



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of LAW

at Utenos kolegija

Expert panel:

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Law
State code	6531KX007
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	2011-06-22

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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 *20th 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*;

Dr. Konstantinos Dimarellis, *Assistant Professor, Department of Law, Nicosia University School of Law, Cyprus*;

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 Activity Plan of Utena University of Applied Sciences for 2019 - 2021

1.4. BACKGROUND OF LAW FIELD STUDIES AT UTENOS KOLEGIJA

Utenos kolegija was established in 2000 as part of the reorganisation of Utena Medical School of Advanced Vocational Education and Training and Utena Business School of Advanced Vocational Education and Training. Utenos kolegija was accredited by the SKVC as a public HEI on 16th of September 2021 for 7 years. Utenos kolegija offers 1st cycle studies for 1676 students, enrolled in part-time and full-time studies (figures as of 1t October 2022). College provides 22 study programmes in 17 different fields.

Utenos kolegija endeavours to train specialists with a higher college education for the needs of the regional, national and European labour market and enable graduates to further their education. Utenos kolegija reports having a wide network of foreign partner institutions, adding to 60 altogether. Contacts reach 22 foreign countries.

In 2017, the external evaluation of the Law Study Programme was carried out by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, SKVC. The Programme was accredited for 3 years. The Final Report by the External Evaluation Panek dates from the 8th of February 2018.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the *Law* study field at Utenos 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	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	23

*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 Law Study Programme is to train a highly qualified lawyer who can work independently in a job requiring personal responsibility in various areas of legal professional activity, by applying theoretical and practical knowledge of the law, who is a critical and creative thinker, who accepts innovations, who is aware of the essence and purpose of the law, and who is familiar with the legal regulations and is capable of applying them (SER p. 7).

The Law Study Programme is relevant for the labour market and based on the assumption that Lithuania faces a shortage of mid-level lawyers in all legal fields. The 2021 State Audit report showed in particular a 10% vacancy rate for officers in the Lithuanian Chief Police Commissariats. The programme seeks the opinion of employers, social partners and graduates on a regular basis, through surveys and meetings of the Law Study Programme Committee, and adjusts the programme accordingly. Graduates work in various private and public institutions, in the fields of law, personnel, public procurement, etc.

The programme offers 2 specialisations: (1) Pre-trial investigation and (2) Legal service. These specialisations are particularly relevant to the regions of Utena, Vilnius and Panevėžys. This is testified by the large numbers of police officers, officers of the State Border Guard Service, specialists of the Prison Department and the Legal and Personnel Services that have a part-time enrollment in the Law Study Programme.

Expert judgement/analysis

During the meetings with the different stakeholders it became clear that the Law Study Programme at UK positions itself as general college studies in law, catering for the regional and the national labour markets and offering avenues for employment in both the public and private sectors.

From the SER it is clear that the number of students in the Law Study Programme is close to 100, with 87 students having taken their final examination in the course of the assessment period (SER p. 13). This is double the number of students that other, comparable programmes have. Students mainly come from the region, yet a number of the students the expert panel could speak to come from further away and opted for UK for specific reasons (flexibility, see below). The programme obviously succeeds in its aim to provide graduates for both the region and the country. The Law Study Programme at UK is known beyond the Utena region.

Graduates are reportedly successfully employed in the labour market under their specialisation (SER p. 7). Yet, at the same time, the SER estimates that ‘more than 50 percent of graduates work in highly qualified positions’. About one third of the graduates are still without a job 12 months after graduation (although this number also comprises self-employed graduates) (SER p. 29). This is a bit surprising. It is recommended to invest in finding the reasons for this paradox.

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 is reportedly in line with UK’s mission to train specialists with a higher college education through applied research, lifelong learning and creating value for the region and the country (SER p. 8).

Reference is made in the SER to UK’s strategic goals for 2022-2024, i.e. to train highly qualified specialists motivated to improve their skills continuously and to work under the conditions of global digitalisation and innovation growth, to develop applied scientific activities, research, and lifelong learning services relevant for the region and the country. UK’s strategic priorities 2022-2024 highlight attraction and retention of students, improvement of the quality of studies, development of internationalisation, improvement of the UK’s organisational culture, development of applied science, consultancy, research and exploratory activities and research; development of cooperation.

Expert judgement/analysis

UK has a well-developed website in English that also pays attention to the mission and vision of the college. The strategic goals for 2022-2024 could, however, neither be found on the English website, nor were they communicated to the expert panel.

According to the website (<https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/en/institution/mission-and-vision>) ‘the mission of Utena University of Applied Sciences is to prepare specialists with a higher college education, meeting the needs of the regional, national and European labour market, and provide with conditions for continuous education by developing and promoting an individual’s abilities to continuously learn and act under digital society conditions.’ Its vision refers to ‘an innovative, nationally, and internationally recognised higher education institution that meets the expectations of society, based on high quality, responsible social partnership, the development of a sustainable environment for the region and the country, and the promotion of democratic values and tolerance’.

Whilst the needs of the region and the country are patently on the radar of the Law Study Programme, such is less so for UK’s mission to also cater for the European labour market and UK’s vision of being an internationally acknowledged institution. In line with the request of the previous external evaluation panel, study material has reportedly been adapted to EU membership and globalisation (SER p. 13) and subjects on EU law and international law have

been introduced, yet it is advised to also formally adapt the Law Study Programme's aims to better represent UK's mission and vision.

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

Factual situation

The Law Study Programme at UK is a programme of 180 ECTS. It is offered in both full-time (3 years, 60 ECTS per year) and part-time mode (4 years, 45 ECTS per year) (SER p. 8). 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 Order of 30 December 2016 (V-1168), arts. 9 and 21, and of 13 October 2020 (V-1557), Arts. 7 and 8, as represented in the table below.

At UK 1 ECTS corresponds to 25-30 hours of student work (SER p. 9).

Table No. 1 Study programme's Law compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes of College level (professional bachelor)*

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	159 ECTS (including general college courses, electives, internships and final thesis)
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	33 ECTS (electives, specialisations and general college courses)
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	10 ECTS
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	Between 22% (last semester) and 60% (first and fifth

		semesters)
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	No info available
Individual learning/independent work	No less than 30 % of learning	Between 78% (last semester) and 40% (first and fifth semesters) (SER p. 9-10)

Expert judgement/analysis

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

The modules/specialisations take up 15 ECTS of the programme, which is less than 10% of the total amount of the programme's 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 Law Study 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.

Annex 2 (SER) shows how the programme's learning outcomes are connected with the above mentioned five general categories. Those learning outcomes are identical to the special learning outcomes for first cycle college studies in law (Minister's Order of 13 October 2020 (V-1557)) and are further translated into the different courses of the programme.

The following learning outcome, classified under 'special abilities' is formulated in a more restrictive way (Annex 2 SER) than in the relevant legal document.

3.1. [Graduates] are able to analyse various legal documents and to evaluate their validity in time and space

Whereas the Minister's Order provides:

20.3.1. the graduates are able to analyse various legal documents and to evaluate their validity term, territory and persons, with regard to whom the documents should be applied, as well as to identify some particular legal rules governing the persons' activities

In Annex 2 study subjects are related to the five categories of legally defined study results but are not connected to the specific learning outcomes laid down by law. There are no further

details in Annex 2 as to how the different learning outcomes are reached by the different courses. This is reportedly set out in the study subject descriptions (SER p. 10).

Teaching/learning methods to reach the learning outcomes are diverse (SER p. 10). Reference is made to the study subject descriptions. The information the expert panel gathered during the meetings with stakeholders can testify to is diversity. A lot of attention is given to individual consultations between teachers and students. Consultation schedules are available on the Moodle platform.

Also assessment methods are diverse. Teachers share good practices among themselves. The final assessment of the subject consists of a cumulative score, the composition of which is calculated according to the proportions provided in the study subject description. The amount of interim assessments for a specific subject, the weighting coefficients assigned to them and the final assessment, assessment methods and criteria are defined by the Study Programme Committee in coordination with the Department (SER p. 25).

UK Study Regulations, which develop on learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods, are available in English on the institution's website.

Expert judgement/analysis

The learning outcomes as described in Annex 2 are not the same as those published on UK's website, at <https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/en/studies-program/law>. Also within the SER (e.g. p. 15) reference is made to learning outcomes that are not mentioned in Annex 2 ('4.5. be prepared to take on the general ethical responsibilities of honesty and integrity; 5.1. be able to develop new ideas in practice and to adapt to innovations and changing conditions in practice'). It is advised to make sure to have uniform communication everywhere.

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 of the Law Study Programme.

The way in which subjects are linked to each of the individual learning outcomes is insufficiently illustrated in Annex 2. It is unclear which subjects relate to which particular learning outcome. By the same token, it is unclear which teaching/learning and assessment methods are used in the different subjects. Notwithstanding the fact that teachers share good practices, which is laudable, a better overview at management level of the used teaching/learning and assessment methods for each subject is advisable. From that perspective, Annex 1 contains very useful yet incomplete information.

Online teaching (and the associated flexibility) is one of the main characteristics of the Law Study Programme. Although management appeared to be aware that a minimum number (10%) of face-to-face moments are necessary and although action was taken following the request from the previous external review panel (2018) that the curriculum should include less self-study (SER p. 14), it would be advisable to draw up a policy that makes sure that all teachers organise sufficient contact hours in person (and not remote).

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

The Law Study Programme consists of general college study subjects (8,3%), study field subjects (88,4%) and electives (3,3%). Students first take general college subjects and then move on to legal subjects that provide more fundamental knowledge and that are arranged in a sequence of different levels. 'En route' students develop personal, social and special skills as well as research capacities, based on the different teaching methods that are used within the different subjects (case study, discussions, information retrieval, etc.) (SER p. 10-11).

With regard to professional skills development reference should be made to the different internships (practices) that feature a specific build-up over the different years of the programme. In the first year: educational internship and cognitive internship; in the second year: document management internship and specialty skills training internship; in the third year: final internship, depending on the chosen specialisation (SER p. 11).

Expert judgement/analysis

Skills and competences are reportedly developed through the different law field subjects. It is hard to check the aim of consistent competence development throughout the different subjects given the fact that the specific subject descriptions are only available on Moodle. Teachers have confirmed that they add to skills development on the basis of different teaching/learning methods. It would be advisable, however, for management to have a better view on the skills development that individual teachers are involved in (as opposed to leaving it to the individual teachers). As far as research skills are concerned, it appeared during the site visit that students were not so much involved themselves in conducting research, although the teachers themselves proved to be quite active from the research perspective.

With regard to the internships (practices), it would be advisable to invest in a concrete description of the differences between the 5 types of practices and avoid using different names (e.g. in SER p. 11 and in Annex 1).

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

Personalisation of studies is regulated in the Study Regulations of UK, which are available in English on the institution's website.

Although the Law Study Programme mainly consists of compulsory subjects, there are a number of ways in which the students can personalise their individual study programme.

- Choice of a foreign professional language (3 ECTS) (either English or German)
- Choice of two electives from a list (2 x 3 ECTS).
- Choice of a specialisation (15 ECTS): 1. Pre-trial procedure: 2. Legal Service

-Choice of the topic of the final thesis (10 ECTS)

-2 alternative social science courses: either Introduction to Sociology or Introduction to Philosophy (3 ECTS)

Based on the above it is clear that 37 ECTS out of 180 ECTS (20%) can be filled in according to the students' own preferences. In addition, students can also choose the place of their internships (max. 30 ECTS). If necessary, for reasons connected with the student's personal life, students can study according to an individual study plan.

Students from the Law Study Programme also have the opportunity to study abroad under the Erasmus student exchange program. UK's Erasmus+ partners can be found on the institution's website.

Expert judgement/analysis

The contents of the Law Study Programme leave room for individualisation that is comparable to what can be found in other law programmes at college level. More attention could be paid to international mobility, however. In addition to the traditional Erasmus exchange also short-term mobility programmes could be considered, as well as internationalisation at home, since students highlighted that it is difficult to combine international mobility with professional and family duties. Programme management could think of a mobility window within the curriculum, in order to assure students that their participation in international mobility will not cause difficulties for them in the form of increased workload or non-recognition of credits.

Apart from the possibility that students have to individualise their study programme contentwise, the flexibility of the Law Study Programme at UK seems to be its most salient and most appreciated characteristic. The teachers of this programme are very approachable and, in doing so, embody the most visible opportunity for students to personalise their study programme.

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

Factual situation

The final thesis comprises 10 ECTS and includes 2 final exams (2 ECTS each) and a graduation thesis (6 ECTS) on a real problem of regional and national law enforcement institutions and the application of the law (see table 5). Procedures are laid down in UK's Procedure of Evaluation and Organisation of the Final Exams and of the Final Thesis Preparation, Submission and Defence, which is available online and in English. Methodological requirements for the thesis are also available online, yet only in Lithuanian. Reviewers' and supervisors' assessment forms are available online as well (<https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/en/institution/legal-acts>).

Students prepare the thesis independently, under the supervision of a thesis supervisor. Interim reviews are organised by the department. At least 15 days before the public defence, the final thesis is discussed at a meeting of the department, upon which the student can still adapt the text. 5 days after this meeting thesis reviewers are appointed by order of the dean. The final thesis is defended at a public meeting of the Qualifying Committee, composed of

competent experts in the study field (researchers, professional practitioners, representatives of social partners).

Annex 4 gives an overview of the topics chosen in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The majority of topics have a connection with criminal law. All students passed and grades vary from 5 to 10.

Expert judgement/analysis

The expert panel has obtained a good view on how the final thesis is organised at UK. A lot of information is available online and has been translated into English, which is excellent. The use of standardised assessment forms is a plus. Although these assessment forms indicate that the final thesis is also aiming towards certain learning outcomes, the final thesis is not mentioned in Annex 2 as a subject that helps to reach the learning outcomes of the programme. That should be remedied.

The previous review panel highlighted that students should be encouraged to refer to the latest legal literature (including foreign literature) in their final theses. Reference needs to be made here to the fact that the library contained too many outdated print books. UK needs to set an example for its students and make sure that its library is up-to-date (see also below).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The programme is firmly embedded in the region and in the country, as per UK's mission. The relatively high number of students from Utena and the wider region testifies to this.
2. The flexibility of the programme, catering for the needs of students with professional and family obligations, is remarkable.
3. Procedures and methodological requirements for the final thesis are thought out well.
4. A lot of information on the programme is available online and in English.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Internationalisation is rather weak, especially given the fact that it is reportedly one of UK's strategic priorities for 2022-24.
2. The learning outcomes as described in Annex 2 are not the same as those published on UK's website, at <https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/en/studies-program/law>.
3. Study subjects are not paired to the separate learning outcomes of the programme (Annex 2).
4. Skills development is mainly left to the teachers of substantive legal subjects; students are supposed to develop competences 'en route'.

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

The College's participation in research and experimental activities includes intellectual property objects created by the College's employees (scientific publications, textbooks, studies, etc.), organised legal quizzes, international practical scientific conferences, participated in various national seminars and discussions related to the field of study, and carried out project activities.

For the years 2022-2024, one of the priorities of the strategic plan is the improvement/development of applied research, consulting and scientific activities.

The results of the teachers' scientific activities in dealing with specific issues of legislation and practical application of the law are integrated into the subjects taught in the LSP by organising seminars on relevant topics and sharing the results of research, discussions, and solving practical tasks, taking into account the latest case law (SER 58).

The biennial International Students' Scientific and Practical Conference "A Country Where it is Good to Live in" is organised to encourage students to share their theoretical and practical knowledge, to present the results of their current research, to share insights, experiences and innovative ideas, to initiate scientific discussions and to disseminate science (SER 59).

The College carries out the communication of science popularisation and scientific applied research results in cooperation with social and business partners.

The promotion of science and the communication of applied research outcomes in the context of the LSP takes place through events such as scientific conferences where research outcomes are presented. Participation in cultural life at the local and national levels takes place through events organised by the Department of Law and involvement of the students of Utena gymnasiums (SER 64).

Expert judgement/analysis

Although the scientific activity of the College is characterised by a variety of forms and has an international aspect, the quantitative data presented in the SER report show an annual decrease in the number of publications (from 2020, a sharp decrease from 5 to 1 publication), seminars, conferences (in the period of 2020-2022, a decrease from 9 to 4) number, and insufficient opportunities for students to engage in scientific research activities. Although conferences and seminars for students are held every year, during the meeting with students, the expert panel got the impression that students are not sufficiently involved in scientific research activities due to the lack of information about it.

The application of the results of scientific activity could be in a wider range of legal subjects (eg. civil law).

The Experts Panel was pleased that the 2020-2024 strategic activity plan provides for the financing of scientific activities, on the basis of which the improvement/development of consulting and research activities will be strengthened.

In the college, less than half of the teachers work full-time, which possibly determines the allocation of time for the academic activities of the teachers.

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 the LSP is constantly updated regarding the latest developments in science and technology, in particular by applying new methods of study assessment and teaching: simulation, reflection, interpretation of data, cognitive games, etc (SER 67).

Taking into account the actualities of law science, new and relevant topics are included in the descriptions of study subjects, seminars and discussions are organised for students.

Expert judgement/analysis

Although the SER mentions new assessment methods, it is not clear what they are and how they are applied in the study program.

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

Factual situation

A peer-reviewed journal of scientific works is published in the college "Insights", intended for the publication of student and joint student-faculty research articles. Students are involved in ongoing research not only by conducting research, but also by publishing it.

For active scientific activity, students are encouraged with incentive scholarships and thanks from the director of the college.

In the field of law studies, the problems of practical application of law solved by students' theses are relevant.

Expert judgement/analysis

During the Experts panel meeting with the students, Experts made an impression that students did not understand what scientific research is, what activities are carried out during it and how they can participate in it. When answering the question, they talked about how to find information about studies. From the answers of the students, the Experts panel got the impression that the involvement of students in scientific activities is very low.

It can be seen from the SER that the conditions for students' involvement in scientific activities are based only on the level of publications. From the experts panel's point of view, the conditions for students' involvement in scientific activities should be expanded, motivating

them with greater choice. Especially since during the meeting with the students, only a couple of students mentioned that they were preparing publications.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Diversity of forms of scientific activity for teachers.
2. Actual questions of the practical application of law are integrated into the content of taught study subjects.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient communication with students. Low involvement of students in scientific research activities.
2. The volume of conditions involving students in research activities is too small, limiting their choice. The SER report does not include a sample of student publications.
3. Low involvement of part-time teachers in scientific research activities.
4. Lack of financial measures focused on the motivation of teachers to participate in scientific research activities.
5. Passive involvement of social partners 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

Students' admission to the college is conducted in accordance with the state's rules for the admission of students to institutions of higher education. Students should achieve a minimum score, as determined by the Ministry of Education for the state-financed places and the non-state-financed places with a study scholarship, whereas the college sets the minimum score for the non-financed places.

Prospective students can find out information about their admission on the relevant websites, including the college's website.

The college organises Open Door Days and visits to schools, in order to disseminate information regarding the study programs, the admission conditions, the study structure, etc.

The students during our meetings have stated that they prefer the college because of regional reasons and due to the student-based approach, since the college offers a flexible and convenient timetable to combine study life and other obligations.

Expert judgement/analysis

The college has managed to build a positive reputation regarding the advantages it offers compared to other colleges. In fact, many students have stated that they have learned about the college from other college students who were satisfied by the education level. The students themselves recognize the individual study program and the distance delivery of the courses as advantages of the studies, as they allow them to combine their studies with other obligations.

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

The admission of foreign students and the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad are governed by European and national rules.

The college has specific rules regarding the recognition of learning outcomes of partial studies abroad.

A student, before departing for partial studies, must sign a contract with the two educational institutions regarding the courses he/she will attend and which will be recognized for his/her studies.

A percentage of 8.6% of students applied for recognition of their studies during the evaluation period. The non-recognition of the courses is due to the non-submission of the necessary supporting documents, the non-response to the learning outcomes in the corresponding college course and the lapse of 10 years since the studies were carried out.

Expert judgement/analysis

The only point to comment on is the particularly low percentage of students who applied for recognition of their studies at another educational institution.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

Factual situation

The college has drafted the Internationalisation Development Strategy for years 2021-2027, mainly based on the encouragement of students' mobility. Students have the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ program, either via study mobility or via internship mobility.

The college has signed 12 cooperation agreements with institutions abroad.

The students are able to get information on mobility by the International Relations Department, on the college website and social media, during meetings, etc.

8 students from abroad have visited the college for full-time studies.

During our meetings we were informed that students prefer to have internships abroad instead of study visits. Students generally avoid mobility programs because of family and work obligations.

Expert judgement/analysis

The low participation of students in mobility programs is explained by the fact that most students have both professional and family obligations and cannot be away from their place of residence for a long time. Nevertheless, some of the students participate in mobility programs through their participation in internships abroad.

3.3.4. Assessment of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students of the field

Factual situation

Academic support is conducted by counselling, internships, preparation of final theses, etc. Also teachers advise students regarding preparation of assignments, papers, etc.

The students can get information regarding internships by the faculty practice supervisor.

International Relations Department employees provide information regarding the students' participation in the mobility programs.

The Career and Communication Department provides information to the students about career planning.

During our meeting we were also informed that there are efforts to develop social skills of students and also seminars are provided related to anxiety, stress control, disorders, etc. These seminars are recorded and uploaded in the moodle.

The college provides financial support to students including scholarships for learning outcomes, one-time and targeted scholarships, living expenses, etc. During our meetings it was clarified that 50 social scholarships are given to all college students.

The college provides psychological support to the students. However, the students during our meeting stated that they do not know that there is a psychologist in the college.

The students have the opportunity to stay in the 3 dormitories.

Expert judgement/analysis

The college provides adequate information to the students regarding their studies and their future professional career.

The college should inform students about the provision of psychological support.

The college has developed many actions and initiatives for the financial support of the students, which makes their study effort more smooth. However, the college could grant more scholarships for excellent performance.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Factual situation

A group tutor for each academic group helps the students regarding college matters. Also the college gives information to the students about financial support, organisational structure, databases, etc. Besides, students' problems are discussed during the school meetings.

The students are informed about the consultation hours with the teachers. The teachers also help the students with the assignments, papers, theses, etc.

The students during our meetings have pointed out that the teachers are very supportive and approachable.

Expert judgement/analysis

The college has developed important initiatives for the successful counselling of students. The students stated that their teachers are very supportive and approachable, which implies a good cooperation between teachers and students.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Individualised study programs.
2. Participation in internships abroad.
3. Adequate financial support of the students.
4. Smooth cooperation between teachers and students.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Very few mobility agreements with institutions abroad.
2. Low interest in participating in mobility programs.
3. Ignorance of students regarding the possibility of psychological support.

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

LSF studies are conducted in full-time and part-time modes. Studies of different modes are equivalent. Studies in a part-time mode are organised in sessions and in a distance way. The time of sessions is specified in the study schedule. During the session, lectures, practicals and internships at Utena College are organised. Participation in seminars, practicals, training practice is mandatory, participation in theoretical lectures is desirable. Between sessions, students study independently. Examinations are held during examination sessions, after which

schedules of repeated defence of project works, of internships, and re-taking of examinations are made. A student, having assessed his/her abilities and possibilities (works, lives abroad or for other reasons is not able to attend Utena College regularly), internal motives and the risk of timeliness of the final accounting of the subject may change his/her studies during the lectures into independent studies. An individual study and accounting schedule can be drawn up for the above students, and an individual accounting sheet is issued, indicating the exact deadlines for the final accounting (SER p. 110).

The study material of the subjects is published, the teaching and learning process is supported; control and interactive connection between the teacher, the student and the students themselves are ensured by VLE Moodle tools. Some lectures can take place online by video conferencing method. Since 2011, Electronic Learning Centre (EMC) has been operating at Utena College; it takes care of the digitisation and accessibility of study information, documents used in the study process and study material for Utena College students, teachers, and entitled (responsible) employees (SER p. 111-112).

In order to achieve specific learning outcomes, both traditional teaching (learning) methods and non-traditional lectures are applied in the studies.

Assessment of the subject LOs is performed during the entire semester and examination session. The final assessment of the subject consists of a cumulative score, the composition of which is calculated according to the proportions provided in the subject description.

Internship places are offered for the students at the institutions with which Utena College has signed cooperation agreements.

Every student has the right to get acquainted with comments on the assessment of their knowledge and skills. Teachers shall inform the interested students about the main shortcomings and mistakes of their work. Students are provided with the opportunity to dispute (appeal) the assessment received and get a reasoned response regarding the appeal consideration (SER p. 118).

About half of the time in LSF is assigned to students' self-study. Students' independent assignments are oriented towards the individual student's needs, the intended abilities and LOs. Clear links are established between subjects' independent tasks and the workload (SER p. 119).

Students, having obtained a Professional Bachelor's Degree may continue their studies in Lithuanian and foreign HEIs according to the first and second cycle university programmes in the Law Study Field.

Expert judgement/analysis

In Experts panel view, the teaching and learning process at the college meets the needs of students and enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. More than half of the time is devoted to practical training, which enables students to prepare for professional careers

and further studies. After completing their studies at the College, students can continue their studies at Lithuanian and foreign higher education institutions.

The assessment system is clear and transparent, the cumulative assessment motivates students to study throughout the semester.

Although during the meeting with the students, the students emphasised the individual learning schedule and distance learning as an advantage, but for the experts, this indicator highlighted whether the lack of contact communication ensures the students' involvement in the study process and does not reduce the possibility of achieving the required learning results.

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

Factual situation

The disabled, socially sensitive groups, working students, and students with other needs are provided with college entrance benefits, targeted benefits, and paid social scholarships, and receive a place in the Student Home.

For students with a disability or a temporary health disorder, some aspects of the study process (study environment, study materials, payment forms, etc.) are adapted to the individual needs arising from the disability or temporary health disorder.

Students with disabilities are given the opportunity to study remotely. They can study remotely in the VMA Moodle environment using the video conferencing system. Individual study and accounting schedules can be made for students with disabilities.

Expert judgement/analysis

Although it seems from the SER that the College provides support for the disabled, socially sensitive groups and individually adapted learning, due to this, during the visit of the Experts panel to the College, doubts arose as to whether the College's material resources are adapted to the individual needs of students with mobility disabilities. According to experts, the distance education emphasised in the SER does not contribute to the quality of the involvement of students of sensitive groups in the study process, and does not sufficiently ensure their full involvement in the academic life of the college.

3.4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

Factual situation

In the Student Academic Database (hereinafter SADB), students can monitor their progress performance. Underperforming students are considered at the Department and the reasons for their underachievement are being explained. Students who have failed the exams or failed to defend the project work are provided with conditions to liquidate academic debts and to get consulted additionally by the teachers. Academic debts can be re-passed twice: for the first time

– free of charge, for the second time – by paying a fee for additionally provided study services (SER p. 129).

In order to reduce the number of dropouts, each student who intends to discontinue their studies is spoken to individually, the real reasons are clarified and, taking this into account, individualised solutions are offered (individual billing, suspension of studies). Student dropout, especially in the first year of study, is solved by creating better support for students in the first year of study: lecture attendance is monitored, group curators work with students, the department administrator and the head of the department constantly remind students about consultations, payment schedules, flexible payment methods for tuition fees, etc.

In Utena College Strategic Activity Plan 2022-2024 and in the criteria for assessment of the achievement of strategic goals and their meanings during 2022-2024, great attention was paid to the issues of the students' dropout, availability of studies, and flexibility. Measure 1.1. foresees creating a system for students' retention – increasing inclusion and "reducing dropout rate" by 30 06 2023, including: the analysis of the risk of students' dropout, individualisation of the study process, academic and psychological counselling, information and coordination, improvement of teachers' competence, and other elements.

Feedback on study achievements and further planning of study progress is based on the cooperation of students and teachers.

Teachers provide assignments that help students consistently develop skills and discuss progress in their studies, as well as formulate assessment criteria that describe student progress and effort. In order to assess the abilities of the students, monitor and compare the planned desired study results, an assessment scale or reflection is applied to the acquired knowledge (information questionnaires, mutual interview), which helps students to self-assess knowledge and the ability to apply it, communication, decision-making.

Expert judgement/analysis

The expert panel noticed that systematic monitoring of students' progress and work with students intending to discontinue their studies and individual adaptation of studies obviously reduce the percentage of student dropouts. The students interviewed during the visit were happy that the College provides opportunities to combine studies with both work and personal life, which presupposes the conclusion that confirms that the means of student progress used by the College are not encouraging to stop studies, but motivating to continue them.

Students were able to list the competencies provided by the College, which most of them use in their current work.

From the SER and meeting results, therefore, it can be said that all the mentioned tools give positive results and students use them successfully. Feedback on study achievements and further planning of study progress is based on the cooperation of students and teachers, and promotes students' personal responsibility for evaluating their achievements.

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

Factual situation

Monitoring of graduates' employment and career is performed by the Career and Communication Department on the basis of the data of Lithuanian Higher Institution Education Information System (KVIS), Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA), Employment Service and of the results of the students' survey.

12 months later after the graduation, in 2019, 65% of LSF graduates were employed, in 2020 – 85%, and in 2021 – 80% of graduates were hired. The majority of the graduates work according to the acquired profession – as police specialists and investigators, officers, junior civil service specialists, personnel and professional guidance specialists, politics and administration specialists, security personnel, civil servants performing general functions, etc. (SER p. 136).

Employers' surveys are regularly conducted, employers' feedback is analysed, which is filled in after the student has completed Professional Activity Practice, employers' representatives participate in the Study Programme Committee meetings, where graduates' employment indicators are analysed. From 2018 surveys of graduates are conducted on the preparation of studies for the labour market.

Utena College has the Alumni Club, the Alumni Club Registration Information System, which allows the Management of the Faculty and Department to contact alumni more effectively and conveniently, and registered alumni can provide work, internships, scholarships and other offers to the students (SER p. 140).

Expert judgement/analysis

On Experts panel view Uten College carries out systematic monitoring of the employment and career of graduates. The methods applied by the college (employer surveys, employers' feedback is analysed, graduate surveys are conducted in order to assess the quality of studies and their application to the labour market). From the data presented in the SER, it can be seen that quite a large number of even 80% of graduates work according to their specialty, this was confirmed by the meeting with graduates and employers, the majority of the gathered graduates are easily employed, are in demand in the labour market of their region (in courts, law firms, municipalities, police and etc.). During the meeting, the graduates gave very good feedback about the quality of the study college, preparation for the labour market, and the college's cooperation and involvement of graduates in the college's activities in order to ensure the relevance of studies to the labour market and student employment.

During the meeting with the teachers, the Experts panel got the impression that practical preparation and preparation of students for the labour market is very important for teachers.

The good level of preparation and organisation of the graduates was also confirmed by the employers who came to the meeting with the expert panel. They said that the students are very attractive and needed by the labour market in their region and perfectly meet their expectations.

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

Factual situation

The principles of ensuring academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are implemented at Utena College in Utenos College's Code of Academic Ethics, Student Internal Order Regulations, Provisions of Academic Ethics Committee Activity, Utena College Policy of Equal Opportunities. Utena College's Academic Ethics Committee is in charge of the implementation of the above mentioned principles; academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are discussed during the study process (SER p. 141).

Student/listener, before commencing his/her studies, signs Declaration of Integrity, which obliges to comply with the provisions of Utena College's Code of Academic Ethics and other documents, regulating ethical conduct; to look responsibly at own-as-a-student duties, to perform them honestly, etc.

Requests for violations of discrimination, academic honesty, and tolerance can be submitted to the Committee by any member of the College community.

Expert judgement/analysis

It is clear from SER that the College adheres to the principles of ensuring academic honesty, tolerance and non-discrimination, the implementation of which is ensured by an active academic ethics committee.

During the analysed period, there were no cases of violations of the principles of academic honesty, tolerance and non-discrimination, which indicates an adequate policy of monitoring and compliance with these principles.

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

Persons studying at Utena College have the right to submit appeals regarding the knowledge assessment score, violations of knowledge assessment procedures or disputing the imposition of penalties. Upon appeal submission to the Utena College Rector or the Faculty Dean, a commission shall be formed by their decree to re-examine the student's LOs. Appeals may be filed under Utena College Study Regulations in the following cases:

- a student who does not agree with the procedure and/or assessment of the examination has the right to submit an appeal to the Dean of the Faculty within 2 working days from the announcement of the assessment of the examination results;
- from the announcement of the results of the final or qualifying examination, final thesis defence results may submit an appeal on behalf of Utena College Rector;
- if a person does not agree with the decision concerning the crediting of LOs, s/he has the right to appeal to Utena College Rector within 10 days;

- a person who does not agree with the decision with regard to the assessment of formal requirements has the right to apply to the Appeal Board for the Assessment and Recognition of Qualifications Acquired Abroad, formed by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania within 10 days.

Expert judgement/analysis

Utena College takes all ethics and values issues seriously and reacts appropriately. Regulation and regulation of appeals in Academic Board resolution meets the needs of students and members of the Community.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The study process is well organised, students are given the opportunity to study according to their availability, and a schedule of classes convenient for them is made.
2. The focus on practical preparation of students ensures that graduates meet the needs of the labour market.
3. A clear achievement and assessment system, motivating students to study all the time.
4. A well-balanced legal study program between theory and practice.

(2) Weaknesses:

Weaknesses mentioned below do not have a significant impact on the evaluation of the area as very good.

1. More tools could be used to monitor the progress of the progress assessment.
2. Low involvement of students and social workers in the development of the study program process

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 college has 11 full-time teachers and 8 part-time teachers. 5 of the 19 teachers hold a PhD and 14 of the 19 teachers have at least 3 years of professional experience.

The annual workload of a teacher is 1,500 hours, which is configured according to the teacher's rank and includes teaching, research, administrative tasks, etc.

The number of teachers has not increased compared to the previous assessment, despite the fact that there was a recommendation to increase the number of teachers.

New teachers go through a pre-hire interview process. A supervisor with teaching experience undertakes to help the new teachers. In addition, the new teachers are consulted by the Head, other lecturers, etc. If a new teacher has no teaching experience, it is recommended to attend pedagogical training.

The teachers have sufficient teaching and professional experience. Most teachers have published legal articles during the assessment years. In fact, most part-time teachers have published legal articles as well. Besides, the college has its own journal, where teachers can publish their articles.

Expert judgement/analysis

The number of teachers is assessed as completely satisfactory. In fact, the number of full-time teachers and teachers who hold a PhD is also satisfactory.

The college pays particular attention to the harmonious integration and adequate preparation of new teachers through the help they receive from experienced teachers, the offer of pedagogical training, etc. However, it is considered more appropriate and beneficial that pedagogical training should be mandatory and not just recommended.

The academic staff of the college has a remarkable and completely satisfactory presence. Most teachers, including part-time teachers, have published several scholarly articles during the assessment years.

As far as the workload is concerned, it was not clarified during our meetings which is the average number of teaching hours per week.

The general impression we got in the context of our meetings is that the college staff consists of a good team, with cohesion and cooperation.

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 has developed a specific strategy for internationalisation for the years 2021-2027 and the participation of teachers in the Erasmus+ program is a condition for receiving the certification of teachers.

Many teachers have participated in the Erasmus+ program during the years 2019-2022 and have visited universities abroad (7 teachers have participated in study visits and 9 teachers have participated for teaching).

Also, during the years 2019-2022, 4 incoming teachers have had study visits in the college and 12 teachers have visited the college for teaching.

The college has taken additional initiatives to increase the internationalisation of the college, such as organising an international conference and publishing articles jointly with teachers from other countries.

Expert judgement/analysis

The college has developed remarkable initiatives for the participation of teachers in mobility programs and as a result many teachers have actually visited universities abroad for study or training.

The presence of incoming teachers at the college during the last years is also remarkable.

From our meetings it emerged that teachers have realised the benefits of mobility and internationalisation and want to participate in the respective programs.

It is particularly important that the college perceives internationalisation more broadly, as shown by the effort to cooperate with universities and teachers from abroad and in other ways (e.g. publishing of joint articles).

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

Factual situation

Teachers have the opportunity to enrich their qualifications through participation in seminars, training, etc. During the years 2019-2022 15 teachers participated in programs to improve their pedagogical methods, while during the years 2020-2022 18 teachers participated in programs to improve their professional qualifications.

Each teacher is responsible for setting at the beginning of the academic year the plan for his/her personal and professional improvement according to the Strategic Activity Plan. There is a departmental assessment every year. Also students participate in the teachers' assessment every year.

The college conducts an extensive teacher assessment every 5 years.

The enrichment of the college teachers' qualifications is done in various ways, e.g. visits to other Lithuanian educational institutions, internships, etc.

Teachers have the opportunity to receive a one-year sabbatical leave every 5 years in order to conduct research.

Expert judgement/analysis

The teachers' participation in training and personal and professional improvement programs is completely satisfactory. Teachers appear to pursue and achieve self-improvement. Besides, the college has developed a funding policy to encourage teachers to enrich their qualifications.

Granting a sabbatical leave is particularly important, so that a teacher can dedicate himself/herself to his/her research and have more effective scientific results. However, it is not specified how many teachers may be absent at the same time, e.g. if only one teacher can be

absent every year, this practically means that each teacher can only be absent on sabbatical leave once every about 10 years.

Also, the teachers have a satisfactory level of knowledge of the English language, which means that the linguistic program of different levels that the college offers to its teachers is effective.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Satisfactory number of full-time teachers and PhD holders.
2. Satisfactory process of integration of new teachers.
3. Considerable scientific presence through publication of scientific articles.
4. Broad participation of teachers in programs to strengthen their pedagogical and professional qualifications.
5. Considerable participation of teachers in the mobility programs and presence of incoming staff.
6. One-year sabbatical leave can be granted every 5 years.

(2) Weaknesses:

Weaknesses mentioned below do not have a significant impact on the evaluation of the area as very good.

1. Optional (and not mandatory) participation of new teachers in pedagogical training.
2. The criteria for granting sabbatical leave are unclear.

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

Since the pandemic much of the study process is executed remotely. The college has created the Electronic Learning Center in order to organise distance learning. Most of the law programme is offered by distance learning courses.

Students can use their own laptops within the college's premises or connect when they are at home via the appropriate tools to attend classes.

Students with disabilities have access to college premises by ramps and elevators. The college is also equipped with special equipment that enables studying for students with hearing or visual impairment.

The college has numerous classrooms and auditoriums, which are generally renovated and fully equipped. The college also provides a space for the students' leisure time, but there is no canteen in the main building used for the law students.

The college offers to the students a list of the recommended institutions and companies where they can have their internship, but the students can also search for an internship by themselves. The students also have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with institutions and authorities that are related to legal studies (e.g. courts, notaries, attorneys' offices, prosecutors' offices, police, etc.) through visits and field trips.

The opening hours of the library are 8:00-17:00 but are extended during the exam period. The library covers a limited area and has 10 workstations and 5 computerised workstations. The library disseminates the newest received books. The library provides access to numerous databases and other e-resources. The students have access to databases even from home. The college is also a member of a network that enables students to do scientific research using databases of other libraries.

The teachers do not have their own offices, but common workstations, since they seldom use the college premises.

Expert judgement/analysis

The assessment of the college is made according to one key parameter: that the courses are mainly offered remotely and therefore the usual needs for facilities (which exist in any other college) are limited, but there is an increased need for suitable digital equipment and the college has obtained such suitable equipment which makes distance learning efficient.

The college has made a remarkable effort to renovate the teaching areas and equip them with modern equipment. The rooms are spacious, sunny and clean. In fact, there is a place where students can spend their free time. The fact that there is no canteen is not a problem, as the students informed us that there are shops nearby.

The area of the library is very limited and there are only a few workplaces. The fact that the college offers mostly distance learning programs does not diminish the significance of the shortage, as college representatives told us that they are expanding their courses and programs with physical appearance. Also, the library hours are limited. These problems are partly solved by the fact that students can use the reading rooms of other libraries, from where they have access to the electronic resources of the college. The library has few spaces suitable for group collaboration. Also, printed books are few and usually older editions. Of course, this disadvantage is counterbalanced by the fact that the newer versions exist in electronic form. In addition, the library offers access to a variety of electronic resources. The books obtained during the years 2019-2022 (33 titles and 61 copies of books) are not assessed to be sufficient. The library has also developed a network of collaborations that allows students to do a wider scholarly research, as they have the possibility to use more sources. The information provided by the library regarding the acquisition of new books is very useful. Also, the library organises four-hour seminars for new students on how to use the library.

The fact that the professors do not have their own offices but common workstations is not a problem, as they do not often come to the college premises. However, the workstations are not suitable and need immediate renovation.

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

Factual situation

The renewal and upgrading of the resources of the college is held annually according to certain rules and procedures and mainly according to the 2022-2024 strategic activity plan.

Great attention is paid to the renewal of the computerised places and the acquisition of updated equipment and software.

Expert judgement/analysis

The college makes continuous efforts for modernization in terms of material equipment and electronic programs and indeed it is observed that this is being achieved to a great extent, without this implying that there is no room for improvement.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Considerable efforts to renovate the facilities.
2. Access to people with disabilities and care to facilitate their learning.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Limited area of the library, workstations and spaces for group work.
2. Inappropriate workstations for teachers.
3. Limited spaces for students' free time.

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

Since 2013 College has implemented a Study Quality Management System based on the standard ISO:9001 and the European Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulations and Guidelines (ESG). The implementation of quality assurance measures has since undergone a series of reforms and modifications.

Nowadays the College central body to ensure Quality Assurance is the 2019 established Study Quality Committee, responsible for the institution as such. It consists of 13 members from

inside College administration staff, other College employees, representatives from the Career and Communication Department and one student from each Faculty.

The processes of collecting data with surveys, the possibility for students to evaluate the teaching staff, complaint procedures etc. have been initiated and described in detail.

The main group of SQMS processes determine the structure of study management and decision-making.

The management and decision-making of the Law Study Programme is carried out by resolutions or decisions of the department, involving different levels of councils and committees in their respective, in detail described functions.

The main Units within the Law Programme is trying to ensure quality of studies are:

- The Department of Law, organising the overall activities of the Department
- The Law Study Programme, reflecting the exact implementation of the programme content
- The Faculty Council, working with the results of the ongoing analyses of the programme.

Expert judgement/analysis

After having held extensive talks during the site-visit at College it has become clear that the Central Study Quality Committee, caring for QMS features for the whole institution is somewhat disconnected from the quality assurance problems of individual study programmes like the Law Study Programme. The only connection to the daily ongoing in the Faculties is the student representative of each Study Field (students unusually being the weakest part of immediate stakeholders for lack of experience and lack of seniority but being the main client of the institution).

The Central Study Quality Committee, setting the QA framework for all branches out above the Study Fields which organise the QA features within Law Studies and define the respective responsibilities.

Given that there is a palpable gap between the defined organisational structure of QMS for College as such, not involving relevant stakeholder groups apart from students and QMS practice within the Study field of Law, involving teachers and students as stakeholders in the procedures. A second gap appears when it comes to the QMS involvement and close ties with the stakeholder groups 'Alumni and Social Partners'. They are by no means left out of the process but the ties are rather loose and their expertise is not used to the full.

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

Factual situation

College and its Study Field Law involve all relevant stakeholders inside and outside the institution to avail of their experiences, needs and expectations. Social partners and

representatives of courts, police, probation offices etc. were and are heard in order to compose courses according to the needs of the labour market.

Employers of all kinds, but mainly the public sector, offer internships for students and are taking part in the commission assessing the defence of the final thesis'. Employers' suggestions in modifying taught courses to meet the needs of employers and the labour market are taken up by the Law Study Programme Committee.

The same is true for suggestions of students', administrations and teaching staff representatives, present in SPC and SQC.

Satisfaction and dissatisfaction rates of stakeholders, concerning studies, employability and the quality of acquired qualifications, are collected with different surveys.

Different meetings of students and teaching staff with alumni, feedback from social partners, concerning the advancement of professional skills of students, the success of events, outings, and professional visits to offices and courts to give students a better perspective towards their prospective careers are taken into account, when the further development of Law Studies at College is discussed within the decision making committees of the Faculty.

Expert judgement/analysis

After having discussed matters with different stakeholders, including teaching staff, students, Alumni and social partners, the panel is satisfied that QMS is a practised feature at College.

SER and discussions during the on-site visit have made it clear that surveys of different kinds are and have been conducted.

Most recent examples of changes and adaptations made according to feedback from stakeholder groups were not given in detail. Each stakeholder group, being a bit further away from College and the core stakeholder groups of students and teaching staff, mainly being alumni and social partners, have a rough knowledge and impression of what is going on inside the decision taking, strategy making and steering units of the Law Faculty.

The further outside stakeholders are from the everyday study life at College, the less informed they are and the less effective their involvement is when asked for opinions and suggestions.

The SER speaks of 'various ways', recommendations and feedback from those stakeholder groups which are described as 'valuable', to reach the decision makers in the Faculty of Law.

All stakeholder groups have verified that their opinions are heard and the Faculty of Law is heeding the given advice when appropriate.

However, when asked in detail of concrete situations and organisational aspects of 'who does what' and 'who is responsible for what' and 'when was the last time someone took part in certain committees of councils with what results and which time- frames for implementation' stayed mainly unanswered.

This shows that provisions for Quality Management are as a framework in place but need overall coordination and narrower ties to the stakeholders outside College.

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

Factual situation

Data and information are on a regular basis gathered by different departments being responsible for different organisational areas within College. The Department of Studies is responsible for information about students, their progress and performance. All survey results on studies, employment, internships, mobilities, resources and infrastructure (including digitalisation efforts) are gathered and analysed by the respective departments in charge.

The main results of the information and data collection are discussed in meetings of several Committees and councils to prepare for possible decisions to react. Summarised results of the surveys are published for the public on the College website.

Conclusion and decisions of surveys and evaluations are disseminated to the public through the College website, social networks (e.g. Facebook), different events and dissemination channels (e.g. the traditional 'in corpore quiz'). Career days are held. Student fairs are used to attract prospective students, potential social partners and the general public alike.

The enrollment procedure for new students is used to ask specifically why College had been chosen as a place of study to gain new insights into what makes College attractive to whom.

Expert judgement/analysis

The main stakeholders, consisting of teaching staff, students, graduates and social partners have verified that representatives of their groups were invited to work with the Study Quality Committee which is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Study Quality Management System.

To the satisfaction of the panel the QMS is in place and working. However, many data and actions deriving from them date back some years. This is also true for the Strategic Activity Plan of Utenos kolegija compiling plans and activities for the time stretch 2019-2021. A more recent Strategic Plan (2022-2024) was provided but didn't reach the panel members. During the discussions it could be established that up to date strategic planning is in place. The part of the College website, where according to the SER p.46 the summarised results of the surveys conducted by the Study Quality Committee are published, could not be accessed.

College QMS activities give the impression to be manifold, touch different sectors of interest which would help to steer College in the right direction under the central lead of the Study Quality Committee. There are many organisational and administrative units active in assisting the QMS activities.

QMS activities and their immediate results date back quite a few years. Strategic planning on the basis of recent data has to be taken up for the present and the future and dissemination

tools would have to be checked for effectiveness and the information for stakeholders and the general public being current.

Interestingly enough, in talks with stakeholders and students, it was expressed several times that 'word of mouth' was the best and most efficient marketing feature of College.

3.7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the SKVC or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI

Factual situation

The quality of studies is assessed by surveys of students' and graduates' opinions yearly after the autumn semester. The conducted surveys so far show that students are satisfied with the conditions and content of their studies. The students have expressed in the surveys their satisfaction with the quality of teaching, the teachers and teaching methods. The studies were seen as recommendable.

Undertaken surveys have led to changes in certain organisational aspects of College, such as the relocation of the library for a better use to the city centre. In another response to alumni and student surveys in College recreational spaces for students and student gatherings have been provided for by College.

Overall satisfaction rate with the academic, financial and personal support provided by College is about 80 percent. Survey outcomes have led to the installation of more methodological seminars, preparing for the task of scientific research, which is needed for the preparation for the final thesis.

Expert judgement/analysis

In the discussion of students with panel members, the students indeed expressed their overall satisfaction with the study situation at College. Mainly the high level of satisfaction stems from the flexible organisational approach of studies at College.

College basically caters for almost every need. This means that remote study features are very high in demand, courses and teacher-student communication have a strong online basis. Moodle is in good use. Literature is mainly accessed online. Even tests and other obligatory features of study can be modified through individual study plans.

This approach of College is highly cherished by students. It seems to be a main point of attraction. Students believe that the ability to study from nearly anywhere and to study at your own pace in a most flexible study environment is a unique selling point of College.

The teacher-student relation is also mentioned as being very good. Teachers are approachable and offer a good teaching quality and professional experience. Also the possibility of living in a College dormitory is attractive to a number of students, including refugees from Ukraine.

The need for more recreational events and facilities as well as a catering place (canteen, cafe) during the weeks of students' presence were named.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. College has a multi-layer, exactly defined Quality Management System, including the main stakeholders on a Faculty Level.
2. College uses several forms of informing the public about the Study of Law, its contents, latest developments, using different channels of dissemination (website, social networks, events etc.)

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The QMS as a whole is complicated and bureaucratic instead of lean and simple in the processes.
2. College as a whole, Faculties and stakeholders outside the institution are not in the same way involved in the QMS process. Thus not all improvement potential is used to the full.

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. Try to find out why a considerable number of graduates work in low-skilled jobs (whilst there is a high demand for graduates from college studies in law). 2. Consider the development of a system that allows monitoring the development of legal (research) skills throughout the curriculum as well as the specific teaching/ learning and assessment methods that are used in every study subject. 3. Consider the introduction of more internationalisation at home (electives in English, guest teachers, etc.), short term mobility (1 to 2 weeks) and the introduction of a mobility window in the curriculum, assuring that participation in international mobility will not cause difficulties for students in the form of increased workload or non-recognition of credits. 4. Make sure that all legally defined learning outcomes of the first cycle college studies in law are present in the learning outcomes of the programme and pair each of them, separately, to the different subjects. 5. Consider the development of a monitorable system of sequential skills development that culminates in the final thesis and final practice. 6. With regard to the internships (practices), consider a concrete description of the differences between the 5 types of practices and avoid using different names for the same internship.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the involvement of students and part-time teachers in scientific research activities by increasing the scope of the conditions of involvement for students and establishing financial means for teachers. 2. To increase the dissemination of information about the ongoing scientific activity and the conditions of opportunities for involvement in it, both for students and social partners.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the mobility agreements. 2. Increase the performance scholarships. 3. Strengthening the facility of psychological support.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To create means for students' independent learning and maintaining the balance of involvement in college activities. 2. Use more methodologies to monitor student progress.

Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mandatory attendance of training seminars for new teachers. 2. Specification of the criteria under which the sabbatical leave is granted. 3. More frequent extensive assessment of faculty staff.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renovation of the library and increase of the workplaces. 2. Renovation of the teachers' workstations. 3. Configuration of spaces for students' leisure time.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended to go through the QMS procedures and look for possibilities to simplify . There are multiple players and multiple responsibilities on different levels, choking the effect of continuous improvement by QMS insights. 2. It is also recommended to ensure that analysis is taking part on the basis of most recent data and leads to an up to date strategic response. 3. It is recommended to tie alumni/graduates and social partners closer to the everyday operations of the Faculty of Law by way of information and resulting collaboration to ensure a seamless bridging effect of studies and practice.

V. SUMMARY

The panel wants to extend its thanks to College for preparing a diligent Self Evaluation Report, realistically mirroring the situation the institution finds itself in at present and the preparation of the site visit, which took place in an open, hospitable and friendly atmosphere.

College runs from an organisational point of view a clearly perceptible academic operation compared to other colleges the panel visited. Very similar and different in curricula details only is the coursework in the Study Field of Law. Very different is the approach in the college-student relation.

Studies of Law are conducted on a very individualised basis. Flexibility to serve the client and main stakeholder – the students – is of the essence at College. Many students face different life situations, may it be the far away living and working, the part timers from other regions, mothers with young children etc. College has specialised to care for almost every need. Remote studies and highly individualised studies are possible at College together with a sprinkle of obligatory contact hours. In the discussions with management students and teaching staff, it became obvious that this flexible and clientele friendly approach with the usual marketing initiatives and above all word of mouth led to a high percentage from students coming from outside the region or availing of remote study precautions. The overall student friendly approach of the institutions is one of the main selling points of College and highly attractive for students.

An initial point of irritation was that College upon request of the panel furnished us with an outdated Strategic Plan, covering 2019-2021 and also referring to data within explanations of how efficient the Quality Assurance provisions work that date back quite a while. The also on October 16th provided Strategic Plan for 2022-2024 didn't reach the panel members. During discussions the main points of the most recent Strategy could be established.

Other than that, the make up of responsibilities in the QMS of College doesn't grasp at all different levels the assistance and expertise of all stakeholder groups. Simplification of processes and narrowing the ties with graduates and social partners who are just outside the immediate internal stakeholders (teaching staff and students) could be the solution.

Very laudable are the lecturer-student and social partner-student relations. In the Study Field Law we have at College 11 fully affiliated full-time teachers which is a figure well above average. Teachers are motivated, are of high quality, mostly have fluent English and live in mobilities, conferences and publications in the spirit of internationalisation, problem-based teaching and research. This also infuses students accordingly. However, students' abilities to express themselves in English has to be improved and the research component in their studies strengthened to a good degree. As of now, students mainly understand 'research' as being capable of researching and composing a thesis.

Students were well aware of mobility possibilities and cross-border activities, be it internships abroad, blended learning activities or other forms of internationalisation at home or elsewhere. As an overall picture, it was obvious that internationalisation efforts are made on an

institutional and individual level but needs to be stepped up considerably with adequate measures.

The network of social partners allows for diverse internships and the practical side of studies, enhancing employment possibilities. Social partners are committed to College and add their recommendations to the quality of studies.

Organisational procedures and the curriculum as such did get recommendations but are in an overall good shape.

When it comes to infrastructure and resources, improvements have to be thought of. Taking into account the mainly remote character of College, there still needs to be thought of installing better catering and recreational facilities. The print book area of the library is partly outdated. Disabled students will find it hard to avail of the premises.

Altogether the Study Field of Law at College was accredited for 7 years with the marks to be found in the report.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Prof. dr. Achim Albrecht