.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the transparency of cooperation between Klaipeda and Vilnius branch. • Demands and influences of practice should not prevail the academic approach. • Encourage to choose topics for thesis that are not closely related to the region.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce a strategy action plan in order to further develop Vadyba journal, with the goal to have it indexed in more and higher level international and local databases. • Abolish the system when students receive additional grade for their final thesis due to the fact they have presented it at the student conference organised by LTVK. • Within internal courses of qualification improvement, offer specific course on improving international publishing output for the academic personnel. • Introduce mechanism to clearly balance quality of research activities and the level of involvement between Klaipeda and Vilnius branch.
Student admission and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the conditions of mobility for students to make sure they meet the students' needs. Promote more short-term mobility possibilities for students. • Create separate individual study schedules for part-time students, since they are not able to attend classes with full-time students. • Try to reduce overly high levels of subordination and hierarchy in the college. • College could promote the psychological help it offers for the students more efficiently.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create the framework for engaging Vilnius regional social partners • To survey Vilnius region market demands that would ground opening of Vilnius branch. • To develop more programs that engage specifics of Klaipėda market demands, considering specificity of the region labour market.
Teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equilibrate scientific and academic teaching and avoid preponderance of practice.
Learning facilities and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To updated library with more up-to-date printed collections.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop financing resources strategy, by focusing more on legal sources, scholarly and practical material that bring knowledge to students and teaching staff.
<p>Study management and public information quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote existing mechanisms of horizontal management. • Promote functioning, role and mechanisms to approach the Academic Ethics Committee of LTVK. • Balance involvement of the social partners in the content and the study process, including offering the internships, between Klaipeda and Vilnius branch. • Strengthen student body, promote it as a link between students and LTVK.

V. SUMMARY

This External Evaluation Report has been composed by the expert panel based on the detailed analysis of Self Evaluation Report and additional materials provided by the Lithuanian Business College, as well as based on the observation and interviews conducted during the panel's site-visit. The expert panel would like to thank LTVK for their efforts in providing all necessary information and engaging in honest and open discussions during the site-visit.

LTVK's mission is ambitious, aiming to produce highly qualified specialists with a focus on recent technological advancements. The college encourages practical experience, supports academic and teacher mobility within the EU, and envisions contributing to a European Education Area by 2025. However, certain details concerning the branch in Vilnius lack clarity, with concerns raised about staff interactions, teaching organization, involvement of the social partners and student activities.

The study programme in Law at LBC aim to address the labour market demand for legal professionals, offering curricula that provide in-depth insights into various legal fields. The programmes emphasize cooperation with social partners and practical stages to enhance employability. The Law and Law Enforcement programmes, while having a narrower focus, have been validated by social partners who confirm the demand for experts in relevant fields related to the programmes. Both programmes are seen as meeting the needs of the labour market. LTVK provides relevant materials to the students and the academic personnel, providing with the latest legal developments. The emphasis on practical performance is noted, but a potential drawback is a regional focus, limiting exposure to broader perspectives. Efforts to improve research output have been made, but there's a need for more resources, seminars, and clarity on publishing priorities. Furthermore, research activities, largely concentrated in Klaipeda, may impact the Vilnius branch's contribution.

The college follows national guidelines for student admission, but issues arise in promoting student mobility and information about exchange opportunities. Adequate social, financial, and personal support is acknowledged, but there are concerns about part-time students' study process organisation. The practical impact on students' professional careers is acknowledged. The college's efforts to support students with special needs are commended. Monitoring of students' study progress lacks a systematic approach, and there's room for improvement in communicating survey results and engaging non-active students.

LTVK's management demonstrates active involvement with stakeholders, however the direct communication with students being mostly the case carries risks of transparency and fairness, even if the interviewed students have demonstrated their satisfaction with the existing mechanism. Therefore, strengthening independent mechanisms and bodies for feedback is necessary, therefore more structured approach to student complaints is suggested.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Dr. Archil Chochia

(signature)