STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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INFORMATICS FIELD OF STUDY

Klaipėdos valstybinė kolegija

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:
1. Panel chair: Prof. dr. Philippe Bonnet
2. Academic member: Prof. dr. Claus Pahl
3. Academic member: dr. Lukas Daniel Klausner
4. Social partner: Juozas Breivė
5. Student representative: Tautvydas Kvietkauskas

SKVC coordinator: Aleksandras Kačanauskas

Report prepared in 2024
Report language: English

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The study field evaluations in Lithuanian higher education institutions (HEIs) are based on the following:

- Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport;
- Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC);
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The evaluation is intended to support HEIs in continuous enhancement of their study process and to inform the public about the quality of programmes within the study field.

The object of the evaluation is all programmes within a specific field of study. A separate assessment is given for each study cycle.

The evaluation process consists of the following main steps: 1) self-evaluation and production of a self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by a HEI; 2) a site visit of the review panel to the HEI; 3) the external evaluation report (EER) prepared by the review panel 4) accreditation decision taken by SKVC and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.

The main outcome of the evaluation process is the EER prepared by the review panel. The HEI is forwarded the draft EER to report on any factual mistakes. The draft report is then subject to approval by the external Study Evaluation Committee operating under SKVC. Once approved the EER serves as the basis for an accreditation decision. If a HEI is not happy with the outcome of the evaluation, HEI can file an appeal.

On the basis of the approved EER, SKVC takes one of the following accreditation decisions:

- **Accreditation granted for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points), or good (3 points).
- **Accreditation granted for 3 years** if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).
- **Not accredited** if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

1.2. REVIEW PANEL

The review panel was appointed in accordance with the Reviewer Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC.

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: Prof. dr. Philippe Bonnet
2. Academic member: Prof. dr. Claus Pahl
3. Academic member: dr. Lukas Daniel Klausner
4. Social partner: Juozas Breivė
5. Student representative: Tautvydas Kvietkauskas

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 08 of May 2024 in hybrid.

Meetings with the following members of the staff and stakeholders took place during the site visit:

- Senior management and administrative staff of the faculty(ies)
- Team responsible for preparation of the SER
- Teaching staff
- Students
- Alumni and social stakeholders including employers.

There was a need for translation during the meeting.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

KVK is a state college that has three faculties (Business, Technologies, and Health Sciences) and ten departments, which administer 25 study programmes in 21 study fields.

Overview of the study field

The Informatics programme is anchored in the Informatics department of the Technologies faculty. It has been offered since 2004.

Previous external evaluations

The Informatics study programme was positively evaluated in 2012. The study programme was accredited for the maximum period of time.

Documents and information used in the review

The following documents and/or information have been requested / provided by the HEI before or during the site visit:

- *Self-evaluation report and its annexes*
- *Final theses*

Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

The following additional sources of information have been used by the review panel:

- Informatics self-evaluation report
- Course description for programming fundamentals and computer networks.

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	INFORMATICS
State code	6531BX004
Type of study (college/university)	College
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full Time (3 years)
Workload in ECTS	180
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Professional Bachelor of Computing
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English
Admission requirements	Secondary, advanced or any other corresponding education
First registration date	2004

III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The first cycle of the Informatics study field at Klaipėdos valstybinė kolegija is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points[1]*
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	4
	Total:	27

[1] **1 (unsatisfactory)** - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are substantial shortcomings that hinder the implementation of the programmes in the field.
2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings that need to be eliminated.
3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any substantial shortcomings.
4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings.
5 (exceptional) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

1.1.	Programmes are aligned with the country's economic and societal needs and the strategy of the HEI

FACTUAL SITUATION

1.1.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the needs of the society and/or the labour market

There is a need for skilled IT professionals and informatics specialists in Lithuania in general and in the Klaipeda region in particular (SER p. 8). The aims and learning outcomes of the Informatics programme are aligned with these needs. The stakeholders stressed the quality of the graduates from KVK and the quality of their interaction with the college.

There is a process in place for a yearly revision of the courses involved in the programme by the INF study programme committee. The KVK has a quality team in place. This is evidence that the KVK is well positioned to self-evaluate the programme and manage its evolution so that it keeps contributing to the needs of society and of the labour market.

1.1.2. Programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the HEI's mission, goals, and strategy

The aims of the programme are aligned with KVK mission, goals and strategy. The programme is anchored in the Informatics department with competent staff in charge. The KVK
defines a clear notion of applied research with which the programme is aligned.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

The KVK has defined a clear structure and strategy that supports the development and evolution of the programme so that it keeps on being aligned with the needs of society and stakeholders.

1.2.	Programmes comply with legal requirements, while curriculum design, curriculum, teaching/learning and assessment methods enable students to achieve study aims and learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The structure of the programme complies with legal requirements (SER pp. 9–12).

1.2.2. Programme aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods are aligned

The INF study programme committee monitors and enforces the alignment of learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods provided by teachers in their course description.

The visit showed that the learning outcomes described in the study programme correspond to the bare minimum described by the *Descriptor of the Group of Study Fields of Computing.* The programme would

benefit from more ambitious learning outcomes, including level 4 or 5 learning outcomes in the Bloom taxonomy.

1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

The curriculum ensures a progression over the duration of the programme (SER Annex 1). In particular, the study programme focuses on a progression of practical training and internship over the last two years of the programme (programming practice, IT system internship, System design internship, and final internship).

1.2.4. Opportunities for students to personalise curriculum according to their personal learning goals and intended learning outcomes are ensured

Students can choose free elective courses (6 credits) as well as choose a subject (distributed programming or database) in the 4th semester (4 credits) (see SER p. 15).

1.2.5. Final theses (applied projects) comply with the requirements for the field and cycle

Final theses comply with the requirements of a Bachelor programme (see SER pp. 15–17).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The INF programme is a good match for the needs of local stakeholders and society in general. The KVK has established processes for self-evaluation and management of the study programme.

AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Negative - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				4	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The yearly evaluation of the programme by the INF study programme committee with a documentation of the changes and their motivations is evidence that the KVK is able to self-evaluate and manage the programme.
2. The progression in terms of practical training and internships is a great feature of the programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. The programme would benefit from more ambitious learning outcomes, including level 4 or 5 learning outcomes in the Bloom taxonomy.

AREA 2: LINKS BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC (OR ARTISTIC) RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1.	Higher education integrates the latest developments in scientific (or artistic) research and technology and enables students to develop skills for scientific (or artistic) research

FACTUAL SITUATION

2.1.1. Research within the field of study is at a sufficient level

The KVK has a clear definition of applied research. This clear framework enables the Informatics department to motivate, monitor and document how staff contribute applied research in the field of study at a sufficient level (e.g., annual assessments, see SER pp. 18–23).

2.1.2. Curriculum is linked to the latest developments in science, art, and technology

The stakeholders emphasised the quality of the curriculum and the quality of the graduates. The participation of students in hackathons and student programming contests is further evidence of the fact that the curriculum is sufficiently linked to the latest developments in computer science.

2.1.3. Opportunities for students to engage in research are consistent with the cycle

The final thesis is the opportunity for students to engage in applied research. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in hackathons and programming competitions that enable them to confront open problems.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

The department of informatics conducts applied research that is aligned with the framework defined by the KVK and is at a sufficient level.

AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Negative - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				4	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The KVK defines clear expectations in terms of applied research and implements clear processes to monitor, document and promote research contributions.

AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

3.1. Student selection and admission is in line with the learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

3.1.1. Student selection and admission criteria and procedures are adequate and transparent

The admission to the Informatics 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 KVK.

For admission to INF studies, applicants are ranked according to the competitive score, which consists of: first subject - mathematics (weighting factor - 0.4), second subject - information technology or physics, or biology, or chemistry or geography (weighting factor - 0.2), the third subject – any studied subject that does not coincide with the first and second (weighting factor – 0.2) and the fourth subject – Lithuanian language and literature (weighting factor 0.2). Applicants to state-financed (hereinafter - VF) study places in the 2020-2023 admission year are subject to a minimum competitive score of 4.3 points, and applicants to non-state-funded (hereinafter - VNF) study places - 2.0 points.

Additional points: completed vocational training program in the same field of education as the INF (level IV) - 1 point; those with at least 6 months of work experience related to the INF direction - 1 point; those who have an employer's recommendation on activities related to the INF direction - 0.5 points; those who have studied for at least one year in Lithuanian or foreign higher education institutions - 1 point. The criteria for awarding additional points are mainly focused on applicants who associate their field of study with an already acquired profession or work experience.

The first line contains only the numbers of applicants who met the requirements of the competition, and the second shows the total number of persons wishing to study (including those who did not meet the requirement of the competitive score). The total number of those wishing to study is growing every year (111 in 2020, 145 in 2021, 147 in 2022, 173 in 2023). The percentage of persons who wished to study and met the requirements of the competition, out of all those who wished to study, remains stable: in 2020 was 83 out of 111 (73.0 percent), in 2021 – 101 out of 145 (69.66%), 2022 – 113 out of 147 (76.87%), 2023 – 139 out of 173 (80.34%).

The minimum competitive score in the analysed period increased from 2.00 to 2.73, the maximum competitive score ranges from 7.30 to 9.39 and was higher than 9 points in the last two years of admission. In 2021 - 2023, three graduates with the highest marks from the matriculation exams entered the KVK - 1 graduate each year. The average competitive score in the field during the analysed period ranges from 4.68 in 2022 to 5.00 in 2023.

3.1.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications, periods of study, and prior learning (established provisions and procedures)

Subject credits and INF study programs are carried out for students who have gone abroad for studies or practice under the Erasmus+ exchange program. If it is not the fault of the person who is being sent to another higher education institution that there are subjects that have not been taken and not reported according to the agreed study content, when he returns to continue his studies, conditions are created to receive evaluations of the subjects of the study program that were not counted.

In three years, 23 students went to foreign educational institutions.

2020-2023 during the period, the number of students who have signed VF and VNF study contracts for the first year study places of the INF study program in Lithuanian for the past three years remains stable. In 2020 There was interest in the INF study program in Lithuanian and 22 contracts were signed, in 2021 – 32 contracts, 2022 – 34 contracts, 2023 – 31 contracts. From 2020 admission to the INF study program is also announced in English. In 2020 Two contracts were signed for the INF study program in English, in 2021. – no contracts were signed, in 2022 – two contracts, 2023 - three contracts.

During the analysed period, 73 credit cards were prepared, of which 32 were for Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Program (hereinafter BIP) participants. Student requests to credit previously acquired study achievements are received every year. For example, in 2022, nine students of the INF study program participated in the BIP project: Smart House Virtualization, in which 40 students from five foreign higher education institutions participated. For the students of the INF study program, following the mobility agreement, the study subject of 4 ECTS credits was credited.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

The number of students in the KVK is consistently increasing, indicating a growing interest and satisfaction with the institution. Student dropout is not presented, suggesting either a low dropout rate or a lack of available data. The KVK complies with all admission regulations, ensuring a fair and standardised admission process. Additionally, the lowest passing score is higher than the lowest competitive score set for the states, highlighting the KVK's rigorous academic standards and commitment to excellence.

3.2.   There is an effective student support system enabling students to maximise their learning progress

FACTUAL SITUATION

3.2.1.   Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

Twice a year, the Department of International Relations organises meetings with students at the faculty. 42 cooperation agreements have been signed in the INF field of study. Mobility program participants receive a grant for travel and living expenses. After the mobility of the students, the credits they bring home are counted when preparing the study results credit card. Dissemination of Erasmus+ experience to students is underway - sharing of experience by returned students is organised. The KVK website in English provides additional useful information for students coming from abroad. Popular Erasmus+ BIP project.

3.2.2.   Academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support provided to students is relevant, adequate, and effective

Information is provided on the official website of the KVK. Consultations on academic and career issues for students of INF study programs are provided at the dean's office, the department, the Study and Career Center. Psychologist consultations in TF are provided once a week, after prior registration by phone or e-mail. by post Financial assistance is provided in accordance with the rules established by the state. 2020-2022 16 students received one-time scholarships. 25 students of the INF study program were encouraged and rewarded for their active participation in scientific applied research and their dissemination. 32 students

were encouraged for their initiatives in international projects. In 2022 during the presentation of diplomas, the UAB Creative Partner company presented a gift voucher worth EUR 500 to one student.

The SA website provides useful information about ongoing social actions, projects, lectures, and visits by social partners. It also organises cultural and entertainment events.

KVK also encourages and supports student activities that create unity and community. For example, blood donation.

3.2.3.   Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

Introductory lectures for students in the first week of their studies are conducted by the vice-dean (introduces the study process, students' rights and responsibilities, study documents), the head of the department (introduces the study program, traditions, requirements), the head of the study and career centre and the study and career specialist (introduces forms and types of support and their diversity, activities of the Study and Career Center) and a library employee (introduces information search systems). Help for students is provided by group curators - they are department teachers who help their supervised group to solve problems related to studies throughout the study period.

Teachers provide consultations to students according to a prepared consultation schedule published in the Moodle virtual learning environment. The student counselling schedule is published for the entire study semester. Teachers advise students individually, by email. by mail, remotely.

At the end of the first semester, a survey of first-year students is conducted in order to find out the effectiveness of the adaptation program. The results of the survey are discussed with the TF academic community, student representatives, and group elders.

Student representatives are included in the composition of the Study Program Committee, KVK Academic Council and the Council.

Every year, career days are organised for students, during which career opportunities are introduced.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

KVK admission is conducted according to state laws and KVK rules. Students are given scores in addition to the admission competitive score. The total number of students who want to study is growing. The lowest score has been increasing over 0.73, and for the last two years the maximum admission score has been above 9.

Students actively participate in Erasmus+ BIP programs and projects. There are only a few foreign students, so the proposal would be to expand the activities of ESN and encourage students to contribute to the promotion of the university. Only 7 students came for full studies in 4 years.

Scholarships and grants are awarded and paid in accordance with established laws and regulations. Students know where to find information. The KVK prepares social initiatives. Students are helped to find internships by teachers, the career centre and the heads of the department themselves.
Students can organise and participate in university events and initiatives. New students are helped by the department, tutors-curators, and student representation to get involved in the study life.

AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Negative - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				4	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Students participating in Erasmus+ BIP program and doing projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Recommend to improve Erasmus Student Network relationships with other universities and colleges to attract more foreign students.

AREA 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT ASSESSMENT, AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

4.1. Students are prepared for independent professional activity

FACTUAL SITUATION

4.1.1. Teaching and learning address the needs of students and enable them to achieve intended learning outcomes

There are 1 study programme in the field of Informatics evaluated. Study forms and modes comply with the specified in SER. Study material is available on a distance learning platform also, as students prefer to attend distance theoretical lectures and this gives ability to enable students resources independently with possibility to plan their study time. The study programme covers a wide range of topics related to informatics, including computer hardware and software, programming, algorithms, data structures, software development methodologies, and more.

Used teaching methods, like traditional theoretical lectures and practical work which are combined within field trips, applied exercises, presentations and conferences, case studies, work in groups, etc., allowing students to experience a variety of learning approaches.

KVK has ISO 9001 implemented with clear procedures for study program enhancement and improvement. Quality department established which monitors processes within ISO certification.

During the meeting with teaching staff it was observed that important soft skills within the study program are developed during teamwork and other study subjects (like, agile development, programming projects, etc.).

Social partners mention that they are satisfied with the graduate skills acquired in the course of their studies.

4.1.2. Access to higher education for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs is ensured.

In the meetings with the management and teachers groups it was stated that there are no students with special needs at this moment in evaluated study programs, however, building premises are adopted to the students with special needs.

Being open for students with special needs creates a success story for business organisations in which such students could work and KVK by itself becoming more open, adaptive to changes, and innovative.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

As it is worth mentioning that each aim in a study program equips the students with the competences relevant to the labour market needs. High variety of teaching methods provides students learning experiences that cater to different learning styles and promote active participation.

Experts were impressed by students' loyalty to their institution during the meetings: satisfaction with the programmes and the resources they could have at their disposal. They found their teachers helpful and accessible on demand.

4.2.	There is an effective and transparent system for student assessment, progress monitoring, and assuring academic integrity

FACTUAL SITUATION

4.2.1. Monitoring of learning progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and learning progress planning is systematic

The assessment methods defined in SER (including exams, assignments, projects, presentations, and practical demonstrations) are designed to evaluate students' knowledge, skills, and ability to apply what they have learned.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

Alumni employability and career are monitored for a period of 6 months, 12 months and 5 years after graduation. It is stated in meetings with the KVK community (management and teaching staff) that 83% of graduates are employed or economically active, other 6% are on continuous study, and those who are not integrated in the labour market are in military service or on maternity leave.

4.2.3. Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are implemented

There is an Academic ethics committee established within the KVK. All information on implementation policies, code of ethics, guidelines and reports on actions are published on the KVK website.

4.2.4. Procedures for submitting and processing appeals and complaints are effective

The Dispute panel acts as designated authority for investigating complaints received, taking decisions and publicising general information over annual reports on the activities of the Academic Ethics Committee. Panel work rules defined in Rules of Procedure of the Dispute Panel.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

High enrolment into the labour market of study program graduates demonstrates the high demand for such specialists in the region and combination of theoretical knowledge, practical application, and assessment methods ensures that students are well-prepared for this issue.

There is a psychology subject in the study program, but this doesn't encounter specific skills development, like negotiation, stress management, leadership and problem solving abilities.

AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Negative - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				4	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Close cooperation with social partners creates satisfaction for the labour market on graduate skills and students profile.
2. Clear rules and transparency of processes established regarding academics ethics and appeals management creates an environment of trust, fairness, and are essential for maintaining academic integrity and effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Expand the psychology subject from only theory, to abilities for personal development, teamwork skills characteristics, negotiation abilities, working with people of different mindsets and attitudes (engaging, example, DISC theory which is a model used to describe human behaviour, based on four personality traits) etc.

AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

FACTUAL SITUATION

5.1.1.   The number, qualification, and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff is sufficient to achieve learning outcomes

The staff workload consists of teaching hours, preparation for teaching and in some cases administrative duties as the key activities.

Staff recruitment is in line with legal requirements considering the past professional experience in order to ensure the competent delivery of course subjects and allowing the achievement of the defined learning objectives.

One study programme is offered, which is also offered in an English-language variant. The subject-specific expertise to support the programme is present among the teaching staff.

From 18 teachers teaching informatics subjects, 44.4% have a teaching load of less than 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalents). 13 out of the 18 staff members teach directly INF subjects. 69.2% of teachers have extensive practical experience. Of the INF subject teachers only one does not have at least a B2 qualification in English. The majority have at least a C1 qualification.

31% of the listed teachers hold a doctoral degree. An increase to 37% in recent years can be positively noted. Of the 12 listed INF teachers, 2 have not published in the reporting period, and 2 have only published one paper each.

Pedagogical experience among the 12 INF teachers ranges from 6 to 21 years.

The ratio between teachers and students is 1:15.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The number of staff members is sufficient to teach the subjects in the programme. The teachers satisfy the formal requirements. Their competence is sufficient. Only scientific competences could be improved for some staff members in order to increase the scientific aspects of the study subjects.

There are not many full-time teachers, with only about half being employed with more than 0.5 FTE. The teaching staff consists mainly of part-time teachers. Many staff members teach at the KVK for many years, resulting in a low teaching staff turnover. While stable at the moment, this could still become a risk in the future.

The teaching staff is balanced in terms of qualifications and expertise. The different subject areas in the informatics domain are represented. Professional experience exists as required. Sufficient didactic expertise exists. Both practical and didactic experience varies in terms of number of years. However, this reflects a healthy balance between younger and more senior staff members. The number of teachers with good English language capabilities is very good and sufficient to teach the English language variant of the offered study programme.

Some teaching staff are also involved in administrative duties. This appears to be done in consensus with the respective staff members and no concerns regarding unjust allocation or lack of sufficient compensation was made.

The student/teacher ratio is very good, which results in a great satisfaction of the teachers with this as it allows personal and targeted interaction with students.

The degree of involvement in research varies is generally sufficient. The teaching staff's scientific activity and production is generally acceptable but could be improved to include all staff members at a sufficient level. In addition, the focus on publications as the only measure of scientific output is neither sufficient to evaluate research nor does it encourage various forms of activities including contract research or stakeholder engagement in this respect.

A comprehensive research strategy is not adequately formulated, which leaves the scientific expectation for staff members uncertain. A more comprehensive strategy that values activities beyond publications would allow staff members to see value in research engagement beyond publications. This would benefit the scientific expertise of staff and would benefit the teaching in scientific terms. Here, an improved research framework could encourage research participation and thus an improved scientific impact on teaching.

In conclusion, the competences are sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes. An improvement of scientific concerns and an increase of more full-time employment are desirable though.

5.2.	Teaching staff is ensured opportunities to develop competences, and they are periodically evaluated

FACTUAL SITUATION

5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

Internationalisation is an important concern for the KVK. The administration provides sufficient information on mobility possibilities. Applications for mobility are examined and approved by management under certain criteria as long as teaching continuity is maintained. A defined procedure for this exists that describes the procedure and criteria for mobility support.

The ERASMUS programme is widely used by a significant number of staff members. Opportunities for mobility are generally provided as long as circumstances allow this. The teachers feel very well supported in this regard.

During the evaluation period the percentage of teachers that visited universities abroad for teaching ranged between 31 and 44%. The number of incoming teachers from abroad has varied in the COVID-19 period, but generally matched the outgoing level.

5.2.2. Opportunities for the development of the teaching staff are ensured

The KVK provides personal development activities, allowing the planning and implementation of each teacher's professional development, including participation in mobility programs, professional development courses/seminars and scientific conferences.

The KVK provides measures to allow the development of teaching staff. This covers pedagogical, subject-specific, scientific and managerial activities. The KVK has implemented a targeted training framework (quality improvement procedure) for all competences, which combines courses on pedagogical as well as managerial concerns. Scientific and managerial topics account for around one third each of the total support hours provided.

On an annual basis, goals and activities are defined by teachers and discussed with the head of department.

Development opportunities in terms of course and other formats can be requested and are generally approved.

The KVK allows students to participate in the teachers' evaluation. The teachers confirm formal and informal feedback procedures that are beneficial for the improvement of their teaching capabilities.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

Staff mobility is at a sufficient level. The support is good for interested teachers and only limited to ensure ongoing teaching activities. Useful links have been established through this.

Mobility programmes have been used to enrich teaching as well as establish and enhance research collaborations. The numbers of incoming and outgoing teaching staff are sufficiently balanced.

The KVK has defined teacher assessment methods based on a range of criteria. However, it is unclear whether this method in practice achieves its objectives. Teachers generally are scientifically active, but the degree of activity across various forms of research engagement could be improved.

Pedagogical and language competencies are sufficient to ensure support for ongoing teaching commitments. However, in order to ensure the expansion of internationally oriented course programmes and allow a better exchange between local and international students, the English language capabilities of all teachers should be enhanced.

The staff development measures are very well received by the staff members. Staff members feel presented well in decision procedures around these concerns. A well-defined plan for enhancing teacher competences across pedagogy, research, management and subject aspects exists.

AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Negative - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle			3		

COMMENDATIONS

1. Highly motivated and enthusiastic teachers.
2. Staff-to-student ratio is beneficial for study quality.
3. English language capabilities of teachers are generally at a sufficient level to teach in English.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. The involvement of all teachers in research needs to be improved in order to better infuse research into teaching and strengthen scientific understanding and skills.
2. The low number of full-time teachers for whom the KVK is the main employer is a potential risk. KVK should aim to increase the number of full-time teachers

For further improvement

1. It is suggested to implement a research strategy that values income and stakeholder needs in order to increase scientific activities of staff.
2. It is suggested to increase the English language capabilities of all teachers to allow a further internationalisation of study programmes and increased mobility.

AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

6.1.	Facilities, informational and financial resources are sufficient and enable achieving learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

6.1.1. Facilities, informational and financial resources are adequate and sufficient for an effective learning process

The study program is conducted in premises at Bijunu str. in Klaipeda. The building is fully renovated and applicable for a comfortable study process. There is first aid equipment at the ground floor near the entrance in case of emergency.

Laboratories are equipped with modern software and hardware relevant to the study program fields. Software and hardware needs are collected in line with the teaching periods.

The library is equipped with many local and worldwide e-learning materials. Despite that, quite a number of paper books which are renewed annually or by demand are in use. There is an opportunity to buy additional publications on demand. A subject librarian for informatics exists.

The KVK has achieved a modern digital organisation maturity for both educational activity (utilising tools such as Moodle) and administrative processes (internal portals for teachers, study schedules for students, etc.).

Students with disabilities have access to college premises by ramps and elevators. Despite that, as it is stated, there is currently no sufficient support for people with visual and audio disabilities to use the library premises.

Students have the possibility to choose the organisation where they want to conduct their internship with the help of department teachers and managers.

There are appropriate spaces for students to relax on the 1st floor hallway. Despite the absence of a canteen, there is a snacks and coffee machine space with the possibility for students to heat up their brought food.

KVK owns dormitories which are renovated and applicable for proper student habitation. The experts did not have the opportunity to visit those premises for a detailed inspection.

6.1.2. There is continuous planning for and upgrading of resources.

Demands for renewing and upgrading of study program resources are planned and prioritised according to the planning process that also involves discussions with teachers and departments, feedback from social partners and the labour market.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

The classrooms are fully equipped and spacious, while the university's common areas are sunny and pleasant. The computer rooms and laboratories are equipped and meet the demand for the study programme, but some of the laboratories are quite small (example, computers architecture and networking) according to students' count and require students to be divided into groups to fill in the classes properly.

There are many general computer classes with standard software (e.g., open source for web application programming) and also cloud services which are available to students by the KVK on their personal laptops. There is the ability to study remotely on demand, and only 3 out of 12 students presented at the meeting do not have their own laptops. This number of hardware requires significant financial effort to be planned annually for renewal and upgrade.

Laboratory equipment and applicable software or hardware are purchased from local college funds and support from manufacturers, social partners and structural funds. It is a typical and commendable example of contribution and cooperation on behalf of the social partners and manufacturers. The infrastructure is overall well modernised.

Currently, the KVK still provides all laboratories and practical classrooms with PCs and installed software. In a time of increasing student laptop ownership, the KVK could adopt a model based on providing laptops (e.g. Chromebooks) for those that do own one. This would allow them to remove fixed PCs from labs, resulting in lower costs and also the opportunity to create more flexible learning spaces.

In the same direction, the KVK should also consider changing student behaviour towards more access to digital resources than printed material (for the library) and also more remote access from outside the college. This again would reduce costs, allow easier updating and enable the flexible usage of space (e.g. in the library).

AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Negative - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				4	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The equipment in the laboratories meets the requirements of the study programme subjects to have suitable students hands-on.
2. Adequate spaces exist that students can use for study or other purposes.
3. Close relations with social partners and manufacturers that help the institution to develop its material facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Efficiency of the management of computerised teaching spaces should be improved by encouraging students to use personal computers, thus reducing the cost of upgrading computers classrooms for

general IT lectures (example, using Microsoft Office software, etc.), leaving a few workstations available, and redirecting the cost savings by considering renting or buying cheaper (example, Chromebooks) hardware equipment and being flexible regarding strengthening the laboratories' training base, teachers competences growth and improving teachers condition.

2. It should be taken into consideration more sustainability into asset management, like overviewing the buy in of paper books critically by prioritising e-learning materials. Here, the usage of materials should be monitored, both in the format (papers vs electronics) and also access (on premise vs remote access).

3. Review the ratio between general computer classes and specialised laboratories should be made to find a way to expand the second ones to provide more possibilities for students to have hands-on study subjects in an effective way.

AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

7.1.	The development of the field of study is based on an internal quality assurance system involving all stakeholders and continuous monitoring, transparency and public information

FACTUAL SITUATION

7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

KVK has implemented an internal quality assurance system that complies with ISO 9001, according to the SER. This covers quality improvement procedures that include monitoring, evaluation, decision-making and publication activities. The processes in places are clear about activities and who is in charge of management and decisions.

There is a dedicated KVK HEI quality centre which organises quality assurance through various surveys, external and internal audits.

The SER describes the groups involved with internal quality assurance. The department head and the head of the CSP are in charge of the management.

The additional material provided gives clear examples of how the study programme and course contents are continually evaluated and updated.

7.1.2. Involvement of stakeholders (students and others) in internal quality assurance is effective

There is a dedicated structure of annual surveys in place to collect feedback from students, teachers, graduates and employers.

The various types of surveys and their goals and objectives are laid out in a clear and understandable way in the SER.

The SER further clearly lays out relevant statistics from these surveys and demonstrates a high degree of satisfaction among graduates and employers, with only information on response rates missing to give a complete picture of the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement.

In the context of the site visit, employers voiced concerns that while graduates from KVK were highly competent in coding and practical skills, transferable skills such as self-efficacy, independent problem-solving and critical thinking could be improved.

At the same time, graduates participating in the site visit meetings were universally satisfied with the study programme and offered no points of criticism.

7.1.3. Information on the programmes, their external evaluation, improvement processes, and outcomes is collected, used and made publicly available

Over the reporting period, the study programme has undergone continuous reevaluation and improvement, which the SER describes in detail (and which additional material supports).

Detailed statistics on student, employer and graduate satisfaction (cf. paragraphs 4.4.3 and 7.4.1) are provided that demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with the programme content and delivery. The publication of the results is part of the quality management processes of KVK.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

The SER makes no mention of the National Student Survey app, but gives a detailed account of the different ways in which student feedback is sought and acted upon.

Student satisfaction is relatively high and stable. General satisfaction is above 80%. Highlighted as notable are active learning and collaboration with teachers.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

The level of detail of the description of internal quality assurance mechanisms, stakeholder involvement, etc. is very high, confirming very tight control over course content and quality and a team dedicated to carrying out these quality assurance processes. Processes for quality management are well defined and repeatable.

Overall, internal quality assurance is highly structured and the various feedback cycles and processes are well-organised. Nonetheless, some employers' concerns w.r.t. graduates' transferable skills could have been better reflected in the study programme.

AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Negative - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				4	

COMMENDATIONS

1. There is a highly structured internal quality assurance system.
2. The various feedback mechanisms are systematically organised and results are presented well.
3. In particular, the SER provides a convincing picture of high satisfaction among the various stakeholder groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Despite the generally high satisfaction of employers with the study programme, there was some criticism w.r.t. to graduates' transferable skills. In particular, acting on stakeholder feedback in a more timely way should be addressed in order to improve study quality more quickly.

2. Employer feedback w.r.t. the lack of transferable skills of graduates (i.e. teamwork, project lifecycle management, risk management, …) should be taken into account and reflected in the study programme.
3. Student and graduate involvement in feedback processes could be incentivised more strongly.

IV. SUMMARY

We would like to thank the HEI for the high quality of the self-evaluation report and for the informative and well-structured visit.

This is a well-defined and well-run programme. The only shortcoming we identified concerns the need to involve more of the teaching staff in applied research activities. Overall, the robust processes in place to monitor and revise the study programme are clear evidence that the KVK will be able to self-evaluate and adapt the programme as needed.

As observed the number of students in the institution is consistently increasing, indicating a growing interest in provided study curriculums and satisfaction with the institution conducted study process. To support this, students' demonstrated genuine loyalty to the institution during the evaluation meetings.

Although the KVK's students actively participate in international exchanges, the number of incoming students to the assessed study programmes is still low.

Despite well-equipped laboratories in some classrooms, efficiency of the management of computerised teaching spaces should be improved, lowering costs of upgrading computers classrooms for general IT lectures.