



**STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

POLITICAL SCIENCE FIELD OF STUDY

Mykolas Romeris University

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:

1. Panel chair: Prof. Dr. Tomaž Deželan
2. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Žaneta Ozolina
3. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Stefano Braghiroli
4. Social partner representative: Rimantas Dumčius
5. Student representative: Evelina Brazauskienė

SKVC coordinator: Greta Misevičiūtė

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The field of study 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 field of study.

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 an HEI; 2) A site visit by the review panel to the HEI; 3) The external evaluation report (EER) production by the review panel; 4) EER review by the HEI; 5) EER review by the Study Evaluation Committee; 6) Accreditation decision taken by SKVC; 7) Appeal procedure (if initiated by the HEI); 8) Follow-up activities, which include the production of a Progress Report on Recommendations Implementation by the HEI.

The main outcome of the evaluation process is the EER prepared by the review panel. The HEI is forwarded the draft EER for feedback 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 an HEI disagrees with the outcome of the evaluation, it 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).

If the field of study and cycle were **previously accredited for 3 years**, the re-evaluation of the field of study and cycle is initiated no earlier than after 2 years. After the re-evaluation of the field of study and cycle, SKVC takes one of the following decisions regarding the accreditation of the field of study and cycle:

- To be accredited for the remaining term until the next evaluation of the field of study and cycle, but no longer than 4 years, if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).
- To not be accredited, if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points) or 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. Tomaž Deželan
2. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Žaneta Ozolina
3. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Stefano Braghioli
4. Social partner representative: Rimantas Dumčius
5. Student representative: Evelina Brazauskienė

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 11th of December 2024 onsite.

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 no need for translation and the meetings were conducted in English.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) is a state-funded higher education institution in Lithuania, established in 2004 and named in honor of Professor Mykolas Romeris (1880–1945), a pioneering figure in Lithuanian constitutional law. The university's institutional evolution can be traced through its predecessors: the Lithuanian Police Academy (1990–1997), the Law Academy of Lithuania (1997–2000), and the Law University of Lithuania (2000–2004).

MRU's mission is to contribute to the consolidation of Lithuania as a democratic state, foster the harmonious development of society through innovative research, and cultivate individuals who are independent, creative, responsible, critically engaged, and committed to lifelong learning. Furthermore, the university endeavors to provide its community members with avenues for both personal and professional advancement. The institution operates across multiple locations, including Vilnius, Kaunas, Utena, and Marijampolė.

The governance of MRU is structured around three principal bodies: the Council, the Senate, and the Rectorate. The university's administrative functions are managed through 18 distinct departments. As the largest university specializing in social sciences in Lithuania, MRU offers higher education across three academic cycles. The majority (95%) of its study programmes fall within the social sciences domain. As of January 1, 2023, the university administered 68 study programmes, including 24 bachelor's, 43 master's, and one professional programme across 19 fields of study: Accounting, Communication, Economics, Education, Finance, Informatics, Law, Management, Human Resource Management, Pedagogy, English Philology, Psychology, Political Science, Public Security, Social Work, Tourism and Leisure, Translation Studies, Public Administration, and Business. At the doctoral level, MRU provides research opportunities in six disciplines: Law, Education, Psychology, Economics, Management, and Philology.

Overview of the study field

Political science study programmes at MRU have been under development for more than two decades. Currently, MRU offers a bachelor's degree programme in Political Science and Public Management (PPM), which was introduced in 2011. In 2021, a specialization in Politics and Communication was added to the programme, with the first cohort of students admitted in 2023. At the master's level, MRU implements the Governance and Policy Analysis (HPM) and Security Policy and Diplomacy (SPD) programmes. In 2023, the International Politics and Security (IPS) programme underwent a comprehensive revision and was renamed *Security Policy and Diplomacy* to reflect contemporary developments and emerging challenges in international politics and global affairs.

Previous external evaluations

The quality of political science programmes at MRU has been assessed through external evaluations. In 2013, the PPM programme underwent an external review by the Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS) and was subsequently accredited by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) for the maximum term of six years. Similarly, the IPS programme (formerly International Politics and Economics) was externally evaluated by the AQUIN agency in 2016 and accredited by SKVC for six years. Additionally, the HPM programme was externally evaluated by SKVC in 2016 and granted accreditation for the maximum six-year period.

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 syllabi were requested:

16156 Economic, Political, and Defensive Integration of Europe and Asia

16158 Russian and CIS Studies

16676 International Relations and Geopolitics

14450 Political System of the European Union

12353 European Studies

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	Public Policy and Management
State code	6121JX061
Type of study (college/university)	University
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time, 3 years; Part-time, 4,5 years
Workload in ECTS	180
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Bachelor's of Social Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English
Admission requirements	Secondary education
First registration date	2011-06-01; Politics and Communication - 2021-06-21
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	N/A

Second cycle/LTQF 7

Title of the study programme	Health Policy and Management	International Policy Studies (title from 2024: Security Policy and Diplomacy)
State code	6211JX074	6211JX075
Type of study (college/university)	University	University
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time, 1.5 years; Part-time, 2 years	Full-time, 1.5 years; Part-time, 2 years
Workload in ECTS	90	90
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Master's of Social Sciences	Master's of Social Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian, English
Admission requirements	Higher Education	Higher Education
First registration date	2010-01-26	2013-05-13
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	N/A	N/A

Second cycle/LTQF 7

Title of the study programme	European Union Policy and Administration
State code	6211JX080
Type of study (college/university)	University
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time, 1.5 years; Part-time, 2 years
Workload in ECTS	90
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Master's of Social Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Higher Education
First registration date	2000-06-16
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	Study programme termination date: 2024-06-30

III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **first cycle** of the political science field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points ^{1*}
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	2
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	2
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	3
Total:		19

The **second cycle** of the political science field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points ^{2*}
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	2
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	2
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	3
Total:		19

^{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.

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IV. 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
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

Mykolas Romeris University's (MRU) political science programmes aim to bolster democratic governance, encourage societal progress through innovation, and cultivate responsible citizens. The alignment of these aims and the programmes' learning outcomes with the needs of society and the labour market presents a mixed picture. This is influenced by factors such as student preparedness, enrolment challenges, and the specific characteristics of the student body.

MRU's stated mission and strategic goals, including digital transformation and AI training, demonstrate an awareness of evolving societal demands. Learning outcomes emphasise the development of creative, civic-minded individuals capable of working in dynamic environments and applying innovative technologies. Programmes like Security Policy and Diplomacy (SPD) and Health Policy and Management (HPM) address specific policy challenges and offer training relevant to the public sector. Moreover, the interdisciplinary approach of the programmes, combining political science with economics, management, and communication, theoretically broadens employment opportunities across diverse sectors.

A significant proportion of second-cycle students are employed full-time. While this might limit the time available for study, it also offers opportunities to apply course content directly to their current work. This practical application can enrich their learning experience and enhance their understanding of the subject matter. The skills and knowledge gained may be immediately relevant and valuable in their professional roles, providing a tangible return on their investment in education.

Data on graduate employment rates and salaries, while generally positive, exhibit some variability across years. This might indicate sensitivity to broader economic conditions and difficulties in consistently preparing graduates for the labour market demands. Furthermore, survey results reveal that some graduates perceive a lack of practical knowledge, communication, and management skills, suggesting a potential gap between programme content and the specific competencies valued by employers.

The MRU's self-evaluation justifies its portfolio of programmes, which includes two second-cycle programmes and one first-cycle political science programme. Offering political science programmes is important to implement MRU's vision as the leading university of social sciences. However, MRU does not seem to succeed in addressing the limitations and challenges imposed by the competitive environment, with other universities competing for the same cadre of potential students willing to study political science in Vilnius.

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

The aims of the Political Science programmes reflect this mission. The programmes aim to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to effective governance, participate in policy-making, and address societal challenges. For example, the Public Policy and Management (PPM) programme provides an understanding of political theory, government institutions, and public policy analysis. The Security Policy and Diplomacy (SPD) programme addresses issues of international politics and security, preparing graduates for roles in government, international

organisations, and the private sector. The Health Policy and Management (HPM) programme focuses on health policymaking, preparing graduates for the healthcare sector's challenges.

The programmes' learning outcomes are also aligned with MRU's strategic goals. A key objective is cultivating graduates capable of independent thought, critical analysis, and problem-solving. The Political Science programmes emphasise developing these skills through research projects, case studies, and engagement with policy issues. Integrating technology and digital literacy into the curriculum reflects MRU's commitment to preparing students for a changing world. Training in artificial intelligence and digital transformation of public administration and public services are especially relevant in public policy studies.

MRU's strategic plan also puts emphasis on internationalisation. The Political Science programmes contribute by focusing on global issues, encouraging student mobility, and partnerships with international institutions. With its international and comparative dimensions, programs such as SPD promote cross-cultural understanding and prepare graduates for careers in a globalised world.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

MRU is committed to aligning its Political Science programmes with the university's mission and the evolving needs of society and the labour market. However, this alignment is imperfect. While the programmes' aims and learning outcomes reflect MRU's strategic goals and broader mission to strengthen democracy and foster societal progress, challenges related to student preparedness, fluctuating enrolment, and systematic employer engagement hinder their full realisation. Intense competitive pressures from other universities offering political science programmes in Vilnius make it difficult for MRU to attract students to its first-cycle programmes. These factors suggest a need for continued refinement and adaptation to ensure the programmes effectively equip graduates with the competencies required to thrive in their careers and contribute meaningfully to society.

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
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FACTUAL SITUATION

1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The Political Science study programmes at MRU comply with Lithuanian and European legal requirements, including the Law on Higher Education and Research, the Descriptor of Study Cycles, and the Descriptor of Study Field of Political Science. Bachelor's and Master's programmes align with the 6th and 7th levels of the Lithuanian and European Qualifications Frameworks, respectively. Credit allocation meets legal standards, with 180 ECTS for Bachelor's programmes and 90 ECTS for Master's. Study field subjects constitute the required minimum of programme credits, and final theses meet mandated credit requirements. Contact hours and assessment methods align with regulations, ensuring consistent quality and legal compliance across all programmes.

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

The screening highlighted that programme aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning, and assessment methods appear always aligned and a more coherent and systematic approach from the programmes' management appears needed. In vertical terms, the learning outcomes of study programmes are generally connected to programme aims and are matched with the outcomes of individual study subjects. Diverse teaching methods such as lectures, seminars, problem-solving tasks, and group projects are integrated, however this does not apply to the preparation of the final thesis. The use of interactive methods, case studies, and real-world policy analysis aspire to foster the development of competencies aligned with programme goals. An assessment of some of the

courses highlighted the need for more systematic regular review of the course format and focus and update of the academic literature used in individual courses. Along with few cases of redundant literature, more attention to constructive alignment is recommended when it comes to the course screening. During the discussion, it was highlighted the added value of organizing peer-review sessions among lecturers. These sessions would allow lecturers to review each other's syllabi, exchange tips and ideas on applying Bloom's taxonomy, and ensure greater consistency in the course offerings in alignment with the overall curriculum.

1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

While the curriculum aspires to ensure consistent development of student competencies through a structured and progressive approach in both Bachelor's and Master's programmes, there seems to be no systematic coordination among lecturers to diversify such competencies and focus on complementarity. Core courses provide the foundation in political science, public policy, and research methods, while elective and specialization options allow for deeper exploration of interests. Methodologies include case studies, problem-solving tasks, and internships, enhancing practical skills. Overall, some degree of personalization is offered through thesis topics (at MA level), elective subjects, and international exchange opportunities, fostering adaptability and specialized knowledge. However, when it comes to thesis topics at the Bachelor level, students are recommended to choose from a list prepared by the faculty together with social partners, which may limit creativity of students. Attention to this is therefore advised.

The university has put a lot of emphasis on embracing AI as an opportunity. However, there seems to be both among students and lecturers a still limited degree of awareness of the university regulatory framework in terms of AI and of its inclusion in the individual course syllabi. In addition, there is no unified approach when it comes to standardized approach across the curriculum.

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

Opportunities for students to personalize their curriculum are ensured through elective courses, thesis topic selection, and international exchange programmes. In the Bachelor's programme, students can choose elective subjects in their second and third years, aligning with their interests in specific public policy areas. Master's students can select alternative electives in the first two semesters and propose original thesis topics tailored to their research interests or workplace relevance. Personalization extends to the Erasmus+ programme, allowing students to study abroad or complete internships. Individual study schedules are available for students with specific needs, supporting flexibility in achieving intended learning outcomes

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

According to the SER, final theses in Political Science at MRU comply with the requirements for their field and cycle through rigorous alignment with legal frameworks, including Lithuanian and European qualifications frameworks and study cycle descriptors. Bachelor's theses demonstrate independent empirical research using one method, showcasing the student's understanding of social science methodologies. Master's theses demand broader competencies, combining multiple methods and contributing to both theoretical and applied knowledge. Topics align with programme objectives, fostering critical analysis and practical recommendations. However, when it comes to thesis topics at the Bachelor level, students are recommended to choose from a list prepared by the faculty together with social partners and this might also run the risk of limiting their creativity. Compliance is formally ensured by the guidelines. It is worth noting that no dedicated courses on academic writing are provided and students would profit greatly from the establishment of an ad hoc master's thesis seminar. Overall, the quality of the final theses in both MA and BA level would benefit.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The Political Science programmes at MRU comply with Lithuanian and European legal requirements, including qualification frameworks, credit allocations, and assessment standards. Programme aims, learning outcomes, and teaching methods aspire to fully integrate theoretical and practical components through various instructional methods and assessment approaches. However, such aspiration appears to be hindered by an imperfect constructive alignment noted in different courses and by the need to update certain courses curricula both in terms of literature and of focus.

The curriculum, overall, is designed to support competence development through core courses, electives, and internships, while students can tailor their studies through elective subjects, thesis selection, and international exchange opportunities. Final theses follow academic and legal standards, with Bachelor's projects focusing on empirical research and Master's theses incorporating advanced methodologies. However, more customized support to students who are working on finalizing their dissertation appear needed.

AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Unsatisfactory - 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		X			
Second cycle		X			

COMMENDATIONS

1. The programmes provide a strong emphasis on quality supervision during the process of thesis writing. While the focus is - overall - on the individual supervisor, general support for the thesis writing process is provided also within the framework of the methodology courses, with the inclusion of online tools and video tutorials on how to access library services and ad hoc tools.
2. Worth mentioning is also the practice oriented approach of the study offer, completed by a strong system of mentorship (involving alumni and fresh graduates). This is crucial for ensuring the curricula's relevance and practical impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. MRU should consider establishing a systematic employer feedback mechanism and collecting structured and systematic data on employer perceptions of future labour market needs, graduate skills and programme relevance. This could involve surveys and focus groups with employer representation. The data should be systematically analysed and used to inform curriculum development and programme improvements.
2. While the university's declared focus on embracing AI and its opportunities is commendable, this should go hand in hand with making sure that both students and lecturers have a high degree of awareness of its challenges and benefits. For this reason, clear reference to the institution's AI policy should be presented across the curriculum, including individual courses,

particularly explaining how broad university guidelines translate into specific teaching and learning or assessment activities.

3. To enhance students' preparedness in the thesis writing process, it is recommended to introduce dedicated courses on **academic writing** and an ad hoc **master's thesis seminar**. These additions would address students' common challenges in developing their final thesis and provide comprehensive support, complementing the methods course currently offered.
4. To ensure the curricula remain relevant, it is essential to **regularly review and update the academic literature** used in individual courses, which appears in certain cases redundant, and make sure that **constructive alignment** is consistently and coherently applied. While these shortcomings have been assessed in courses such as "International Relations and Geopolitics" and "Russian and CIS Studies", there seems to be a more generalized need for regular review. This process might require more proactive involvement and strategic guidance from the programmes' leadership to align course content with evolving global realities.

For further improvement

1. While students might profit from the possibility to identify their bachelor's thesis topic from a list prepared by the faculty together with social partners, this might also run the risk of limiting their creativity. In the long run, following the introduction of a master's seminar, you might want to limit this practice and to incentivize students' initiative in identifying their thesis topic and focus.
2. To disseminate best practices among lecturers and enhance both the relevance and consistency of the curriculum, it is recommended to promote peer-review sessions among lecturers. These sessions would allow lecturers to review each other's syllabi, exchange tips and ideas on applying Bloom's taxonomy, and ensure greater consistency in the course offerings in alignment with the overall curriculum. This collaborative approach would foster innovation, improve teaching strategies, and strengthen the coherence of the academic programme.

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
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The University demonstrates a strong commitment to research performance, as evidenced by the production of publications and active participation in both national and international conferences and academic networks. The creation of 15 research labs is a clear demonstration of the above mentioned commitment. Specific areas of expertise, such as health policy and critical political theory and political philosophy, have gained international recognition, further enhancing the institution's academic reputation. Notably, specialized research groups like the Aristotelian Studies and Critical Theory contribute significantly to the University's international profile, fostering collaboration and advancing scholarly influence on a global scale.

Nevertheless, there is a noticeable inconsistency in research performance among the faculty. While some researchers have delivered outstanding contributions in terms of both quality and quantity of publications, others have shown limited engagement in scholarly output. Alarming, a subset of staff members has not produced a single publication over the past three years. This uneven distribution of research activity raises concerns about the coherence of the University's academic standards and highlights the need for targeted strategies to support and incentivize research engagement across all departments.

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

Research projects conducted within the 15 laboratories are making significant contributions to enhancing the curriculum. These projects not only foster a deeper integration of research and teaching but also ensure that course content remains relevant. The list of publications highlights that nearly all faculty members are actively engaged in producing research and scholarly works. Moreover, these publications often have a direct connection to the subjects they teach, enriching the academic experience for students.

However, there is room for improvement in some areas. For instance, several course descriptions in the field of International Policy studies fail to reference the most recent and widely recognized publications in their literature lists. Updating these references would align the courses more closely with current advancements in the field and further strengthen the bridge between cutting-edge research and teaching. Despite the fact that curricula is linked to the latest developments in science and technology, several teachers have not produced any publication in their respective fields.

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

The University places significant emphasis on engaging students in research activities, fostering a robust culture of inquiry and academic development. Beyond traditional practices such as attending lectures, participating in conferences, and completing course papers, the University offers specialized training to equip students with advanced research competencies. These include practical instruction in data collection and analysis using a range of software tools such as Microsoft Office, Excel, SPSS, AMOS, Solver, and PMP. For second-cycle (graduate) students, a comprehensive course on research methodology further enhances their skills in research design, critical analysis, and project implementation. A particularly innovative initiative in science communication The *Scientific Research Fest* has been introduced, which has garnered great interest among students.

The University’s research training programs are built on the foundation of students’ strong knowledge of statistics, proficiency in interpreting qualitative data, and their ability to integrate theoretical frameworks with practical applications. Additionally, MRU’s teaching staff actively involve both first-cycle (undergraduate) and second-cycle (graduate) students in their own research projects, creating valuable opportunities for hands-on learning and collaboration. The 15 research centers provide an excellent platform for students to develop research skills and contribute to their future careers. However, the number of students participating in these research centers should be expanded to unravel their full potential. According to the information obtained during the discussions with students it was notable that more efforts should be invested in explaining potential of participation in research labs, which can significantly contribute to students’ professional skills.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

Research within the field is strong and internationally recognized, particularly in areas such as the history of political theory, public administration, and public health. However, some faculty members struggle to establish a basic research track record. While the Faculty produces a solid number of publications, representation in prestigious international journals and publishing houses could be improved. The establishment of research laboratories has strengthened the connection between scientific advancements and the curriculum, yet some areas have not fully integrated the latest developments. Additionally, students remain insufficiently aware of available research opportunities and are not adequately engaged in the institution’s research activities.

AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 2	Unsatisfactory - 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		X			
Second cycle		X			

COMMENDATIONS

1. A notable initiative is the establishment of 15 research laboratories, which serve as innovative platforms for both theoretical and applied research projects. This endeavour is a step towards enhancing the competences of teaching staff and students. These labs are designed to bridge the gap between academic research and real-world applications.
2. The university's teaching staff are committed to developing research methods and integrating them consistently into their work. This commitment is also reflected in the management, which has introduced incentives for excellence in research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Although the number of publications produced by the teaching staff is considerable, the proportion of articles published in high-impact, internationally peer-reviewed journals can be increased.
2. Particular attention needs to be paid to those teachers who have difficulties in maintaining a basic publication record. A plan for them to improve needs to be developed.
3. The current level of multidisciplinary research does not fully align with the significant potential offered by the existing 15 research laboratories and the University's identified research priorities.
4. Students are only partially aware of the diverse research opportunities at the University and are therefore not fully engaged in the University's research activities. This limited awareness hampers the research potential of the institution.

For further improvement

1. More emphasis should be placed on the production of single-authored publications and the development of scientific monographs.
2. More first (Bachelor) and second (Master) cycle students should be actively involved in research projects and motivated to participate in them.
3. Participation in large-scale international research projects should be strongly encouraged. These projects would provide opportunities for broader international co-operation and access to additional financial resources and strengthen the international presence of the university.
4. Greater efforts should be made to promote interdisciplinary collaboration between these laboratories to address complex global challenges and maximise the impact of ongoing projects. A strategic focus on cross-disciplinary synergies could open up new avenues for innovation and breakthrough discoveries.

AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

According to the documents submitted, the admission of students to first cycle programmes is done in an impartial manner and in accordance with government documents and is centrally organised and managed in the LAMA BPO system. Applicants may receive additional points for relevant achievements in international and national science olympiads and academic competitions, military service, volunteer work, and participation in university-sponsored academic schools. Second cycle students are admitted according to the procedure approved by the MRU Senate and updated annually. Students who have a university degree and are committed to additional studies in political science or who have received a positive evaluation in a motivational interview are also admitted. All study programmes assessed show a decline in enrolments and (mostly) applicants over the years assessed. The decline in enrolments has prompted universities to change their programmes in order to attract more enrolments. The highest competition score has increased, but the lowest value for competition has remained stable, affecting both the size and quality of student groups enrolled in degree programmes. During the assessment period, the number of students dropping out of degree programmes has decreased.

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

Students who have graduated, studied or are studying in Lithuania or in other countries recognised in Lithuania may have the results of their studies credited according to the established procedure; the crediting of study results is explicitly regulated by a decision of the University Senate and the information on the procedure is published on the University website. If you do not agree with the conclusions, you have the right to appeal against the procedure. Recognition of partial studies completed at a foreign higher education institution is also possible if the higher education institution is recognised as suitable for the type, form and level of study. The recognition of study results is possible without restriction if they were acquired at a higher education institution with which the higher education institution has concluded an exchange agreement or if they were acquired during the Erasmus+ mobility phase. Results abroad are recognised for all students according to the same criteria as defined in the Senate resolution and according to the same procedure. Achievements acquired through non-formal learning are also recognised according to the criteria defined by the higher education institution. The assessment and management of foreign qualifications is monitored and evaluated.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

The admission process is both adequate and transparent. Admissions for the first cycle are managed through the LAMA BPO system, which ensures fairness by awarding additional points for academic performance and other relevant experience. Admissions for the second cycle, which are governed by the MRU Senate, include pathways for graduates and motivated candidates. Enrolments have

declined over the past three years, resulting in adjustments to programmes to attract more students. Despite the overall decline in enrolments, the scores of top applicants has increased and dropout rates have decreased, indicating improved student retention. Universities have clear procedures for recognising foreign qualifications, prior learning and partial studies to ensure consistency, especially for Erasmus+ participants. Non-formal learning is also recognised. In summary, HEIs apply transparent admission procedures, adapt their programmes to increase enrolment and have an inclusive academic recognition policy, which contributes to quality education and student success.

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

3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

Students of the university have the opportunity to participate in national and international exchange programmes such as Erasmus+, universities with bilateral university agreements, international internships in Lithuanian communities and schools around the world. This information is published on the higher education institution's website and social networks. Occasionally, the International Office staff also attend lectures to present Erasmus+ opportunities. The list of partners for Erasmus+ student mobility can be found on the MRU website. The number of outgoing exchange students is low compared to the number of incoming students, which is due to the combination of work and study.

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

The university provides comprehensive support (academic, financial, social, psychological, academic) for students as well as counselling assistance. Students of the University may receive a reduction in tuition fees in cases provided for in the University's administrative procedures. Students are eligible for MRU social scholarship, sponsorship scholarship, international ambassador scholarship, group coordinator scholarship and patron scholarship may be awarded. Students may be eligible for a reduction in tuition fees in accordance with the procedures laid down by the higher education institution.

Students can contact the head of their degree programme if they have any questions about the study programme. For psychological support, students can contact the Community Welfare Centre's Psychological Counselling Service, and for spiritual support, students can find spiritual support in the Chapel. Students have the opportunity to participate in a mentoring programme designed to help students integrate into the world of work. Students have the opportunity to improve their health and participate in cultural activities. Lectures are also held in the first half of the day so that students can combine their professional and private lives with their studies. Study materials are available to students on Moodle. The university has a mentoring programme to facilitate integration into the professional world.

3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

At the university, counselling takes different forms depending on the needs of the students: A handbook is provided to new students, meetings are organised with representatives from various departments during the induction week, meetings are organised with programme leaders during the induction week to provide information about the programme and the course of study. Additional information will be presented in classes during the induction sessions. Students are also informed by email, both by a student curator and by the programme management. Both students and staff reported frequent communication at various levels and the availability of staff to respond to student needs, however, more structured system of academic support, particularly in terms of study progression and finishing the studies is missing.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

National and international exchange programmes such as Erasmus+ and bilateral agreements offer ample opportunities for the academic mobility of students. However, the number of outgoing students remains low as it is difficult to reconcile work and study, which affects the overall internationalisation dimension of studies. The HEI offers a range of comprehensive, adequate and effective support services, including academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support. It also provides accessible psychological and spiritual counselling services. In addition, it facilitates students' integration into the professional world through mentoring, cultural activities and flexible lecture times. Convenient access to study materials on Moodle further enhances the academic experience for students. Counselling services are offered through handbooks, departmental meetings, induction weeks with programme leaders and a range of direct informal interaction opportunities between students and staff. However, the institution should seek ways to make students more aware of the counselling services available to them and to institutionalise these services more fully.

AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 3	Unsatisfactory - 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			X		
Second cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

1. Student support services are extensive and diverse, addressing various aspects of students' academic performance, socioeconomic conditions, and psychological and physical well-being.

2. The University's professional mentoring programme provides students with a unique and effective induction into their future professional environment and career opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. The institution must address the problem of low outgoing mobility and find solutions to the challenge of reconciling study and work. Opportunities need to be explored to provide realistic mobility opportunities for students who are already integrated into the labour market. At the same time, additional awareness-raising measures and possible incentives for full-time students should be explored.
2. Structured academic support to students should become more institutionalised with a particular attention paid to student progression and study completion.

For further improvement

1. Ways should be explored to make students aware about the range of support services as well as opportunities they have at their disposal.

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

4.1.	Students are prepared for independent professional activity
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The institution emphasises a student-centred approach and offers some variety in teaching and learning methods and assessment, however the provision is quite conventional and does not offer an adequate level of innovation. This is also related to the limited opportunities for individual professional development of teaching staff. However, the formative and summative dimension of assessing students' learning progress is present. Students are supported by the Moodle learning management system with virtual classrooms and access to general information about the subject programme, study material packages and various examinations.

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

The process is organised to facilitate access to socially disadvantaged groups and students with special needs is described. An open and flexible study environment is the university's stated priority and the university provides an infrastructure suitable for people with mobility and visual impairments. The study process is also sensitive to students' special needs, which they communicate via an online form that helps the administration to design and implement adjustments. Students with special needs or from socially disadvantaged groups can study individually at the student's request and based on the dean's directive. For students following an individual learning path, distance learning is organised by offering individual or small group consultations with lecturers via the virtual learning environment or other video conferencing tools. Students from socially disadvantaged groups or students with special needs can apply for financial support, social scholarships and tuition fee reductions in addition to the support provided by the state.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

The study programmes examined contain formative and summative dimensions of student learning progress within courses, but the overall tracking of learning progress is less structured. The review of documents and the interviews conducted with teachers and students also indicate the willingness of teachers to adapt to the needs of students, but also conventional teaching and learning methods and assessment methods with little pedagogical innovation (e.g. problem-based learning, project-oriented curriculum, more formative assessment methods). Access to higher education for vulnerable groups of students and students with special needs is ensured through various strategies. Through the individualisation of the study process, the availability of the appropriate infrastructure to support this individualisation as well as the physical infrastructure for studying and even through financial support.

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

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

Student progress in this area is monitored in accordance with University policy and allows for the provision of feedback to promote self-assessment and learning progress. Summative feedback is usually provided in the middle and at the end of a semester. The institution reports that oral presentations and assessments are conducted in the classroom and Moodle assignments show individualised feedback on Moodle. Students are also supervised and receive feedback when writing their final thesis. The university introduced a tool to respond to high dropout rates, which had been worsening over the years. As a result, the institution developed a reactive mechanism aimed at addressing the issues that prompted students to initiate the process of contract cancellation. However, the institution is yet to work on an adequate preventative mechanism that would sensitise students to possible adjustments to the study approach or to the support initiatives available to them and thus prevent eventual contract cancellations.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

Several data sources are used to monitor the careers of graduates (Career Management Information System-KVIS, Education Management Information System-ŠVIS, STRATA, the magazine Reitingai). The MRU participates in KVIS (Karjera.lt), to which various people from the university have access. Quantitative data on the careers of MRU graduates (employability of graduates 6 months, 12 months and 3 years after graduation) are monitored and feed into the MRU Strategic Plan for 2021–2023. The Career Centre also monitors graduates' careers via the KVIS (Career Management Information System). However, these systems suffer from low response rates and the lack of some relevant employability dimensions, which the institution is trying to mitigate with additional activities. As a result, the institution works with data that mainly falls into the employment category and covers only some areas of employability. There is little data on graduates' careers and the validity of this information is questionable due to low response rates. Furthermore, the link between programme design and employability data is not apparent. There is also little data on employers' views of graduates and their skills, which is somewhat contained by the information from the internship scheme, with supervisors in mentoring organisations providing their feedback. Similarly, employer feedback is obtained through employer participation in student thesis assessment panels and through the field of study committee. However, employers' views on graduates are not systematically tracked, so this perspective should be strengthened and integrated into the quality assurance system and curriculum design process.

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

The MRU regulates academic integrity with the Code of Academic Ethics adopted in 2015, which is based on the fundamental principles of the Magna Charta Universitatum. The implementation of academic integrity is in the hands of MRU's Supervisory Commission on Ethics and the Ethics

Committees of the academic units. The Academic Centre for Ethics was established in 2011 and in that year MRU became a member of the International Academic Integrity Centre. MRU teaching staff also research and publish on academic integrity issues. The institution organises annual information posters on the topic of academic integrity as well as public lectures, and the library also offers training courses for students that deal with measures for implementing academic integrity, among other things. The MRU carries out a mandatory review of Bachelor's and Master's theses to ensure the academic integrity of written work. All theses are accumulated on the MRU's electronic study platform and checked against the national text matching system – ESAS (formerly known as EPAS). All students are familiarised with the legal requirements for assessment during the induction week and during examinations. The MRU also regulates the use of generative artificial intelligence tools by specifying how these tools may be used.

The principles of non-discrimination in study and research are also laid down in the Code of Academic Ethics. Gender equality is pursued on the basis of national regulations and university rules on the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment or persecution. MRU has an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy that aims to ensure equal opportunities without discrimination. In the academic year 2020-2021, there was 1 case of violation of academic integrity (plagiarism), as a result of which a student was expelled from the university.

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

The MRU regulates appeals in the Appeals Regulations and students can appeal against decisions on a number of aspects relevant to their studies (calculation of competition marks, procedural errors in admissions, verification of knowledge and skills, assessments, coursework, theses, crediting of results, etc.). Appeals can be submitted in Lithuanian or English. Once an appeal has been submitted, the Appeals Commission is formed within 5 working days at the latest to review the student's request and make a decision. A person who is not satisfied with the decision of the Appeals Commission has the right to appeal to the MRU Permanent Dispute Resolution Commission in accordance with the procedure set out in the internal regulations. Students are introduced to these regulations during induction week. No appeals or complaints were reported for the assessed period.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

The university monitors students' learning progress and feedback through a number of mechanisms. As a result, the institution has introduced a reactive dropout prevention mechanism that is activated as soon as a student expresses the wish to drop out. However, preventive measures should be strengthened to address the needs of students before the desire to drop out is expressed. Information on the employability of graduates, their careers and the views of employers is limited and unreliable. At the same time, their use in the quality assurance process is not systematically evidenced, particularly in curriculum development. The rules of academic integrity are in place, with multiple controls and mechanisms for reporting breaches of integrity. The principles of non-discrimination are regulated and awareness of them is monitored. The appeals system is in place and students are informed about it.

AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 4	Unsatisfactory - 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		X			
Second cycle		X			

COMMENDATIONS

1. The attention of staff and the institution to the individual needs of students is commendable and the individualisation of the study pathway for different groups of students enables a high quality study experience for students with atypical needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Teaching staff are motivated to engage in professional development and bring professionally relevant knowledge to the classroom, but the systemic approach to teaching and learning innovation and teacher professional development does not match this motivation. Professional development efforts for teachers in terms of innovative teaching and learning methods and assessment need to be strengthened and teachers' professional development needs to be individualised according to their needs and motivations.
2. As the reactive dropout prevention system shows, the university should increase its efforts to recognise and respond to students' needs before this leads to a desire to terminate the study contract. Preventative measures should be strengthened.
3. Data on graduates' employability, graduates' careers and employers' views should be improved both in terms of its comprehensiveness (coverage of broader dimensions of these concepts) and reliability (turnout, systematic tracking). Above all, this information should be systematically taken into account in the design and implementation of curricula.

For further improvement

1. The tracking of students' progress beyond individual courses and in line with the expected learning outcomes of the programme/competence profile of the graduate needs to be strengthened, including tools for advising students on their educational pathway.

AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

5.1.	Teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The composition of the teaching staff adheres to Lithuanian legislation and complies fully with all relevant requirements. Approximately 80 percent of the teachers hold scientific degrees, demonstrating their high level of competence and academic expertise. The teaching process is supported by a combination of full-time and part-time lecturers, as well as practitioners from fields directly related to political science, ensuring a robust and practical learning experience. The hiring and management system is clearly defined and operates on a principle of competitiveness, promoting merit-based selection and excellence.

The administration of MRU has developed comprehensive guidelines outlining the standards required for teaching staff. These standards are transparent and accessible to employers, ensuring clarity in expectations. Teachers undergo an annual evaluation based on these predefined requirements. The evaluation criteria, which are shared with the teaching staff, encompass a wide range of performance aspects, including teaching quality and research contributions.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The MRU strictly adheres to Lithuanian legislation and meets all relevant academic and professional requirements. With 80% (1st cycle) and 83% (2nd cycle) of faculty members holding scientific degrees, the university ensures a high standard of academic competence and subject-matter expertise. The university's faculty recruitment and management system is structured on principles of transparency, meritocracy, and competitiveness. To maintain high educational standards, MRU has established comprehensive guidelines that outline the qualifications and expectations for teaching staff. These guidelines are readily accessible, ensuring clarity for both faculty members and administrators. An annual evaluation process that systematically assesses faculty performance against predefined criteria contributes to teaching effectiveness, research contributions, and professional engagement.

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

5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

The administration of MRU actively encourages its teaching staff to participate in a variety of international mobility programs, recognizing their importance in fostering academic collaboration, cultural exchange, and professional growth. Notably, the University has extended its mobility opportunities beyond the widely known ERASMUS+ program, which is complemented by other prestigious schemes such as NordPlus, the Research Council of Lithuania programs, the Fulbright Scholar Program, DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships, and several others. These diverse opportunities underscore the University's commitment to supporting the international engagement and development of its academic staff.

The selection process for staff participation in mobility programmes is transparent and grounded in the principle of competition, ensuring that the most qualified and motivated individuals are chosen. This approach promotes merit-based opportunities and encourages excellence in teaching and research.

The number of outgoing and incoming teachers involved in these mobility initiatives is adequate to maintain a healthy exchange of knowledge and practices. However, further efforts could be made to enhance participation rates. Expanding such efforts would not only strengthen MRU's international networks but also enrich the teaching and learning experiences at the University.

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

The University offers a range of courses designed to provide a foundational knowledge base essential for the professional development of its teaching staff. These courses aim to ensure that educators remain equipped with the latest knowledge, skills, and methodologies required for effective teaching and research.

Training sessions organized by the MRU library are particularly well-suited for newly employed teachers, helping them familiarize themselves with the University's academic resources, research tools, and library systems. These sessions provide valuable guidance on navigating academic databases, utilizing digital tools for research, and adhering to best practices in academic publishing.

Additionally, the University offers training programs focusing on ICT (Information and Communication Technology) competencies, which cater to a broader range of educators. These courses are designed to enhance teachers' digital literacy and equip them with the skills necessary to integrate modern technology into their teaching practices. Special attention is paid to Artificial Intelligence and its application in learning, teaching and research.

By providing these diverse training opportunities, the University demonstrates its commitment to fostering continuous professional growth among its teaching staff, consequently contributing to quality of education and research output.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

MRU is strongly committed to fostering the international engagement and professional development of its teaching staff through a wide range of mobility programs. The University actively encourages faculty participation in diverse international initiatives. While ERASMUS+ remains a cornerstone of these efforts, MRU has extended its mobility opportunities to include programs such as NordPlus, the Research Council of Lithuania initiatives, the Fulbright Scholar Program, DAAD, Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships, and other notable schemes. This broad selection of mobility options underlines the University's dedication to supporting its educators in gaining global experience and expanding their academic horizons. The selection process for participation in these mobility programs is transparent, competitive, and merit-based, ensuring that opportunities are granted to the most qualified and motivated faculty members. While the number of outgoing and incoming faculty members involved in mobility initiatives is sufficient to sustain meaningful knowledge exchange, further efforts to enhance participation rates could amplify MRU's international impact. Strengthening these initiatives would not only broaden the University's global network but also enrich the overall teaching and learning environment.

The MRU places strong emphasis on the continuous professional development of its teaching staff. The University offers a variety of training courses designed to equip educators with essential knowledge, skills, and methodologies required for effective teaching and research. Newly employed

faculty members benefit from specialized training sessions organized by the MRU library, which provide valuable guidance on utilizing academic resources, research tools, and library systems. The MRU prioritizes the development of digital competencies among its teaching staff, offering targeted training programs in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Special focus is placed on the role of Artificial Intelligence in education, equipping faculty members with the necessary expertise.

AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 5	Unsatisfactory - 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			X		
Second cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

1. The University places a strong emphasis on fostering collaboration with international partners to enhance academic exchange and global perspectives. This commitment strengthens and enriches the academic environment, fostering a more diverse and dynamic community.
2. The teaching staff is committed to bringing professionally relevant and up-to-date knowledge into the classroom. By aligning their teaching practices with current developments in their respective fields, they ensure that students receive an education that is both academically relevant and practically applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Currently, programs such as Public Policy and Management, as well as Health Policy and Management, are leading the way in academic and research activities. However, fields related to international relations appear to be lagging behind, suggesting a need for greater focus and investment in fostering their growth and development.
2. While international mobility at MRU remains robust, there is significant potential for further enhancement in other aspects of international engagement. Specifically, greater participation in international professional associations and the promotion of teaching staff internationalization are essential steps. These efforts could include encouraging faculty involvement in global academic networks and integrating more international perspectives into the curriculum.

For further improvement

1. Further internationalization of the teaching staff is essential to incorporate the most innovative teaching methods and practices into MRU's academic framework.
2. Faculty members delivering courses in international relations should actively enhance their expertise by engaging in advanced research initiatives, participating in global academic collaborations, and integrating the latest advancements and best practices in the field.

AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

HEI has sufficient resources to effectively plan and organise the study process, including well-equipped, comfortable classrooms with computer visualisation equipment, audio equipment and wireless internet access. The university has computer classrooms, a podcast studio and an open access policy. Study spaces are also adequately equipped for students with special needs. Library facilities are well equipped and adapted for independent student work, not only providing space for individual study, but also allowing students to work in groups.

The study infrastructure, as well as the MRU library premises and the services they provide, are also adapted for students with special needs (for example, several workstations for students with visual impairments were demonstrated during the meetings), 336 workstations and 266 reading stations, including 70 computerised workstations in the library.

The study process can be carried out in classrooms ranging in size from 12 to 440 students, depending on the size of the student group. Classrooms available in the HEI with the following software: Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator or In Design, SPSS

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

HEI plans to upgrade its existing infrastructure based on demand: additional computer classrooms are planned, procurement plans are submitted each year based on the information received on demand, and software upgrades are aimed at updating every five years. Academic staff have the opportunity to make requests to the library for new publications, which the library does 2-3 times a year. The structure of the budget allocated to the Library has evolved according to demand, with a decrease in the funds allocated to the purchase of printed publications and an increase in the funds allocated to database subscriptions.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

The Higher Education Institution (HEI) ensures an effective learning process by providing adequate and sufficient facilities, informational, and financial resources. The institution's well-equipped classrooms, computer labs, and specialized facilities, such as a podcast studio and accessible spaces for students with special needs, cater to diverse educational requirements. In addition, the library offers extensive resources, including computerized workstations and accessibility features, to support both individual and group study. Continuous planning for resource enhancement is in place to ensure that the infrastructure keeps pace with evolving demands, with regular upgrades to software, equipment, and library collections.

AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 6	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and
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		substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	shortcomings to be eliminated	without any shortcomings	internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	
Second cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Provision of well-equipped and accessible learning spaces, which include specialized facilities such as computer classrooms, a podcast studio, and library workstations tailored to students with special needs.
2. Proactive approach to resource management

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
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FACTUAL SITUATION

7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

The internal quality assurance system for the programmes is assured by its structured approach and integration of stakeholder input. It operates through regular surveys, stakeholder consultations, and Study Field Committee (SFC) evaluations. Feedback is systematically analyzed and used to identify and address issues in teaching, curriculum, and student services. External evaluations and benchmarking ensure compliance with national and international quality standards. Monitoring, transparent communication, and regular updates to programmes based on feedback are designed to ensure that the system remains responsive and in maintaining a satisfactory degree of academic quality

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

The involvement of stakeholders, including students, in internal quality assurance is guaranteed through structured feedback mechanisms and active participation in governance processes. Students contribute via anonymous surveys, oral feedback, and representation on the Study Field Committee (SFC). Social partners, alumni, and employers provide input through consultations and participation in programme reviews. The Study Field Committee integrates this feedback into quality assurance activities, such as curriculum updates and teaching improvements. Regular meetings and open communication channels possibly ensure that all stakeholders have opportunities to influence decision-making and contribute to programme enhancements.

The self-evaluation report acknowledges a lack of systematic data collection on employer perceptions of graduate training and skills. Although employer representatives participate in Study Field Committees and thesis defences, this engagement is too limited to provide an effective feedback loop for enhancing the programme's relevance from an employer's perspective. MRU does not systematically collect and monitor data on employers' perceptions of graduates' training and skills, representing a significant quality assurance gap.

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

Information on programmes, external evaluations, improvement processes, and outcomes is collected through surveys, stakeholder consultations, and external quality assurance evaluations conducted by institutions like SKVC. Data is analyzed by the Study Field Committee (SFC) and other governance bodies to identify areas for improvement. Updates and changes to programmes are implemented based on this feedback. Outcomes, including evaluation results and improvement actions, are summarized in annual reports and communicated publicly via the MRU website and other platforms.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

Student feedback at MRU is collected via structured, anonymous surveys provided electronically. These surveys include a range of questionnaires addressing the quality of subjects, teaching, internships, and overall study programmes. Additional feedback is gathered from final-year students and graduates through email surveys. Feedback is supplemented by oral surveys and discussions in Study Field Committee (SFC) meetings, which involve students and stakeholders. The data is analyzed to identify strengths and areas for improvement, with results informing decisions on study

programme adjustments. Summaries of survey outcomes are made publicly available on the MRU website

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

The internal quality assurance system at MRU is generally effective, utilizing structured feedback mechanisms from students, alumni, and employers through surveys, consultations, and Study Field Committee evaluations. This approach ensures that teaching, curriculum, and student services are regularly assessed and updated in line with both national and international standards. However, a notable gap exists in the systematic collection of employer feedback regarding graduates' skills and training. Although employer participation in committees is valuable, it is not comprehensive enough to provide a robust feedback loop for program enhancement. Addressing this gap would improve the alignment of the programmes with labor market expectations. Overall, MRU's quality assurance system is strong but could be further strengthened by enhancing employer engagement.

AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 7	Unsatisfactory - 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			X		
Second cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

1. The university has made significant progress in institutionalizing internal quality assurance activities. Surveys are voluntary and anonymous but are strongly incentivized. The collected data is organized electronically. For current students, questionnaires are typically provided through an electronic study booklet. For graduates, surveys are sent to the email addresses registered in the university's digital data system.
2. Overall, the university demonstrates a strong commitment to a data-driven approach in feedback analysis and ensures transparency by making information about study programmes' performance publicly available through its official online channels.
3. Communication with students and alumni is carried out with strict adherence to data privacy standards and full compliance with GDPR regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. While publicity of feedback and data is done consistently and in an accurate way, **presentation** of data and **contextualization** of their relevance should be done in a **more meaningful way**. When data are very scarce, feedback can be better presented in a qualitative way

2. Steps should be taken in order to **increase students'** participation in the course **feedback** process. This could be achieved, while keeping the process voluntary, by means of more systematic reminders and the requirement to explicitly drop-out for those not willing to provide feedback.

For further improvement

1. While the link with alumni is quite strong and consolidated, the organization of a **regular alumni survey** might prove key both to strengthening the connection with the external stakeholders and to trigger a positive process of trickling down when it comes to the curriculum development.

V. SUMMARY

This report presents the key findings of the expert panel based on the Self-Evaluation Reports (SER) and interviews conducted with Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) administration (senior management and faculty administration staff), staff responsible for preparing the SER, teaching staff, and stakeholders, including students, alumni, employers, and social partners.

The expert panel provides a positive evaluation of the implementation of the Political Science study field at MRU, with all assessed areas rated as satisfactory, good, or very good.

The panel found that MRU's Political Science programmes align with the university's mission and the evolving demands of the labour market. The university's strategic goals—particularly in digital transformation and AI integration—demonstrate a forward-looking approach. Learning outcomes focus on fostering creative, civic-minded individuals capable of working in dynamic environments and applying innovative technologies. The interdisciplinary structure of the programmes, integrating political science with economics, management, and communication, enhances graduates' employability across diverse sectors.

Research within the Political Science field is internationally recognized in certain areas; however, disparities in faculty research engagement persist. Some faculty members struggle to maintain a consistent research track record, and the number of publications in high-impact journals remains insufficient. To address this, MRU should implement structured improvement plans for underperforming faculty, encourage single-authored publications and scientific monographs, and enhance participation in large-scale international research projects. Increasing student involvement in research activities would further strengthen MRU's academic standing and global presence.

The university's admission process is transparent and effectively managed. First-cycle admissions are conducted through the LAMA BPO system, ensuring fairness and merit-based selection, while second-cycle admissions follow MRU Senate regulations. Despite a decline in enrolments, the quality of top applicants has improved, and dropout rates have decreased. MRU offers a comprehensive range of academic, financial, psychological, and social support services; however, student awareness of these resources remains low. Institutionalizing and promoting counselling services more actively would improve accessibility and engagement.

MRU provides international mobility opportunities through ERASMUS+, NordPlus, and various bilateral agreements. However, the number of outgoing students remains low, primarily due to challenges in balancing work and study. Strengthening support mechanisms for student mobility would significantly enhance the university's internationalization efforts.

The university actively invests in faculty development, offering specialized training in information and communication technology (ICT), pedagogical skills, and AI applications in education. Newly hired faculty members benefit from structured training in academic resources and research methodologies.

MRU has established a robust internal quality assurance system, employing electronic surveys and data-driven feedback mechanisms to assess and enhance study programmes. Student and graduate feedback is systematically collected, analyzed, and made publicly available in compliance with GDPR standards. While these mechanisms reflect MRU's commitment to transparency, the systematic integration of employer feedback into curriculum development remains an area for improvement.

The university provides an effective learning environment, supported by modern facilities, comprehensive informational resources, and sufficient financial investments. MRU's well-equipped classrooms, computer labs, and specialized learning spaces cater to diverse educational needs, while its library offers extensive resources to support both individual and collaborative study. Continuous resource enhancement plans ensure that infrastructure remains aligned with evolving academic and technological demands.

VI. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE