



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of LAW

at Marijampolės kolegija

Expert panel:

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Law and Public Procurement</i>
State code	6531KX006
Type of studies	College studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time, 3 years Part-time, 4 years
Credit volume	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Law
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	2011-06-17 2019-03-25

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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 *17th October, 2023*.

Prof. dr. Achim Albrecht (panel chairperson), *Professor of European and International Business Law, University of Westphalia, Germany;*

Prof. dr. Petra Foubert, *Dean, Faculty of Law, Hasselt University, Belgium;*

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Ms Kristina Cipkuvienė, *Managing Associate at UAB "Teisės riba", 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.	Strategic Action Plan for 2021-2025 and Development Guidelines for 2030 of Marijampole University of Applied Sciences

1.4. BACKGROUND OF LAW FIELD STUDIES AT MARIJAMPOLĖS KOLEGIJA

Marijampolė kolegija (MK) is a public legal entity and a Higher Education Institution under the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania. It has 2 Faculties; the Faculty of Education Studies and Social Work and the Faculty of Business and Technology. The Faculties have two Departments each.

The Law and Public Procurement study is supervised by the Department of Law, Management and Communication. The Project Activity and International Partnership Department provides information on project applications for EU Structural Funds, cooperation with foreign educational institutions and mobilities. The Study Field Law runs projects, exchanges and conferences on the basis of scientific research on a national and cross-border level.

The last external evaluation was that of study programmes. It took place in 2019. The programme 'Law and Public Procurement' was accredited by order of the Director of the SKVC on the 2020.02.20.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the *Law* study field at Marijampolės 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	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	2
6.	Learning facilities and resources	2
7.	Study quality management and public information	2
	Total:	17

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

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

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

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

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

Factual situation

The aim of the programme is to train the legal professionals needed in the region and the country for practical work in the public, non-governmental and private sectors, with a broad range of theoretical and practical knowledge of the nature and purpose of law, and the management of public procurement processes and procedures, the principles and content of the various branches of law, the development, interpretation and application of these norms, sufficient independent and team-working skills, the ability to analyse, research, innovate and apply them in their professional activities, and an understanding of the importance of continuous professional development (SER p. 17).

The specific focus on public procurement has been inserted into the programme in 2019. The decision to move away from the previous three specialisations (Pre-litigation Investigation; Police Activities; International Business Law) was inspired by the increasing volume of public procurement in the country's GDP (11,4% in 2020), the rapid development of public procurement law and the position of the Lithuanian State Audit Office (2018 State Audit Report) as well as the European Commission that well-trained public procurement professionals are essential in order to safeguard public finances and the image of public procurement. A labour market analysis and meetings with social partners have confirmed that the aim and learning outcomes of the programme are valid and appropriate (SER p. 23-27).

Expert judgement/analysis

Although the focus on public procurement was suggested by the social partners in 2019 there is some concern whether this focus adds to the (country-wide and/or regional) attractiveness of the programme. Student enrolment has remained quite modest over the previous three years (Annex 5) and students and graduates highlight that they opted for the programme for proximity reasons and not for its focus on public procurement. In addition, the majority of graduates seems to find a job in the regional public sector (courts, municipalities, waste management, fire brigade, ...), with a striking presence of graduates in sectors related to criminal law (prisons, police stations, probation offices, prosecutor's offices, ...).

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 aim of the programme (see 1.1.) is to a certain extent in line with MK's mission to provide collegiate and short-term studies that meet the needs of the region and international standards, based on professional practice and applied research, to provide students with conditions for obtaining a professional bachelor's degree, to ensure a modern study environment, a wide range of lifelong learning and career development opportunities, and to ensure the coherence of international and social partnerships (SER p. 29).

The programme is to a certain extent in line with 'High value-added studies and research applications' set out in MK's strategic guidelines 2030 (SER p. 31) and is linked with MK's Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 (1) to provide high quality, high value-added studies that meet the needs of the regional labour market and (2) to strengthen the internationalisation of MK's studies in order to become a full participant of the European study and research area (SER p. 32).

Expert judgement/analysis

Given the rather moderate number of students in the programme, there is some concern that the programme may not have found yet the focus that fully meets the needs of the region, as per MK's mission. The stated labour market demand for graduates with specific knowledge of public procurement is not (yet) translated into an intake of students with a specific demand for that specialisation. MK might want to conduct a more in-depth labour market analysis as well as start more thorough marketing of its programme on law and public procurement.

As far as MK's mission regarding internationalisation is concerned, the programme on law and public procurement still needs an approach to internationalisation that can boost the support of both students and teachers (compare also to the recommendations made during the last external evaluation). At this moment, students and teachers are not sufficiently imbued with the importance of internationalisation for their respective careers, which contrasts with MK's mission and strategy. Solutions need to be found for students' and teachers' main concerns in this respect: the difficulty of combining internationalisation with family duties/other professional obligations and the belief that catering for the needs of the region renders internationalisation superfluous. Knowledge of English is a point of attention, as well as the limited number of credits for European and international law subjects.

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

Factual situation

The Law and Public Procurement programme at MK is a study programme of 180 credits that can be taken up full time (3 years, 60 credits per year) or part-time (4 years, 45 credits per year) (SER p. 37). It has existed since 2011 and leads up to a professional bachelor's degree in law.

In line with the Law on Higher Education and Research (30 April 2009), the programme is a first cycle programme offered by a college/institute of higher education and prepares for

professional activities. Its scope in ECTS is within the ranges required by the Minister's Orders of 30 December 2016 (V-1168), arts. 9 and 21, and of 13 October 2020 (V-1557), Art. 7 and 8, as represented in the table below. The table is based on the info provided in the SER and in Annex 2.

At MK 1 ECTS corresponds to 26.67 hours of student work (SER n° 43).

Table No. 1 Study programme's *Law and Public Procurement* 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
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	156 ECTS (including thesis, publ. procurement courses and internships)
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	24 ECTS (electives and general college courses)
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	12 ECTS
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	45%
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	No info available
Individual learning/independent work	No less than 30 % of learning	55%

Expert judgement/ analysis

The programme is compliant with the relevant Lithuanian legal requirements for a first-cycle programme in law at college level.

Public procurement courses take up 18 ECTS of the programme, which is only 10% of the total amount of ECTS.

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

Factual situation

The programme's learning outcomes are aligned with the description of the learning outcomes of the first study cycle as laid down, in general terms, in the Minister's Order of 16 November 2016 (V-1012), and involve (1) knowledge and its application, (2) research skills, (3) special skills, (4) social skills and (5) personal skills. On a deeper level, the programme's learning agreements are in line with the special learning outcomes for first cycle college studies in law (Minister's Order of 13 October 2020 (V-1557)). In Annex 1 (SER) the learning outcomes of the Law and Public Procurement programme are enumerated and paired to the different study programme subjects. The programme features two learning outcomes that are additional to what is legally required: 1.8. [The graduate of the programme] possesses knowledge of public procurement law and [is] able to apply it successfully to a wide range of public procurement issues. 3.3. [The graduate of the programme is] able to organise public procurement in a competent manner, to analyse and evaluate procurement situations, and to deal promptly and effectively with problems arising in public procurement relations.

According to the SER, teaching/learning methods are appropriate for the acquisition of the aspired knowledge and the development of the intended competences. The study of law and public procurement is reportedly based on a synthesis of lecturing and independent study, thus ensuring a link between the content of the studies and the methods of study. The study process applies and combines a variety of teaching and study methods: traditional and interactive lecture, activity-based methods (e.g. discussion, practical content-based learning, problem-oriented teaching, simulation, etc.), methods that promote independent study (e.g. comprehension of the material, reflection, case study, problem solving, simulation), methods that encourage exploratory learning (e.g. exploratory learning based on problem-oriented learning (e.g. observing and discussing court hearings with court representatives, simulations of court proceedings, analysis of case material, etc.), etc. (SER p.50).

Assessment methods reflect the diversity of teaching/ learning methods. Guiding principles for the design of assessment methods include coherence with learning methods and relevance of the assessment tasks to the content of the learning outcome. Two examples are given in the SER (p. 53).

Expert judgement/ analysis

Although Annex 1 pairs to each of the programme's learning outcomes a number of study subjects, the SER and its annexes contain only limited information on the teaching/ learning methods that are used in every subject, nor on the related assessment methods. The expert panel had no access to the Moodle platform in order to check whether the content of the subjects as well as their teaching/learning and assessment methods are sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes. However, students confirmed that this info is readily available in the subject descriptions on the Moodle platform and that the teachers amply communicate on how the subject is organised and assessed (e.g. during consultations). Teachers highlighted that teaching/learning and assessment methods are very diverse and include both traditional and more innovative methods. Management indicated that the choice of such methods is left to the teachers, as they are in the best position to make an informed choice. Although it certainly is laudable to put trust in the teachers, a better overview at management level of the used teaching/learning and assessment methods for each subject is advisable. From that perspective, Annex 2 contains very useful yet incomplete information. The expert panel considers that the very wide discretion of individual teachers when it comes to the used teaching/ learning and assessment methods is a fundamental shortcoming that shall be addressed.

The two learning outcomes that are related to public procurement have been added at the request of the previous external evaluation. There is no indication, however, that the curriculum features the 'holistic' concept of public procurement that was requested by the previous external evaluators. The expert panel believes that this is a fundamental shortcoming that needs to be addressed.

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

Annex 2 (SER) shows a logical arrangement of the programme's subjects, starting with general subjects and moving on to varied subjects in the study field of law and, eventually, public procurement subjects (from the third semester onwards).

Basic skills are reportedly consistently developed and include skills related to the ability to work individually and in a team, to communicate and cooperate, to be proactive, to justify and defend one's opinions, etc. Courses that the SER refers to in this respect include Culture of Lithuanian Language, Foreign Language, Professional Ethics and Introduction to Studies, Theory of Law, Logic, Constitutional Law, etc. (SER p. 59). Reference is also made to elective courses in other fields and, as far as the research skills are concerned, to the thesis (as from the fifth semester) (SER p. 61). Students undertake 4 internships (professional practice placements), during the last 4 semesters of the programme, for a total of 30 ECTS. One of the internships is in a public procurement entity. During the internship students are to get acquainted with the activities of law enforcement institutions (SER p. 62).

Expert judgement/ analysis

It is hard to check the aim of consistent development of knowledge and competences throughout the different subjects given the fact that the specific subject descriptions are only available on Moodle. Several subjects focus on the development of basic skills and competences (e.g. Foreign Language, Professional Ethics). It is less clear from the curriculum which subjects focus on the development of legal competences and legal research skills. These are reportedly developed through the different field subjects. Students have confirmed that they are prepared for legal writing in several of their subjects; the same goes for case analysis. It is important, however, for management to have a better view on the skills development that individual teachers are involved in. The expert panel considers that the very wide discretion of individual teachers in this regard is a fundamental shortcoming that needs to be addressed. With regard to the practice placements, it would be advisable to invest in a concrete description of the differences between the 4 types of practice placements.

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

The SER lists several opportunities for students to personalise their curriculum.

Students can choose from a list of free elective courses, for a total of 9 ECTS. The list is adjusted annually and published on the MK website (SER p. 64), yet was not available to the expert panel.

The following principles should lead the students' choices:

- the first choice shall be from among the subjects designed to enhance students' ability to communicate in foreign languages;
- the second choice from the list of general college subjects aimed at developing information management skills, general competences and co-cultural awareness;
- a third choice from the list of subjects in the field of study for the development of professional competences.

Students can choose the topic of their final thesis, that should be related to the field of study programme and/ or specialisation. Students can also choose the places for their 4 practice placements.

Expert judgement/ analysis

Elective courses seem to cover a wide number of subjects. Some of them relate to competence development, which should actually be better monitored at the level of the curriculum (see 1.5.). Choice of competences to be developed cannot be left to the students' own choice alone.

Students who would be interested in international mobility should be given concrete opportunities within their curriculum, e.g. in the form of a mobility window assuring them that participating in international mobility will not cause difficulties for them in the form of

increased workload or non-recognition of credits. Short-term mobility opportunities need to be considered.

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

Factual situation

The final thesis is to demonstrate the student's independent ability to relate the individual courses, to systematise the acquired theoretical knowledge, and to collect and analyse the data necessary to solve specific problems of professional activity (SER p. 67). Students are requested to enumerate the learning outcomes they intend to demonstrate in the final thesis and its presentation. Annex 3 (SER) provides an overview of the final theses for 2020-2022 graduates.

The requirements for the final thesis are laid down in the MK Regulations (SER p. 68). The topic of the thesis must be related to the study field or the specialisation. The thesis must be publicly defended and is assessed by a Qualification Commission set up by the Rector and consisting of at least 5 persons. The student's final grade shall consist of the reviewer's assessment (30%) and the arithmetic average of the assessments of the members of the Qualification Commission (70%) (SER p. 72).

Expert judgement/ analysis

Although the expert panel had no access to MK regulations, the panel has a good view on how the final thesis is organised at MK, based on the discussions it had with the different groups of stakeholders. The fact that Annex 3 lists very few topics in the public procurement field is explained by the fact that the programme on Law and Public procurement only started in 2019. As a consequence, the first big wave of graduates is still to come, as highlighted by senior management.

It is somehow surprising that students can decide for themselves which learning outcomes they want to demonstrate through the final thesis. This could clarify why the 'final thesis' subject is not listed in Annex 1, which connects the learning outcomes of the programme with the different subjects. It is necessary, however, to make sure that also the subject of the final thesis is mentioned in this overview and is linked to the learning outcomes of the programme.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The Law and Public Procurement programme is firmly embedded in the region. There is a good connection with local youngsters to try and convince them to study at MK. Students and graduates are proud to study/ have studied within this programme. MK's mission to connect with the region has clearly been rolled out in this programme.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Student enrolment has remained relatively moderate over the past years, notwithstanding the introduction of a focus on public procurement.

2. The curriculum does not feature a 'holistic' concept of public procurement, as already requested by the previous external evaluators.
3. Although MK's Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 highlights the importance of internationalisation, students and teachers are not yet sufficiently imbued with the importance of internationalisation for their respective careers.
4. Too much is being left to the discretion of individual teachers when it comes to the consistent development of knowledge and competences and the used teaching/ learning and assessment methods. From that perspective, Annex 2 contains very useful yet incomplete information. On the other hand, choice of competences to be developed is also left too much in the students' hands, by way of elective programme subjects and by leaving them the choice of competences to be developed in the 'Final Thesis' subject.

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

Factual situation

MK's Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 includes the objective "Developing research and development". In order to achieve this goal, MK develops cooperation with regional, national and international partners, conducting R&D activities in clusters, carrying out consultancy activities, conducting applied research, preparing scientific publications, publishing the scientific journal "Homo-Societas-Technologiae" (H-S-T) and organising scientific conferences (SER p. 76) .

In 2020, 11 research papers were submitted for evaluation in the Lithuanian Research Council's system of evaluation of the results of scientific (artistic) activities in the field of Law, 1 of which was prepared in the field of Law. In 2021, 21 research papers were submitted for evaluation, 1 of which was in the field of Law, and in 2022, 43 research papers were submitted for evaluation, 10 of which were in the field of Law. According to the annual formal evaluation of the research papers, the scores for the credited research papers are 20.87 points in 2020 and 27.07 points in 2021 (SER p. 83) .

MK closely cooperates with law enforcement institutions and their representatives during its research and study activities (SER p. 92).

Expert judgement/analysis

During the meeting with the Senior Management and Faculty Administration Staff, the expert panel did not get the impression that the visibility of research achievements in the assessed field in the MK is quite important in ensuring a sufficient connection between scientific activity

and study content. Only a few teachers mentioned that they have participated in research activities.

12 articles in the field of law in the period 2020-2022 (p. 83 of the SER), for a total of 2.23 FTEs of lecturers in the field of law (p. 189 of the SER). This means that in 3 years there are 5.38 scientific articles per law lecturer FTE. The expert group took into account and evaluated all the information about the involvement of teachers in scientific research activities. Preparation of publications is only one of the evaluation criteria. Although the number of publications per teacher is not low, the fact remains that the involvement of teachers in scientific activities in assessing the involvement of teachers in general remains sufficient and cannot be considered sufficient and must be increased, increasing the number of full-time teachers. This fact did not encourage the expert group to award more points for this criterion than indicated in the report.

Although the quality of MK research by the Lithuanian Research Council's system of evaluation of the results of scientific (artistic) activities in the field of Law was assessed as sufficient, more attention should be paid to the long-term sustainability of scientific activities by involving more teachers both at the national and international level and by expanding the relevant coverage of scientific research for the content of law studies.

Research activities at the national level are insufficient and should be improved by expanding cooperation with external partners and teachers from other countries.

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

Factual situation

The content of each study consists of the content of the subjects taught in the study programme and its objectification in the teaching process. Lecturers encourage students to use the latest scientific publications for the preparation of independent and final theses, to use the EBSCOhost database and foreign open access resources (<https://marko.lt/informacijos-ir-studiju-saltiniu-centras/>), which contain the latest scientific achievements. The lecturers teaching in the Law and Public Procurement Programme consistently and systematically follow the innovations in legal regulation, amendments to legal acts, and are interested in the latest scientific production. Accordingly, they strive to implement the latest scientific achievements, innovations in legal regulation, and to transfer them into the content of the study subject and teaching process. The content of the taught subjects is constantly updated in response to the social changes taking place in the society and the state (SER p. 105).

Expert judgement/analysis

MK has been regularly organising scientific conferences with presentations on the topic of legal science, and in 2022 the Scientific Conference was dedicated specifically to the topicality of law, state, and public procurement.

On Experts panel meeting teachers ensured that the programme's lecturers integrate their scientific production into the study process, i.e. they use their scientific articles in the teaching of their subjects, which shows that the content of the study programme relates to the result of the scientific research carried out by the faculty.

Anyway, Experts panel would like to mention for recommendation level that when assessing whether the content of the study program corresponds to the latest scientific achievements, it should be noted that modern research by employees of the law and public procurement program is also an important aspect in order to maintain the connection between the content of the program and the latest scientific and technological achievements, therefore, MK teachers needs to be encouraged to participate in research only at the national level (as isn't demand to participate in international level by law, as MK is not university), to use more areas of applied science so that law and public procurement students can use them as learning tools.

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

Factual situation

The SER describes a number of practical/applied areas in which students in the program are involved. The MK annually organised student conferences, where the latest scientific and technological achievements in the field of law are publicised, encouraging the writing of scientific articles and reports. The studies are focused on the formation of students' skills in applied science. During their studies, students get to know the requirements for the preparation of written works, the main methods of social research and learn to conduct applied research and present it. Students deepen their research skills by writing coursework and theses.

It should be noted that students' involvement in scientific and project activities is encouraged by prizes, nominal scholarships and letters of appreciation established by the founders (SER p. 109).

Expert judgement/analysis

From meeting with students (most of whom were first-year students), the expert group got the impression that students are not interested in participating in research activities, even if they are encouraged by bonuses, named scholarships established by the founders or letters of thanks. Out of the student body, only one student could say that he had read a paper whose title he could not remember. Students could not name in what ways they are encouraged to participate in research activities. The impression was made that students do not receive encouraging communication from teachers to participate in scientific research activities. The

involvement of teachers in scientific research activities at the national and international level should be strengthened, showing the benefits of scientific research to students, attracting them to topics of interest.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The studies are oriented towards the development of students' skills in research application.
2. Close cooperation with regional social partners in organising joint scientific and practical events, preparing scientific publications.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. MK's strategic measures do not ensure sufficient involvement of teachers and students in scientific research activities.

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

Factual situation

The admission to the law study programmes is carried out in accordance with the general provisions of the Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for General Admission Organisation (LAMA BPO) and the admission rules of MK.

Persons with a secondary education or the equivalent can apply for admission.

The whole process is in large part governed by the laws of Lithuania. These and the MK procedures are published on the MK website for public and transparent access.

All features of the chosen studies are described in detail. The Student Admission Counselling Centre is freely accessible to give further information and any advice needed. The Open Information and Guidance System (AIKOS), information via social networks, career days, information for schools, student fairs etc. also help largely to disseminate information.

Social partners are also multipliers for the study programme. The trend in decreasing student numbers seems to have been stopped or shows stable figures as the analysis of application and admission figures show.

The competition score of applicants to study programmes is formed according to the 'Description of the procedure for the formation of the queue of the best graduates of secondary education programme', approved by the Order of the relevant Ministry. MK complied with the

minimum score requirement for admission to both state-funded and non-state funded study places until 2022. In 2022, a minimum entrance competition score of 2 was applied for admission to non state funded study places, irrespective of the year of completion of secondary education.

Expert judgement/analysis

In the discussions with management and students it could be established that the admission process at MK adheres to the relevant laws of Lithuania and the procedures are transparent, not overly complicated and communicated widely and freely accessible.

The students voiced that any questions or problems could be openly discussed with the Student Admission Counselling Centre or on an individual basis be derived from a wealth of information through the Open Information and Guidance System.

Students verified that MK within the MK regional setting is well known and present in the interested public. All possible channels and dissemination possibilities are used.

Students verified that offered information was not outdated and completed.

Although the admission rules are clear and transparent, it can be noted that enrolment numbers are quite low.

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

Academic recognition is carried out by the SKVC according to the documents handed in by the student. After a positive recognition, the entry grade of the student is calculated using the SKVC grade transfer tool.

Academic recognition of foreign qualifications is done by SKVC. For the crediting of partial study results, MK runs a formalised process laid down in MKS QMS Study Results Administration Procedure.

Also possible is the process of the assessment of recognition of learning achievements acquired through non-formal or informal learning. If the MK formalised procedure assessing those achievements leads to recognition the achievements can be credited.

All information on such crediting possibilities and the respective procedures are published on the MK website and freely accessible. First year students are also informed. The chairperson of the study programme and the Head of Department are of assistance in the application procedure and the general paperwork that needs to be handed in order to get recognition.

Expert judgement/analysis

To the satisfaction of the panel the discussion session with students has verified that MK is most helpful and supportive in recognizing and crediting partial study results and as a feature of

lifelong learning recognize and credit achievements having been made by non- formal and informal achievements.

According to students, sometimes problems arise when partial study results and informal achievements don't seem to exactly fit to the curriculum taken at MK and courses and work absolved are in danger of not being recognized.

Another problem sometimes arises when documents needed to establish in detail what had been studied, with which results or coming from a different study field, give problems in the recognition procedure.

However students stated that with the help of MK officials normally all problems can eventually be solved.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

Factual situation

So far, MK cooperates with 48 higher education institutions in Europe and worldwide on the basis of inter-institutional agreements. The SER states that it is the students free choice to avail of mobilities, best suiting them.

Information on such possibilities is published on the website, disseminated at freshers meetings and other events. An International Office exists at MK. So far students can participate in Erasmus+ KA1 and KA2 mobilities.

Students can also plan mobilities with other partners on a self-organised basis.

COVID had effectively brought mobilities of outgoings as well as incomings to an almost total standstill.

Expert judgement/analysis

Discussing internationalisation and possibility with students, they voiced that they don't feel fit to follow lectures abroad because of language problems. Unfortunately, the students who participated during the visit could not demonstrate practical English language skills, which essentially limits their learning mobility and limited use of foreign sources and participation in international study exchange programs. English is among the general college subjects with 84 hours of independent work. During the meeting, the level of English language of the students showed that more contact lectures would be needed, because the study applied to this subject (module) does not allow the students to acquire the necessary knowledge of the English language. The insufficient level of English was identified as one of the obstacles to participation in international study exchange programs.

The next problem seems to be a lack of time for mobilities as most students are part-timers, taking their lectures in the afternoon hours. Asked in detail they were aware 'that somewhere on the 4th floor of the MK building there should be an International Office responsible for Erasmus+'. Nobody did have any closer contact with the responsible administrative staff.

Asked, if they were informed about the new possibilities of Erasmus blended learning projects, of eTwinning, of short term mobilities and such, they voiced that they never heard of it.

Possible incoming foreign lecturers to take lectures on EU Law and International Law in English they found interesting but had not experienced such at MK. Asked, if they could name some of the 48 existing partner institutions and their programme offerings, they couldn't name any.

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

Students at MK are provided with academic, psychological, financial and social support of different kinds according to the situation.

MK provides:

- to study in flexible forms, get recognition for non-formal achievements
- get in touch with the students' Representative Office, catering for student social needs
- individually plan studies and exams, if the need arises
- avail of career planning support
- attend the MK Student Academy free of charge to deepen certain subjects
- access all information on grades, ECTS, payments etc. via the Unimetis study management information system
- develop individual artistic and creative abilities
- get free psychological support and tutoring
- get financial support if disabled
- Avail of divers financial support programmes like different scholarship programmes for the reimbursement of already paid tuition if meeting the criteria for it
- living at dormitories
- accessing social assistance provided for vulnerable groups and students with special needs.

Expert judgement/analysis

Students are well aware of the help, assistance and support offered to them.

Especially the flexible and individual study plans and the opportunity to prolong deadlines when papers have to be delivered, to take part in sessions on a remote basis when the need arises or to find other individual ways to conduct studies, gives many students a freedom of choice

From an infrastructural point of view, the aid for students with visual impairments is very good. Students in wheelchairs or otherwise reduced mobility are able to access the building. with the help of ramps which should be provided at all entrances. A battery powered lift enables such impaired students or staff to reach the higher levels of the building. Marijampole currently has no such clientele but is prepared to cater for special needs and their demand for assistance.

Generally spoken, the level of support for students is good.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Factual situation

Study information in its most recent form and information on support available is posted on the MK website.

Notifications are automatically sent to student's email addresses. The information monitor and notice board of Faculties and the Study and Career Department are freely accessible by the students.

First year students are made acquainted with the provisions. A 'Freshers Guide' is provided, containing useful and necessary information.

The same is true for information on courses, lectures, events and changes thereof.

Group mentors are on standby to help when need arises.

Lecturers play an important role in coaching and caring. They are often approached on an individual basis or online via ZOOM, Teams etc.

Special needs of students allow for individual study plans to allow studies besides raising children or besides awkward working hours.

Expert judgement/analysis

Discussions with students established the overall satisfaction with the situation of study information and counselling.

Administrative and teaching staff were described as being approachable and helpful.

Asked about it, the students didn't have the impression that stepping up the level of English language proficiency and taking part in mobilities was strongly promoted by MK.

The mentoring programme – as mentioned in the SER – was not widely known by the students.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Providing students with a wide variety of academic, financial, social and other support.
2. Provide study beginners with easy to access online information on all MK procedures and support from MK administration.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Student mobility is practically dormant.

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

Factual situation

The study of the Law and Public Procurement study programme is based on a synthesis of lecturing and self-study. This means that the aim is to ensure a link between the delivery of study content and the methods of study. Great emphasis is placed on the optimal implementation of the study content and the selection of appropriate study methods, with the understanding that properly selected study methods enable the results of the study to be translated into student achievement. The study process applies and combines a variety of teaching and study methods (SER p. 157).

The objectives of the courses are implemented through problem-based learning, document analysis, on-the-job training, video film viewing, project and research work, lectures by social partners (SER p. 158).

The relevance of study methods to the aim of the programme and the learning outcomes is inherent in the assessment methods. The assessment system includes a variety of assessment methods, which enable the student's achievements to be monitored in terms of the results to be attained and theoretical knowledge and practical skills to be assessed in a coherent manner (SER p. 160).

Students have the opportunity to use non-contact consultations conducted via Moodle, email, Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

After completing their studies, graduates may choose to pursue further university studies, or, if they have fulfilled other university requirements, to enrol in postgraduate studies in the field of legal studies or other fields of study (SER p.167).

Expert judgement/analysis

The study methods specified by SER in the teaching process meet academic and professional standards.

The expert group was pleasantly surprised that previous expert recommendations were taken into account: the experiential learning method has been intensified, based on problem-based learning, which during the meeting was evaluated by the students as one of the best learning methods.

At the meeting, all the participating students stated that they are employed, but none of them work in the field of law.

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

Factual situation

The SER report states that adaptation of the study process to socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs is an important commitment of the MK. For socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs according to the individual's needs, an acceptable method of counselling is adapted, an individual study timetable is arranged, or another problem is solved. According to the SER, access ramps to MK buildings and special facilities to reach classrooms on all floors of MK building are provided for persons with reduced mobility.

Expert judgement/analysis

During the meeting, college representatives mentioned that they currently do not have students with special needs. However, looking at the already existing infrastructure of the college (access to the building and classrooms, tools for the visually impaired in the library), it is doubtful whether the college is ready to accept not only students with mobility and visual disabilities, and whether they would be provided with the necessary support and the opportunity to use all learning tools. However, the college is not properly prepared for this.

Although it was not mentioned in the SER report, the students confirmed that they have the opportunity to study remotely in case of illness, pregnancy, childcare leave, or they can temporarily stop their studies according to the laws of the Republic of Lithuania. Students also mentioned that they have the opportunity to take exams individually.

During meetings with students and college staff, it was indicated that low-income students can receive financial aid, but that financial aid is rarely used by students because most of them work.

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

In the course of the study programme, data related to the implementation of the programme shall be collected and systematised: data on student progress shall be collected in the Study and Career Division, data on student mobility shall be collected in the Project Activities and International Partnership Division. The following quality assurance tools/methods are used: analysis of students' study results, questionnaire surveys, discussion of students' professional practices, discussions, analysis of the resources needed for the programme, reports of the chairpersons of the qualification committees, internal audits and others (SER p. 170).

Lecturers monitor students' progress during the study process, the results of mid-term examinations and provide additional guidance to students as required.

At the end of each semester, a questionnaire survey is carried out among students on the relevance of the subjects taught to their professional preparation and the quality of teaching.

Graduates are surveyed at the end of their studies. The results of the surveys indicate the optimum quality of the study process and the content of the courses, the methods and assessment system used, the optimum student workload, and the compliance with students' expectations. Employers' representatives, in the meetings of the curriculum committee and the qualification committee, also have the opportunity to express their views on the type of advanced graduates they would like to see (SER p. 172).

Expert judgement/analysis

In the opinion of the expert panel, the questionnaire survey of students, monitoring of student progress, accumulation of such data and counselling of students is a satisfactory aspect of quality assurance of the study program.

During the meeting, the students confirmed that they have the opportunity to receive advice at any time on all issues of the study programs, so the availability of staff and teachers to students is also considered a satisfactory factor.

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

Factual situation

MK graduate career monitoring is carried out on the basis of the Career Management Information System (CMS), which provides personal career management information, tools and services to improve young people's employability and career satisfaction. The majority of Marijampole HEI graduates are registered in the KVIS. The Study and Career Department conducts an electronic alumni questionnaire survey and collects information from the chairs of the study programme committees who are in contact with alumni. Information on graduate employability is also collected from the Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA), issues of the magazine "Reitingai" and the Employment Service (SER p. 174).

According to the electronic questionnaire survey conducted 12 months after graduation, in 2021 100% of the 2020 graduates surveyed are employed, and in 2022 all the 2021 graduates surveyed are also employed (SER p. 176).

According to the data of the Education Management Information System (EMIS), during the period under analysis, 10 graduates of the Law field of study were either employed in the LPC main groups 0-3 (Tier I) or started working independently within 12 months after graduation: in 2020, 6 graduates were employed according to the above mentioned criterion (including 1 self-employed graduate), in 2021 – 2 graduates were employed (including 1 self-employed graduate), in 2022 – 2 graduates were employed independently. It should be noted that some graduates usually go abroad to work, so that the NIS data do not fully reflect the actual situation (SER n° 177).

Information on the views of graduates and employers on graduates' professional preparation and competences acquired after graduation is analysed through questionnaire surveys of both employers and graduates. The 2021 graduate survey showed that more than half of the graduates were employed during their studies. The majority of others graduated within six

months of graduation. Employers' respondents consider the training of specialists at MK to be adequate and satisfactory for employers.

Expert judgement/analysis

The study program has a strong focus on public procurement specialisation. Students acquire enough knowledge and necessary competence to work in the field of public procurement. Along with strong specialised procurement skills, graduates' ability to prepare procurement documents makes their employability even stronger. During the meeting, this was also confirmed by the alumni, who shared that part of this study program gave them the opportunity to quickly find employment in the public sector and was an attractive advantage in the eyes of employers. During the meeting with the experts, 99% of the employers were from the public sector (probation service, police, prison, etc.), which shows the great potential of the public procurement program.

Graduate employability is monitored both centrally and at the program level. Information is collected and provided on the opinions of graduates and employers, on their professional preparation and competences acquired after graduation. From meetings with alumni, employers and social partners, it was clear that the law and public procurement study program offers great potential for students to successfully work in the public sector after graduation. in the region.

The employers' opinion about the training of graduates and their acquired competences mentioned in the SER report and during the meeting coincided – the employers unequivocally asserted that the training of specialists at the college is adequate and the acquired competences of the graduates satisfy them.

The SER states that Graduate career monitoring is carried out on the basis of the Career Management Information System (CMS). During the meeting with the expert group, students indicated that they receive information about job vacancies from the Career Management Information System, but they would like much more active, more individualised help from the CMS in finding their personal career path.

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

Factual situation

The policy of ensuring academic honesty, tolerance and non-discrimination is implemented based on the Statutes of MK, The Code of Academic Ethics of Marijampole. The principles of academic ethics shall be integrated into all MK's business processes, and the approved documents shall be a managerial tool for the application of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination. During the period under review, there were no cases of breaches of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.

Expert judgement/analysis

MK takes all ethics and values issues seriously and reacts appropriately. The code of academic ethics of MK emphasises the fundamental values of academic ethics, which students get to know during their studies.

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 procedure for submission and consideration of appeals is clearly defined in the SER and in the MK's internal documents and is well known to students. The Regulations of Studies of MK (Resolution of the Academic Council No AT-15-29 of 8 June 2015; consolidated version as of 17 June 2020 No AT-6) state that a student who disagrees with the assessment of his/her knowledge and skills and the examination procedure shall have the right to appeal to the Appeals Committee of MK in a reasoned written form no later than within three days from the date of the announcement of the assessment of the examination (the assessment of the student's independent (project) work). The Appeals Board shall be composed of five members. 3 members of the Board shall be appointed by the Academic Council (1 member of MK administration, 1 member of the faculties), 1 member of the faculties shall be appointed by the Students' Representation. The procedure for applying to the Appeals Board, the composition of the Board, and the Rules of Procedure of the Board shall be published on MK's website. Students have the opportunity to lodge appeals according to clear, open and transparent procedures. The Study Regulations state that students may appeal against course grades and decisions of MK administration to the Appeals or Disputes Committees in accordance with the established procedures and receive a response within the established time limits (SER 186).

There were no appeals against assessment and no complaints about the study process during the period under review.

Expert judgement/analysis

Based on the information provided by the SER, the expert group is satisfied with the application of the procedures for submitting and examining appeals and complaints regarding the direction of the study process in the studies.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. High potential and successful integration in the field of public procurement specialisation at the regional level.
2. MK has effective application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies.
3. Various study and assessment methods are applied in the study process, encouraging students and employers to be active participants in the study process.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The study program should have a broader approach to the needs of students, including the provision of information and advice at career path selection level.

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

Factual situation

The department of law has 17 professors, out of whom one is full-timer and 16 are part-timers. The college harmonised with the recommendation made in the previous evaluation and hired a full-time public procurement professor. However, it did not comply with the recommendation of the previous evaluation to hire more full-time teachers. The teaching staff still consists mainly of part-time practitioners who combine teaching with their job. The college supports that this choice is based on the desire to connect academic knowledge with the practical aspect of legal science.

The teaching staff has a low level of knowledge of the English language, as will be pointed out below in the context of mobility as well. In fact, this was also highlighted in the previous evaluation. As a result, only 4 courses in English are offered per semester, but the college does not provide any additional information regarding course outline, professor, etc.

Most teachers are hired at the dean's initiative. However, the college has not set a provision for obligatory training in pedagogic methods before a lecturer's recruitment. The college only shows some videos to the new teachers, which were produced from lessons taught by other teachers. Nevertheless, some training seminars are offered to teachers from time to time.

In the context of the meetings held, an attempt was made to clarify the total number of the teaching hours for each teacher per week. However, no specific answer was given, but the answer given referred to the total number of working hours per year, including hours of research and administrative tasks.

Finally, the evaluation of the teaching staff is held with a double system. First of all, each teacher defines a plan with his goals every September and delivers it to the college and at the end of the academic year, in June, the achievement of the goals he/she had set is evaluated. Second, an extensive evaluation is conducted every 5 years for each teacher. Finally, it is worth noting that the students evaluate the teachers at the end of each semester and in fact, from the discussion we had with the students, it became clear that the students are very willing to participate in the teachers' evaluation.

Expert judgement/analysis

The ratio between teachers and students is satisfactory (17 teachers : 43 students). However, there is a noticeable shortage of full-time teachers, with just one full-time teacher compared to 16 part-time teachers. Indeed, having practitioners as teachers can offer benefits to students in terms of offering practical knowledge. However, this does not mean that practical knowledge is an exclusive prerogative of practitioners. Such knowledge can also be provided by a professor who is a full-time academic. It is noteworthy, as it was pointed out above, that there had been a recommendation in the previous evaluation for the recruitment of full-time staff and there was no such recruitment, except for one recruitment of a public procurement lecturer, which means that this suggestion was ignored. Besides, the parallel engagement of practitioners with other activities de facto leads to a fragmentation of their teaching effort, which causes adverse consequences in terms of their academic performance. Hence, the expert panel believes that this is the fundamental shortcoming that needs to be eliminated.

The institution does not take care of the proper training and preparation of the teachers before they start teaching. Despite the fact that teachers are mainly practitioners who do not have pedagogical knowledge, there is no provision on providing them with such knowledge that will facilitate their teaching work. Videos of previous lessons are not evaluated as satisfactory, as there is no guarantee that these videos contain lessons with worthwhile pedagogical methods. In any case, there is no provision for obligatory training of any kind before teachers assume their duties, except for some workshops related to certain subjects. Expert panel strongly recommends implementing training and preparation of the new teachers.

Furthermore, there is no clear picture of the total teaching hours of each teacher per week. There is a general record of the total number of working hours for each teacher, with the indication that these hours include research hours and administrative duties, which are not specified. Besides, as already demonstrated above, the research does not have noticeable results, while coping with administrative duties is not easy, when it comes to a practitioner. However, the number of teaching hours per week is crucial in order to evaluate the effective response of the teacher to his/her duties.

Finally, conducting an extensive staff evaluation every five years is extremely rare, as there are teachers who may never enter this evaluation if their contract expires before the completion of five years of teaching. Moreover, it is not specified what this evaluation includes. In fact, questions are raised about the effectiveness of the evaluation, when the majority of teachers have not participated in conferences or published any articles since 2019, except for their participation in the “State, Law, Public Procurement” conference, which was organised by the college.

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

The college cooperates with 48 institutes of higher education, without, however, specifying their mode of cooperation. In fact the college seems to have developed cooperation mainly with universities in Turkey and Poland. The teaching staff of the college does not particularly

participate in mobility programs, as during the last years between no and three teachers participate in mobility programs per year. Also, very few teachers from foreign universities have come to the college to teach. Only one lecture was given in 2021 by a professor from a university in Turkey. In fact, the college offers only a few courses in English, while the level of knowledge of the English language by the teaching staff is particularly low. During our meetings it was mentioned that the International Office of the college has been established.

Expert judgement/analysis

The absence of internationalisation and mobility is self-evident: in 2020 no teacher participated in a mobility program, in 2021 and 2022 only one teacher participated and in 2023 three teachers participated. Admittedly, the statistical data has been affected due to the pandemic. However, participation in mobility programs is low even after the end of the pandemic. Besides, the staff has attributed its unwillingness to participate in mobility programs to its parallel obligations instead of other reasons (e.g. the pandemic).

The inability to develop international collaborations also results from the fact that no courses in English are offered. Not offering courses in English does not make the institution attractive to foreign students wishing to study in Lithuania or for foreign teachers wishing to teach in Lithuania.

In addition, the operation of the International Office appears to be unsatisfactory. Despite the fact that the teaching staff mentioned its existence, the students did not seem to know details about its operation.

Despite the fact that the institution mentions academic cooperation with other institutes as one of its goals, the teachers do not seem to know what special mobility possibilities they have, as they limit themselves to mention that it is difficult for them to participate in the Erasmus+ program.

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

Factual situation

The activity of the teaching staff is based on a personalised plan, which is drawn up every September, approved by the college and its achievement is evaluated at the end of the academic year. It is reported that the existence of a fund has been established which is granted in order to encourage teachers for scientific research.

The development of the teachers' skills is also done by prudence of the college as well, as workshops are organised with specific themes (e.g. managing students, preparation of writing an article, science and business, public procurement, etc.), which, however, do not always have legal content.

The table of teaching staff provided to the evaluation committee includes all teaching staff and for each teacher it states which conferences they attended, which articles they published, if they participated in any training seminars, etc. It is observed that only 3 of the 17 teachers have

published legal articles. Some teachers have not attended any conferences or seminars and have not published any articles. Also, most of the teachers have attended a conference in 2019 that was organised for the anniversary of the college's founding and they also attended another conference during the assessment period on "State, Law, Public Procurement", which has been organised by the college in 2022.

Expert judgement/analysis

The scientific presence of the teaching staff is minimal. Most of the teachers have participated in only one scientific conference related to the 100-year anniversary of the College, which, however, had mainly pedagogical and sociological content, and took place in 2019, and another conference on "State, Law, Public Procurement", which was held and organised by the college in 2022. That means that most of the teachers have taken part in only one law conference during the assessment period. In addition, only 3 of the 17 teachers have published articles, while it is noteworthy that most of them have been published before 2020, while for some of them no information is given about where and when they were published.

The improvement of the teaching staff's competences can be considered based on two axes: teaching qualifications and scientific achievements.

With regard to teaching qualifications, as mentioned above, the institution has not taken care to ensure that the teaching is of high calibre. It is not mentioned whether there is a trial course before recruiting a teacher, where teaching ability can be established or weaknesses can be identified. In addition, the institution does not offer any training course before the staff's recruitment in order to achieve optimal teaching methods.

Research does not seem to be favoured by the institution, as is also clearly shown by the very low scientific output. It is reported that the existence of a budget is foreseen, which can be paid to someone in case of writing an article, which can be a particularly important incentive and help for the production of scientific work. However, it is not made clear under what conditions it is paid, its specific amount, etc.

The pathologies of teaching staff competences are made even more apparent by the staff's assessment, which has no clear content, is conducted infrequently (every 5 years) and does not seem to have meaningful results. The evaluation seems to constitute a pure procedure, as the goal of scientific production is not achieved.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Satisfying ratio between teachers and students.
2. Workshops organised for teachers.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. No adequate number of full-time teachers.
2. No provision for obligatory pedagogical seminars before recruitment of a teacher.

3. Infrequent and vague staff assessment.
4. Only a few courses are offered in English.
5. Low-level internationalisation and mobility.
6. Low scientific presence (e.g. conferences) and production (e.g. publication of articles).

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

Factual situation

The college has founded the Center for Information Technology and Electronic Studies with 4 computerised classrooms and the Social Research Center with 15 workstations. Four classrooms are equipped with smart interactive screens and all classrooms have multimedia projectors and internet access.

The college uses the Moodle virtual learning environment for all courses taught.

The college is equipped with appropriate equipment to facilitate education and study for visually and hearing impaired students. However, there is no lift and so not all areas of the college are accessible for people with mobility impairments.

The college takes initiatives in order to ensure the placement of the students in internships.

The library is open from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM and the opening hours are extended by one hour at certain times of the year. The library has some printed books, but mostly it is stocked with e-books. Teachers and students have access to several databases.

It was requested during the visits to have an inspection of the teaching staff's offices, but we were informed that the teachers do not have separate offices, but there is a common workspace for all the teachers.

Expert judgement/analysis

The college facilities present a huge weakness: the higher floors of the building are unsuitable for students with mobility disabilities. The answer that the institute does not face any problem as there are no wheelchair-bound students at the moment cannot be considered sufficient, as an educational institution should have the appropriate facilities for disabled people at any time.

The advantages of the facilities and resources include provision for visually and hearing impaired students, as there are computers and devices that facilitate their study.

The library does not appear to be adequately staffed. First, there are few copies of printed books and not enough e-books. Opening hours are limited and increase slightly during the examination periods. The reading room has limited work seats, which is a disadvantage, since many students prefer to study in the library. The college offers access to several databases. However, access to the databases outside the college premises is only allowed after following a specific procedure.

There are no suitable places where students can spend their leisure time, such as canteen, gym, playroom, etc. There is an area next to the library, but it seems to be insufficient due to its limited area.

Teachers do not have their own offices, but there is a common workstation for all teachers. This makes research from university premises impossible, as writing cannot be based on teamwork. It also makes cooperation with the students difficult.

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

Factual situation

During the years 2020-2022, an attempt was made to renovate many areas of the college within the framework of the "Improvement of the Study Environment and Infrastructure through the Implementation of the Regional College Model" program, new technological equipment was purchased, while at the same time new departments of the college were established (e.g. the Social Research Center).

Expert judgement/analysis

The college has made a remarkable renovation effort. Also, the computer rooms are remarkable, where students can study and use the computers. However, there are still several things that can be improved and renovated to make the building fully sustainable. The studio owned by the Center for Information Technology and Electronic Studies, where lectures can be videotaped, may be well-equipped, but it does not seem to contribute positively to law courses.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Well-equipped teaching classrooms and computers classroom.
2. Provisions for students with visual and hearing impairments.
3. Access to a sufficient number of databases.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Not all areas are accessible for students with mobility disabilities.
2. Inadequate number of printed books and e-books.
3. Limited library opening hours and limited work seats in the reading area.
4. No staff's offices.

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

Factual situation

MK operates a Quality Assurance System complying with the ISO 9001: 2016 QMS standard which is linked to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Quality Assurance Provisions and Guidelines (ESG). This QMS is certified and has been recertified.

The QMS defines all steps and responsibilities connected to the requirements of composing, delivering and ensuring the quality of the run programme. All steps and involved features are put forward in the SER.

The core administrative responsibilities lie with the Academic Council (governing body for academic affairs), the Programme Committee, caring for the quality of study Programme implementation and R&D activities in the study field, the Department of Law (management and communications), the Curriculum Committee conducting relevant surveys and the Centre for Information Technologies, ensuring IT services and many more administrative units, all having clear cut duties and responsibilities according to the SER.

Expert judgement/analysis

The annexes, materials and the SER as well as the discussions with management and stakeholders have made clear that a functioning QMS exists at Marijampole University of Applied Sciences and that many quality assurance measures, primarily surveys and data analysis plus the decision making on the basis of aggregated data are in place.

However, when it comes to inconsistencies or seemingly overlapping competence, there needs to be clarification work to be done (e.g. the respective competences of the Council for Innovation and Quality of Studies and the Study Programme Committee).

Also, the SWOT Analysis of the institution, published in the current Strategic plan, names partly long-standing weaknesses where it is unclear who will tackle those effectively with which measures and in which time frame (see P. 12 of the current Strategic Plan for details).

Quality Assurance has so far not managed to do away with those impairments which do still exist, as was a result from the discussions during the site visit.

Another example of a threat to more and better internationalisation has proved to be the mindset of teachers. They are specialists of their kind with great professional abilities but naked for languages, mobilities and internationalisation, the answer basically and unisono was that 'they would teach Lithuanian law for the needs of the region', the answer meaning that all

features of internationalisation would not apply to the Study Field of Law. However, the Strategy of the institution seems to be different from that.

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

Factual situation

The effectiveness of curriculum evaluation and curriculum improvement processes reaches out to involved social partners in an especially intensive way.

Providing for a first cycle academic grade in Law (or professional bachelor), the contact to diverse social partners, representatives of those being involved in teaching, assessing thesis papers and offering employment for later graduates, the involvement of this stakeholder group in assessing and infusing the programme is valuable.

As an example of QA involvement of social partners, apart from surveys and round table discussions, the round table of MK with social partners in 2022 is given as an example in the SER. Representatives of diverse public offices, the Bar Association and other institutions and companies have taken part, discussing modifications for the law programme.

MK took as a result to add subjects like Family Law and Qualification of Criminal Offences on the recommendation of experienced practitioners who are accustomed to the needs of the labour market.

Social partners are also widely involved with the drafting and defending their respective final thesis., thus ensuring the practicability of the final thesis.

On the initiative of students, activating forms of innovative teaching, solving practical problems, initiating mock trials and other Moot Court type teaching events, teaching methods were enriched by students and teaching staff alike.

Alumni are giving input on possible course modification via surveys, bridging between College time and much more experienced practitioners (social partners). They can tell what to expect, trying to get a first job after graduation.

Expert judgement/analysis

The panel could establish in its discussions with stakeholder representatives that all stakeholders are in different capacities involved in the Quality Assessment of the Study Field of Law and that a continuous improvement process is underway.

However, not all stakeholder groups have the same voice and impact. Rather strong and influential are the social partners for given reasons and the current students as main clients of the institution.

Teaching staff is heard and has an impact as far as teaching methods and all things around it are involved. The weakest influence comes from the graduates/ alumni which have ties with the institution and take part in surveys from time to time. Their commitment to strengthen quality of studies and help to improve the Study Field is rather weak and not institutionalised with round tables, standing memberships in councils or committees.

The SER mentions that social partners suggest relevant topics for the final thesis, and advising students before helping to assess the papers in the relevant committees. Expressly asked, the social partners present at the day of the site visit, denied that they would suggest relevant topics to the students or do advisory work during drafting time. Students expressed that they would choose their topics on their own and cooperate with teaching staff rather than social partners during drafting time. The questions were asked to find out the amount of practical problem solving in academic final papers influenced by experienced practitioners. However, in many cases practitioners are also teachers so that counselling on final papers comes from both sides: theoretical and practical.

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

Factual situation

The institution conducts regular surveys of the following stakeholder groups:

- students
- lecturers
- alumni
- social partners

The administrative responsibilities for conducting and analysing the surveys lie with different administrative units (e.g. the Study and Career Department conducts an electronic questionnaire survey of graduates 12 months after graduation to find out about employment, the continuing of studies, etc.).

Aggregated data of all relevant surveys are published on the institutions' website for the interested public and appear in MKs Annual Activity Report.

MK's website also publishes up to date information on programmes, teaching activities, internships, events, the results of evaluations, different statistical data and results of surveys to mirror to the public where the institution stands and how things have developed.

All relevant information concerning the Law and Public Procurement programme and the main circumstances around its development and progress are published on the Website of the Open Information, Consultation and Guidance System.

The use of online information, online bulletin Boards,, connections to traditional media reporting on MK and the use of social networks to communicate news and market MK and its programmes completes the picture of how MK uses different channels to collect, use and disseminate information.

The SER offers examples on modifications undertaken by the College in the structure and content of coursework on the request of students, teachers and social partners, all found out (and being observed by the institution) in using the results of carried out surveys.

Expert judgement/analysis

In perusing the SER and holding intensive discussions with management, administration and stakeholders the mode of conducting and analysing surveys of the aforementioned kinds and the dissemination methods of aggregated data to the interested public as well as the feedback on collected data and decisions taken to the stakeholders could be verified by the panel.

However, the Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 of MK speaks of the institution's endeavour to further strengthen the communication system and use innovative marketing solutions. Having been asking on these features, the panel could not find out with the given answers and remarks whether those strategic initiatives touching at the dissemination of information from the institution to the public and the stakeholders have already been fully enriched with new approaches or if initiatives were under way and what exactly was planned with which responsibilities within the institution.

One question concerned the 2021 newly established Council for Innovation and Quality of Studies and its different responsibilities regarding the Study Programme Committee, both being integral part of the Quality Management System. There was no satisfying answer to the respective roles and responsibilities against the background of the ongoing strategic alignment of the institution and the implications of the Study Field Law.

Already defined as a weakness and this weakness, dating back years, is the lack of offering information on the study Field of Law on the website and official channels used by the institution in the English language. Promoting internationalisation and voicing that MK education reaches not only the regional and national but the European and international level as well it is of the essence to display information in English in detail also. This matter has to be resolved quickly and decisively.

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

The HEI collects and summarises as well as publishes on the institutions' website data aiming at finding out the level of satisfaction of students of the Study Field of Law with the quality of their overall study conditions.

Regular student surveys carried out in the consecutive years 2020-2022 show that a majority of students have a 'favourable opinion' of the quality of the content and methods of study (according to the relevant part of the SER).

The SER quotes satisfaction of students because of the possibility for students to carry out independent and group work,, the variety of study methods of teachers in their subjects, the

linking of theory and practice, the course materials, the general attentiveness of administration and teachers hearing students and observing their needs.

The overall study conditions, the study process and the study infrastructure (rooms, equipment, literature, databases etc.) add – according to the SER – to the attractiveness to study at Marijampole University of Applied Sciences.

Expert judgement/analysis

In the intensive talks with students and staff it was possible for the panel to establish that indeed there seems to be a high level of satisfaction of students with the study of law at Marijampole.

The main point why Marijampole was chosen as a place of higher education – according to the discussions with students as well as graduates – was the regional relation of students and College. All students the panel talked to stem from the region, live in the region and want to work and stay in the region. Internships with regional employers of the mainly public sector (police, probation, prison services, courts, municipality etc.) give guidance and security for employability in the future after graduation.

The aim of the College to step up internationalisation by diverse means laid out in the current Strategic Plan, could not be reflected with the discussions with students. Erasmus mobilities of any kind, enhancing English language skill which could hardly be found with the students as far as active speaking was concerned, were not really on the agenda of students.

Students lauded the enhancement of the general infrastructure of the College, the approach of high ranking practitioners/teachers to establish innovative teaching methods (examples could be given) and the clear and transparent guidance through their studies.

They also cherished that their voices and needs are heard and reacted to by the institution (examples were given).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Certified, modern QMS (ISO 9001: 2015 standard).
2. Involvement of all relevant stakeholders in QA matters.
3. Results of surveys lead to improvement processes which are disseminated to stakeholders and the public.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. No information on all relevant matters on the institution website in English.
2. Some inconsistencies in the competences of different administrative bodies concerning QA management.
3. Some weaknesses (see SWOT analysis) have so far not been taken up for remedy with a clear plan.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Given the relatively moderate student enrolment: conduct a more in-depth labour market analysis and/or start more thorough marketing of the Law and Public Procurement programme. 2. Given the focus on public procurement, make sure that the curriculum features a holistic concept of public procurement, including e.g. more courses with a public procurement focus, integrated attention for public procurement in other courses, compulsory public procurement topic for the final thesis, internships in diverse public procurement functions, etc. The 'Final Thesis' subject should also be connected with the learning outcomes of the Law and Public Procurement programme. 3. Speed up efforts to add an international component to the Law and Public Procurement programme. Consider the introduction of more internationalisation at home (electives in English, guest teachers, ...), short term mobility (1 to 2 weeks) and the introduction of a mobility window in the curriculum. Also, English language courses should be upgraded. 4. Develop a system that allows better monitoring of the development of legal (research) skills throughout the curriculum as well as the specific teaching/ learning and assessment methods that are used in every programme subject.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find more ways, plan a strategy to encourage teachers and students to participate in scientific activities. 2. Strengthen the research staff by recruiting lecturers with a doctorate in law. 3. To ensure the aspect of mobility and internationality in the activities of scientific research and applied science (by inviting foreign lecturers, giving students and lecturers the opportunity to participate in international projects).
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended to find ways to increase the language skills of students and advertise and avail of new Erasmus+ mobility programmes (e.g. short term stays, Summer Schools, blended learning, internships abroad) to attract interest in mobilities. 2. Furnish College buildings with the necessary equipment to allow wheelchair access for the walking impaired. It would meet the benchmark of other Lithuanian HEIs.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure informal communication between students and teachers by involving students in academic activities, which will help them in their professional activities.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Strengthen students' skills of the English language at the level of contact lectures in order to increase student mobility and internationality. 3. To supplement the study program with new law study subjects in order not to restrict the student's freedom of choice of study and career path and to maintain competition with regard to public procurement specialisation. 4. To enable the Career Management Center not only to collect and systematise information, but also to be active in the case of students' career choices by providing student job advertisements, adapting them according to market needs, providing information from employers, providing consultation to students regarding the application of their competencies in the labour market.
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment of full-time teachers. 2. Pedagogical seminars before a teacher resumes his/her academic duties. 3. More frequent, intensive and specific-content staff evaluation. 4. Greater scientific production and presence (participation in conferences, publishing of articles). 5. Intensification of internationalisation and mobility. 6. Improve the level of staff's English language skills.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simplifying the process of students' access into databases outside the college premises. 2. All areas should be fully accessible for students with mobility disabilities. 3. Extending the library's opening hours and increasing the number of work seats in the reading room. 4. Creation of staff's offices or workstations of few people. 5. Extension of the renovation to all areas of the building.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended to provide information on the MK website in English on the Study Field Law with a clear time frame and named responsibilities. 2. It is recommended to clarify the different status and responsibilities of the Council of Innovation and Quality of Studies and the Study Programme Committee, both deeply involved in QA management. 3. It is recommended to find a dedicated approach to long existing structural weaknesses, such as very sparse internationalisation efforts and their acceptance in the stakeholder groups

V. SUMMARY

The panel wishes to foremost thank MK as an institution and all those who have worked hard to compile the meaningful SER in all its details. The site visit was well prepared and all panel members felt most welcome at MK.

MK is a long-standing Higher Education Institution in the region and well known to the Onepublic. The Study Field of Law caters to the needs of mostly the public Employment sector. The panel has in the meeting with social partners taken notice of representatives from police, prosecution probation, prison service, border protection, judges offices, municipalities etc. All social partners stressed their long standing good relations to MK and its students and graduates.

The Study Field to be evaluated, being 'Law and Public Procurement' consists of two strongly emphasised study contents, namely criminal law and public procurement law with courses in the necessary basics of civil law, and a sprinkle of International and European Law and Languages. The SER stresses that public procurement was a field of expertise, much and ongoing, needed in the regional labour market. The social partners unisono agreed on that point and argued, public procurement specialists were in dire need for almost any public sector employer one could name.

However, pointing out that special trend and employment need in other colleges with very similar programmes compared to that of MK, this impression could not be repeated. Having had to do with neighbouring regions, and a similar make up of study, social partners and almost identical job offers, the 'public procurement' argument was not taken up.

Also, MK students, being asked for their plans for employment after graduation lauded the internships the quality of teachers, many of them being high ranking practitioners and also social partners, the law study courses enabling them to start with a first academic grade into suitable jobs, being assistants, involved in pre-trial procedures etc. Public procurement as such didn't seem to be of such extraordinary importance for the later working life as it would seem reading the SER and talking to management and social partners.

MK has a number of exemplary features, such as state of the art equipment and classrooms , a very good contact to the public and social partners, functional administrative procedures and has worked on the improvement of infrastructure in a laudable way.

The Strategic Plan however is sincere in showing where the weaknesses of MK lie.

It is not the rather minor points like adding features to allow handicapped potential students and staff to access buildings as a matter to meet national and international benchmarks. or to re-simplify the rather complicated and multi-layer QMS with the focus to allow all stakeholder groups to be an integral part of the steering and decision making process of the institutions.

Of course, the library resources have to be updated in the print section and some reshuffle has to be thought of to find more space for students and teaching staff alike to finally have assigned working and meeting spaces for them.

One of the main ailments are research activities for teaching staff and students alike. Practice oriented teaching is fine and meets the needs of the labour market but critical thinking, scientific research, publishing, interaction in the scientific sense can't be forgotten in academic surroundings. This is what divides school from university and learning from studying. The Higher Education spirit should be more tangible in linking science to studies and in the academic endeavours of teachers.

Much room for improvement lies in the question of internationalisation. Many remarks are dedicated to that special topic. Language skills of students and teachers, talking about the internationally prevalent English language, are still insufficient. Mobilities are mainly dormant. There is no information on the Study Field of Law to be found on the MK website in English.

In the discussions the panel couldn't make out the spirit and dedication to go forward with internationalisation with a decisive plan. The tools are readily available. Changes have to be made. MK is part of Europe and completely embedded in European Law. It is not an island in splendid isolation. Without acting on the main weaknesses the good and very good features of MK will be underrated.

All in all the Study Field of Law at MK is accredited for 3 years with the marks laid down in the report.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Prof. dr. Achim Albrecht