SKVC

FILM ART FIELD OF STUDY

AT LITHUANIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:
1. Panel chair: Prof. Karen Savage
2. Academic member: Prof. Žilvinas Lilas
3. Academic member: Prof. Indrek Ibrus
4. Social partner: Ramunė Kudzmanaitė
5. Student representative: Mažvydas Maziliauskas

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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 Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 Order No. V-149. The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on 14 October, 2024.

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: Prof. Karen Savage, Head of Arts, Culture & Heritage: College of Arts (University of Lincoln), United Kingdom.

2. Academic member: Prof. Žilvinas Lilas, Professor of 3D animation at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, Germany.

3. Academic member: Prof. Indrek Ibrus, Professor of media innovation at Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication School, Estonia.

4. Social partner: Ramunė Kudzmanaitė, Film and theatre director, lecturer at the College of Social Sciences, Lithuania.

5. Student representative: Mažvydas Maziliauskas, fourth-year student at Vytautas Magnus University, majoring in Creative Industries, Lithuania.

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 25th November 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 a need for translation during the meeting with the senior management and administrative staff of the faculty. Additionally, some members of the panels did not contribute to the conversation, which may have been due to language difficulties. All panels were offered translation if they required it.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

The Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (hereafter LMTA, Academy) is a specialised tertiary higher education institution that delivers studies in arts, as well as art history and theory, trains professional music, theatre, film and dance artists and researchers.

The Academy was founded in 1933 and disseminates results from art activities and scientific research. LMTA currently hosts about 1,000 students in three study cycles – Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral studies.

The mission of the Academy is to 'ensure sustainable development of art and art research', 'participate in the shaping of the national artistic education and cultural policy', 'foster spiritual harmony and national identity in society' and 'educate the most artistically gifted young people into creative, proactive, entrepreneurial members of society who are open to Lithuania and the world'.

In 2024, structural changes took place at the Academy and from September 2024 there are four faculties, three are based at Vilnius (Theatre and dance, Music, and National Film School) and one in Klaipeda.

Following structural changes at the Academy, as of autumn 2024, the Department of Film and Television was separated from the Faculty of Theatre and Film and became the National Film School of the LMTA. The National Film School has about 120 students and 38 teachers working there.

Overview of the field of study

This evaluation focuses on the 2nd cycle of the study programme Film Art which is the only study programme of this type in Lithuania where film professionals broaden and extend knowledge and abilities acquired in the first study cycle by implementing a creative film art project and conducting artistic research relevant in their area. There are 4 specialisations of the second cycle study programme: Sound Design, Production, Cinematography and Film Directing.

Previous external evaluations

In the previous review (2021), the second cycle Film Art was given a positive review but with two clear shortcomings. These were evaluation areas 1: Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum, and 4: Teaching and Learning, student performance and graduate employment. Both of these sections were evaluated by the panel with 2 points. In the previous report, the panel noted that "The conformity of the outcomes regarding the field and labour market in the case of the second cycle is not as self-evident as such programmes generally seek their identity between artistic practice, research and theory. The second cycle at the LMTA is not an exception and struggles to clearly articulate its mission and vision." (EER 2021, page 10). In 2024, it is evident that students and staff are pushing the understanding of artistic research. The student panel reiterated how important the research element was to their studies. The aims are now more clearly written, although further explicit link to the mission and vision of the programme could be made. When you mention 'values', what precisely do you mean? There were some confusing responses from the student and teaching panels regarding the relationship between research and practice, so although it is clear that students understand that artistic research is integral to what they do, further clarification about that relationship is required, especially in terms of *Film Art*.

Another comment from the panel in 2021: "By inspecting the curriculum, it becomes evident that the second cycle study programme is somewhat undefined with open elective courses and a small number of mandatory courses" (EER 2021, page 10). The staff have clearly responded to this, but perhaps now the programme has swung a little too far in the other direction. The panel in 2024,

noted that there was very little space in the curriculum for students to design their own learning, and therefore to attempt something new was restricting. The panel appreciate that this is a difficult balance to address, especially at Masters level, when students want to master their subject. However, further innovative thinking around open, live-brief, or challenge-based problems might be a way for students to experiment beyond their discipline.

Documents and information used in the review

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

Study field: FILM (P05) Study cycle Second, II, Master's studies SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (henceforth abbreviated as the SER).

and its annexes, specifically:

- 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE FOR ORGANIZING PUBLIC COMPETITION FOR TEACHERS AND SCIENTIFIC EMPLOYEES AT THE LITHUANIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE
- 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE FOR ORGANIZING PUBLIC COMPETITION FOR TEACHERS AND SCIENTIFIC EMPLOYEES AT THE LITHUANIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATER
- 3. LITHUANIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE
- 4. LIST OF FINAL THESES IN THE FIELD OF FILM BY MA GRADUATES IN 2020 - 2022 AND 2024
- 5. DESCRIPTION OF MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE POSITIONS OF TEACHING ARTISTS OF THE LITHUANIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE
- 6. RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE LITHUANIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE
- 7. ANNEX 3. FILM II CYCLE LIST OF TEACHERS
- 8. ANNEX 5. PROJECT/ CREATION OF THE LMTA CAMPUS AT OLAND7 STR., VILNIUS
- 9. ANNEX 8. ROOM REQUIREMENTS
- 10. ANNEX 9. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS
- 11. DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF COMPETITIONS FOR LMTA TEACHERS AND RESEARCHERS.
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II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

Second cycle/LTQF 7

Title of the study programme	**Film Art**
State code	6211PX003
Type of study (college/university)	University cycle studies
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time studies, 2 years
Workload in ECTS	120
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Master of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Higher university education (Bachelor's Degree)
First registration date	19 May, 1997
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	

III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **second cycle** of the Film Art field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points[1]
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Quality assurance and public information	3
Total:		22

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[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.

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The Academy sees employability of graduates as one of its strengths. (SER, page 45) "High employability of graduates. Positive feedback from employers on the knowledge and abilities acquired by graduates". On-site meeting with the employers and other stakeholders revealed a generally positive view of technical know-how of the programme's graduates.

Also, SER provides a satisfactory graduates employability record. Out of 20 graduates (Annex to SER No. 6) 14 are listed as freelancers or "employed in film industry", 6 employed at the production houses or the other companies, and 2 are heads of the companies.

However, there's no clear evidence of an increased employability upon the completion of the second cycle of studies. Also, none of the graduates chose to pursue further studies, although the Academy emphasises this possibility (SER, page 40): "Upon successful completion of the second cycle studies in the field of Film and acquisition of the Master's Qualification Degree in Arts, graduates may continue studying in doctoral research or art studies". It is not clear how many graduates chose to pursue independent research. (SER, page 40)" […] conduct independent research in the area of film…"

The SER document doesn't furbish direct evidence on the Film Art (MA), programme's, code 6211PX003 (later programme) direct societal or economic impact, nor does it provide any documented feedback gained by surveys or statistics. However, indirectly, the programme as "the only study programme of this type in Lithuania" could be seen as crucial for maintaining a viable film industry in the country. Furthermore, the Academy itself is a significant cultural phenomenon in Lithuania, hosting: "more than 500 public art events a year: about 300 concerts, about 170 performances, and about 30 film screenings." (SER, page 7) Thus, it is safe to say that the programme has an important role in the field of film arts in the country.

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

The programme complies with the LMTA mission, the vision and strategic priorities established in the *strategy LMTA'2030.*

The object of studies in the field of Film Art (later the Programme) is defined broadly but with a good understanding of current technical and conceptual context of genre: "the artistic content intended for television, computers, mobile phones and other screens".[…]"information and communication technologies and screen industries" (SER, page 8) The Programme is positioned in the study group of arts, providing a clear curricular direction.

Also the Programme offers four specialisations such as "Sound Design, Production, Film Directing and Cinematography". One important field, scriptwriting is not as visible or obvious in the list of specialisms, albeit it lists film screenwriters as one of the key components in the field. However,

there's an understanding of a need to revise the current make-up of the programme: "There are plans to broaden the range of specialisations in the second cycle study programme *Film Art* in the future too" (SER, page 8). The on-site meeting with the Programme's students revealed that the majority of them joined the Programme to enhance their research capacities. Acquiring additional technical skills for film production was not, they said, the primary motivator to join the programme.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

Programme's alignment with the needs of the society and/or the labour market are not adequately presented in the SER or in any additional documents. However, circumstantial or indirect evidence (this programme is "the only study programme of this type in Lithuania") suggests a clear need and a value of such a program in the country. The panel had to rely on their interviews with the teaching staff, leadership, alumni and social partners to find out the true measure of such an alignment. However, as with most programmes in the field group *arts*, there's immanent underlying uncertainty about the exact employment possibilities of the graduates, specifically in comparison to the ones graduated from the first cycle.

It is important to note that in the last 10 years academic focus in a field of art has steadily changed from the one directly coupling it with the labour market (creative industries, etc.) to a more nuanced and diversified approach, counting individual creative work (artist) education, art therapy and research as valid venues. From this vantage point, the academy's focus on research (189 mentions in SER) is wise. However, this position (artistic research) needs to be strengthened in the 2nd cycle, and proceed not at the level of the final thesis (research paper) only, but should be spread throughout the academic calendar and integrated at the level of class assignments and experimental artistic projects.

Moreover, quick saturation of the film market in such a small country is a pressing issue, therefore 1. diversification of approaches and away from a single technology (film) and genre (feature film) to a wider variety of strategies would benefit the programme and 2. Offering an English language track would attract a more diverse student body (all graduates of the programme 2020-2022 are ethnic Lithuanians) and would increase employability of the graduates outside Lithuania.

The Academy may wish to explore and reflect upon the possibility of a practice-based research component—as a stronger academic venue within the Programme—besides primarily market oriented education. A deeper research element would better differentiate such a Programme from its first cycle siblings.

It is not clear how the Programme is planning to accommodate Erasmus incoming students or to comply with its own internationalisation goals (LMTA'2030 Strategy), when studies are entirely in Lithuanian? (SER, page 32): "Over the last three years, there were no students coming from abroad for full-time studies in the field concerned because they are delivered in Lithuanian. The language is very important in the study programmes in the field of Film because screenplays and dialogues are written in Lithuanian, film documentation is in Lithuanian, shootings take place in the Lithuanian-speaking environment".

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 Programme complies with the statutes and provisions of the higher education of the Republic of Lithuania and the relevant frameworks of the EU. Namely it complies with the Lithuanian

Qualifications Framework in accordance with the Description of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, the seventh level of the European Qualifications Framework, the second study cycle of the Framework of Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area. Furthermore it is governed by the Descriptor of the Study Fields of Theatre, Film and Dance, the Descriptor of Study Cycles, the Descriptor of Full-Time and Part-Time Modes of Study, the General Requirements for Delivery of Studies, among a number of other national and international legal frameworks.

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

The Programme's aim to train an artist in the field of Film Art within the area of 4 specialisations, is in compliance with the profile and competences of LMTA. Learning outcomes, to train professionals for the respective fields of Sound Design, Production, Cinematography and Film Directing, are clearly defined in the study descriptor of the Programme (Annex to SER No.1). Curriculum design of the Programme complies with Bologna provisions of 'The European Credit Transfer' and 'Accumulation System (ECTS)' and awards a sufficient number of credits (120)

1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

Most of the recent graduates find their competences sufficient to the workplace requirements. (SER, page 43) "In the survey, respondents are asked "were the knowledge and skills acquired during your studies sufficient to enable you to successfully find a job and pursue a career?". 66.7% of respondents indicated that "yes, it was absolutely sufficient" and 33.3% chose "almost sufficient". Also, 67% of graduates rated the usefulness of the knowledge they received as "good" and 33% as "very good"". (SER, page 43)

The credit point allocation is feasible and corresponds to a typical academic makeup of an art school, where roughly half of the load is dedicated to development of individual artistic projects. 65 credit points development of individual projects. "In the Programme, from 2,487 to 2,505 hours are allocated to students' individual work (which accounts for 77.71–78.28 percent of the total scope of the programme), in total" (SER, page 39).

The on-site meeting revealed that the majority of students were attracted by the possibility to further their research. The clear understanding of research methodology, its goals and the difference between reflection and research was however lacking.

In 2023 LMTA received an Erasmus Grant to develop joint study programmes. However, at the time of reviewing the material and through the panel discussions, the panel did not see evidence of any such programme or steps towards inter-institutional cooperation in the documents provided: "[…] ERASMUS-EDU-2023-EUR-UNIV programme with a total of €12,800,000 of which €1,103,737 is allocated to the LMTA. The project aims at strengthening the quality of study programmes, developing joint study programmes, introducing teaching innovations, promoting experimental artistic projects, staff and student mobility, and strengthening inter-institutional cooperation" (SER, page 15).

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

Curricular design (Annex to SER No 1) could be more flexible to ensure a wider type of personal learning goals. At the moment, and in line with a "project studies" type frequented in the field of arts, students have freedom of choice within their field of specialisation, and specifically when it comes to development of specialised artistic projects. However, when it comes to crossing over to a different type of knowledge, the proposed architecture is not flexible enough. From overall 120 credit points, a student is required to take 70 credit points within his/her field of specialisation, additionally 30

credits as Final Master's Project and 20 credits as "Courses determined by the Academy and chosen by the student". From those 20 credits students can freely choose only 5 as an "Optional Subject", In other words, from 120 ECTS, it appears that students can freely choose only 5.

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

The second cycle graduation theses consist of a creative project and a research paper which is a standard provision with most of art and film academies. The Academy provided access to a number of graduation theses (2an_list_of_MA_graduat_final_theses_of_film.pdf) spanning from 2020 to 2022, 2024, which included both creative project and research paper.

The graduation projects fully comply with the legal provisions and the acts of LMTA and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The Programme complies with legal requirements governing national or international EU higher education. However, there are two areas of concern. 1. Internationalisation. It is not clear how the program can accommodate foreign students or foreign teachers. The teaching language is exclusively in Lithuanian. The reasons for this are: "because screenplays and dialogues are written in Lithuanian, film documentation is in Lithuanian, shootings take place in the Lithuanian-speaking environment" (SER, page 32). From the submitted documents the panel can assess creative projects and research papers of the graduation theses. The artistic practical projects demonstrate a sufficient professional aptitude and artistic flair as is expected from the second cycle graduation projects. The research papers exhibit a good grasp of structuring a paper, and follow this structure of 'description of methodology', 'historical overview', 'main thesis' and 'possible critical voices'. All research papers (20) follow the standard formatting rules of a scientific paper and include a summary in English. Also, all exhibit a non-trivial length and contain on average 37 pages.

The graduation projects fully comply with the legal provisions of the relevant educational authorities. The SER claims: "The object of studies in the field of Film Art is determined by close links among film and film-inspired screen arts (the artistic content intended for television, computers, mobile phones and other screens) and technical inventions, the development of information and communication technologies and screen industries." (SER, page 8). Nevertheless, graduate projects follow a narrowly predefined genre of a classical feature film. For years 2020-22 out of 12 graduate projects in the specialisation film directing, only 3 projects were non-feature films, namely 1 experimental film and 2 documentary films. As a Programme in the group of study fields Art, the outcomes should have a wider artistic spectrum and deeper engagement with a wider variety of technologies when it comes to image recording/generation and delivery to audience/spectator.

Furthermore, the choice of the supervisors for the graduation project should be broadened. For example, all graduates of the Directing Study programme 2022 were led by the same supervisor (lect. Lina Lužytė) who is also a graduate (BA/MA) of this same Programme.

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
Second cycle			**X**		

COMMENDATIONS

1. The programme is the only one of this kind in Lithuania, delivering a master level education in the field of cinema. Programme is satisfactory in preparing an *auteur* cinematographers capable of delivering an audio-visual product fulfilling national and international requirements in the branch of professional filmmaking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Internationalisation is stated as one of strategic priorities of the academy: "For the purposes of the strategic priority of international school, the following internationalisation strategy is implemented in the studies in the field of Film:

- Develop the strategic partnership through participation in international networks and joint projects;
- Improve students and teachers' skills and competences through participation in short-term and long-term mobility programmes and projects;
- Continue the programme of foreign teachers' instruction and study visits;
- Participate in international events, conferences, improve professional skills, intercultural competences and language skills;
- Update study programmes by introducing the most recent trends, knowledge, scientific and teaching methods learnt while participating in international programmes and projects;
- Introduce more flexible mixed and distance learning modes;
- Promote subject instruction in English;
- Attract a larger number of international students under mobility programmes. "(SER, pages 9, 31, 32). Furthermore, in 2022 LMTA became a member of FilmEU+ alliance, focused on enhancing international mobility.

To achieve its goals, the Programme has to urgently find ways of ensuring a meaningful international collaboration (opportunities in relation to this programme, faculty and student exchange etc.) possibility. At this stage there's no possibility for any type of international collaboration (Erasmus and others) within the programme as the language of instruction is exclusively Lithuanian.

2. The Programme lacks flexibility to meaningfully personalise its curriculum. Students have an opportunity to freely choose only 5 (out of 120) credits of the whole Programme. As a second cycle programme it should provide a wider choice.

For further improvement

1. Areas of specialisation at the moment are "Sound Design, Production, Film Directing and Cinematography". One important field, scriptwriting is absent. It would be fruitful, in order to ensure a seemless curricular flow "from script to screen" to consider offering scriptwriting as one of the specialisations within the programme. Also, to ensure a viable intake of the students, it would be worth exploring a possibility of offering it in English language.
2. The module "Existential Psychology" focuses exclusively on 20 century existentialism. It would strengthen the class by introducing different methodological approaches. For example, Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism", also, non-humanist and feminist approaches in psychology and psychoanalysis. Freud, Lacan, Simone de Beauvoir "The Second Sex", Julia Kristeva "Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia" Dorothy Dinnerstein "The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise", Melanie Klein "Love, Guilt, and Reparation & Other Works".

3. Finally thesis supervisor. Students of the Programme should be provided with a wider choice of supervisors. For example, the "directing specialisation" 2022 offered a single choice only. The Programme should consider implementing 2 supervisor model with a second supervisor chosen from outside of the area of specialisation

4. The Programme should better explore contemporary technologies directly linked to film, such as mobile screen, 360° and stereoscopic, cinema and also different narrative approaches, other than fictional features, integrating in curriculum experimental, documentary and non-linear narrative approaches.

5. Research tools and outcomes should be better defined. Specifically, it would benefit the programme providing a clear guidance in research methodologies, and not just quantitative and qualitative, but exploring possibilities of conducting a research with a set of either sociological, philosophical, aesthetical, anthropological, psychoanalytical or historical tool-sets. When it comes to outcomes, it would help the programme to draw a bit more clear boundaries of the accepted format, ranging from essay to hypothesis to axiomatic thesis.

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 SER as well as the interviews with administrative staff and faculty members and students illustrated a rather well-crafted strategy to integrate research, artistic achievements, and practical film production into its Master's program in the field of Film Art. While the Academy positions itself as a leader in this regard, a closer analysis reveals a nuanced picture of strengths as well as opportunities for further advancement.

A core strength of the Programme is its consistent emphasis on artistic research, as reflected in its alignment with national evaluation standards and high rankings in artistic output. While the SER could have provided a more systematic overview on how (precisely) artistic research training and practices integrated into the Programme, the testimonies by both faculty members as well as students evidenced a very tight integration throughout the two years of studies. Indeed, many students admitted that the strong emphasis on research and, therein, artistic research was the main motivator for them to join the Programme – as it enabled them to take the next step compared to their preceding BA studies. We can conclude that research practices are sufficiently integrated into the Programme.

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

A notable strength lies in the Academy's efforts to align its curriculum with contemporary trends in the global film industry and research. Initiatives such as interdisciplinary projects on ethnographic filmmaking and digital platform studies highlight the institution's responsiveness to emerging cultural and technological dynamics. By addressing themes such as identity, inclusivity, and democratic values in film, the Academy situates itself at the intersection of art and socio-political discourse. However, despite these commendable efforts, the SER does not sufficiently clarify how the curriculum systematically integrates these themes into the broader pedagogical framework. For instance, while interdisciplinary collaborations are mentioned, the extent to which they influence core learning outcomes or inform teaching methodologies remains was not sufficiently evidenced. A

deeper theoretical engagement with the interplay between research and practice would enhance the Program's intellectual coherence and ensure that students gain a comprehensive understanding of how their work contributes to broader societal narratives.

Infrastructure and resources are another area where the Academy excels, as demonstrated by the Audiovisual Arts Industry Incubator, which provides cutting-edge facilities for both students and faculty. This commitment to equipping learners with advanced tools is commendable and aligns with the needs of a rapidly evolving film industry. However, the SER suggests potential imbalances in how these resources are distributed across different specializations. For instance, it appeared that while fields such as cinematography and directing are prominently featured, other areas may receive comparatively less attention in terms of research initiatives and project opportunities. Addressing this disparity by ensuring equitable resource allocation and showcasing achievements across all specializations would foster a more inclusive and balanced program.

One recurring theme in the SER is the emphasis external artistic accolades as markers of success. While these achievements validate the Academy's high standards, they do little to illuminate the mechanisms through which such recognition translates into meaningful improvements in teaching and learning. In the future the Academy could analyse more systematically how feedback from national evaluations has been integrated into the program's design or how specific award-winning projects have informed pedagogical innovations. Such introspection would not only reinforce the Academy's commitment to continuous improvement but also provide a roadmap for other institutions seeking to emulate its success.

The Academy's participation in international networks, such as FilmEU, further strengthens its reputation as a globally engaged institution. These collaborations provide valuable opportunities for students and faculty to engage with diverse artistic practices, research methodologies, and cultural contexts. However, despite this international outlook, there is a need to expand the Academy's global reach, particularly in terms of attracting international students and faculty members and deepening institutional partnerships. While the inclusion of international research projects demonstrates the Academy's proactive stance, a more structured approach to leveraging these collaborations for curriculum development could enhance the program's relevance and adaptability in a globalised academic and artistic landscape.

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

For students, an important motivator was the high quality of faculty contributions, which include internationally recognised artistic and, occasionally, research achievements. The integration of practical studies with theoretical courses ensures that students are exposed to real-world filmmaking processes while benefiting from mentorship by leading industry practitioners. However, this teacher-led model, while effective in its own right, may inadvertently limit opportunities for students to independently conceptualise and lead projects. Students in their interviews downplayed this risk – after their first few months of studies, they sensed that they were in full control of the direction and nature of their own MA projects. Yet, for the future, the faculty needs to make sure that an emphasis is placed on fostering student autonomy further in order to cultivate a new generation of filmmakers equipped to innovate independently rather than simply replicate existing practices.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

The strategic prioritisation of artistic research and the first steps towards internationalisation reflects the Academy's forward-thinking ethos. Yet, the lack of a detailed long-term vision for sustaining and expanding these priorities is a notable omission. We recommend a clearer articulation of such a vision in the near future.

In conclusion, the LMTA demonstrates an impressive ability to blend artistic practice with academic research within its Film Art Master's program. Its achievements in fostering a vibrant creative environment, supported by robust infrastructure and some international collaborations, position it as a leader in film education in Lithuania. However, to fully realise its potential, the Academy must address areas of imbalance, foster further student autonomy, and adopt a more reflective and theoretically robust approach to its integration of research and practice. By doing so, it can ensure that its Programme not only maintains its high standards but also evolves to meet the demands of an ever-changing global cultural and academic landscape.

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
Second cycle			**X**		

COMMENDATIONS

1. Good integration of artistic research into the study programme throughout different courses. The MA programme is now more research driven.
2. First necessary steps towards internationalisation – the Academia has stated to build on its participation in the FilmEU consortium and a few other research projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Further internationalisation of both student as well as faculty contingent. It is important to facilitate more systematic exchanges of students and faculty with partner organisations across Europe and beyond. More active participation in research and development projects via programmes such as Creative Europe, Horizon Europe, etc., should be also pursued.
2. Articulation of a clearer method of how artistic achievements are translated into curriculum development. The artistic achievements of some of the faculty members are notable, but a clearer strategy of how to use these in strengthening the pedagogical processes would be necessary.

For further improvement

1. The Academy should continue strengthening and making explicit that students will have significant autonomy in deciding and designing their own research projects. Research autonomy and thematic variety of projects should be encouraged.

1. 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

As mentioned in the SER, starting in 2024, admission to all specializations within the Programme are standardized. This means all applicants must take the entrance examination assessment, participate in an admission interview, and have their first-cycle study learning outcomes evaluated by the academy. Also, for the entrance examination assessment, candidates must prepare presentations of their planned creative research projects - previously, tasks differed from the entrants' specializations (as it all is mentioned in the SER). Information about the admission process, the structure of the competitive score and the study program grid is available on the website, social networks and shared during study fairs and open days. Additionally, consultations are organized to assist applicants.

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

Students from abroad can study through exchange programs or by paying for their tuition. Applicants seeking recognition of a foreign qualification must submit an application with supporting documents, including consent for data verification, via email. The academic value of the qualification is assessed by comparing it to the closest Lithuanian equivalent based on several criteria, and the outcome (recognition, non-recognition, or recognition with requirements) determines eligibility for further study applications, though it doesn't guarantee admission, which is governed by the Admission Regulations, which are updated on an annual basis and are publicly available. Graduates from other higher education institutions are also eligible to apply. All applicants, except those who earned their Bachelor's degree in Film from the LMTA in the same year that admission to the study Programme is held, must provide examples of their work created during studies, work or free time, prepared scientific materials and other materials that demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the subject of study. This information about the candidate's activities is used to evaluate the candidates' competence and motivation.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

The Academy places a strong emphasis on student admissions by providing consultations, posting information on the academy's website and social networks, and participating in study fairs. This is particularly recognized and appreciated by those pursuing film studies. However, the Academy does not limit its attention to students only during the admission period - this is reflected in the experience of the academy community in working with foreign students.

This experience manifests in several ways, including the organization of lectures delivered in English and the provision of additional consultations designed to support international students' academic progress and integration. However, while the Academy's efforts in accommodating international students are commendable, there remains a need for greater attention to be paid to the actual content of the studies conducted in English. Ensuring the quality, depth, and relevance of the curriculum offered in English is crucial for attracting and retaining international talent.

Furthermore, many students choose the film master's program specifically as a stepping stone, preparing them for potential enrolment in doctoral studies. Given this clear objective for many students, it is essential for the Academy to more effectively highlight the full range of opportunities

the master's Programme offers for doctoral preparation, as well as for other opportunities. This includes showcasing career pathways, networking opportunities, practical skill development, and other valuable aspects of the program that contribute to students' professional and academic growth.

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

The Academy offers information about partial studies abroad and encourages students to participate in various programs. Students receive details about funding opportunities, including support from higher education institution and participation in funding competitions. Students can choose between longer and shorter mobility trips. Students prefer short-term partial studies abroad to maintain their study rhythm and avoid disrupting their daily lives. Another reason is that students participating in short-term mobility programs maintain their enrolment, which is crucial for programs heavily reliant on collaborative work. SER data indicates that in 2023, the most popular student travel destinations were nearby: Kintai, Lithuania, and Tallinn, Estonia.

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

Students can apply for scholarships and financial support provided by the state. The LMTA actively encourages students to explore various scholarship opportunities. It places a strong emphasis on student well-being by offering necessary assistance and enhancing inclusivity for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the Academy has student organizations that students can join. Opportunities for on-campus dormitory living are available based on space and the student's capacity to attend the academy.

3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

Students actively participate in enhancing the study process by engaging in the activities of study Programme committees and other representative bodies. Teachers are responsive to student feedback and adjust study subjects accordingly. While students receive important information via email, the volume of messages often results in some being overlooked. Additionally, information can be accessed through other channels, such as social networks, remote chat and meeting platform.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

Students currently have the opportunity to participate in short-term mobility trips, such as exchange programs. However, it is recommended that they also be made aware of the significant advantages offered by longer-term international experiences, such as full-semester or year-long exchanges, and internships abroad. These extended experiences can provide deeper cultural immersion, enhanced language acquisition, greater personal growth, and a more substantial impact on their academic and professional development.

While current provisions generally meet students' needs and mechanisms are in place for them to voice their opinions and concerns, there is room for improvement in the effectiveness of communication channels. It is crucial to explore and implement more robust communication strategies to ensure that all students receive timely and relevant information. Specifically, leveraging social media platforms, which are already integrated into students' daily lives, could be highly effective. Additionally, utilizing the digital tools and learning management systems already employed during their studies, such as online portals, email newsletters, and dedicated communication

platforms, could create a more streamlined and accessible information flow. This multi-pronged approach would ensure that all necessary information, including details about academic resources, support services, upcoming events, and opportunities like long-term mobility programs, reaches the entire student body efficiently and effectively. Although the faculty may feel that they are attempting a number of mechanisms for communicating with students, it is clear from discussions with the students that the approach is not always working. The student panel made it clear that they did not engage with a lot of the communications. Therefore, we suggest that a communication review might be considered. Creating 'more' methods of communication is not what is required, it is about creating the 'right' methods of communication. Additionally, we have used the term 'robust' above, but this is a dynamic approach and requires the student to 'be robust' in their approach too. A review of the communications, along with an agreed way forward with the student body might be the most appropriate next step.

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
Second cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

1. There is a good and effective range of support for students - The Academy offers career-focused extracurricular activities, psychological support, and academic advising, while also providing students with opportunities to contribute feedback and suggestions for program improvement.
2. The admission process is well-organized, and the academy focuses on student understanding. Entrance exam presentations allow applicants to showcase their knowledge and self-expression, fostering deeper understanding of relevant topics which likely benefits their studies. The academy offers consultations for prospective students, and current students report a positive admissions experience, finding the process clear and straightforward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Inefficient communication is a problem, as students rarely use their Academy email due to information overload, and while they prefer social media, not all necessary information is posted there. A better approach would be to categorize information by importance and assign it to specific channels, leveraging teachers and student representatives to disseminate key, time-sensitive updates.
2. Develop targeted strategies for attracting foreign students - to use partners of the higher education institution to promote its unique offerings through advertising campaigns both in Lithuania and internationally.
3. Highlight the benefits of a master's degree beyond just the option to pursue doctoral studies.
4. Make sure the student body is aware of the student representation model and how they can engage with it.

For further improvement

1. The Academy should prioritize improving employee foreign language skills, particularly by assessing teacher preparedness for international students and offering language courses. Stronger language proficiency will not only attract more foreign students but also enhance the institution's and students' public image and partnerships.

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

Both the SER and the interviews with the staff members and students provided a comprehensive view of how the institution monitors academic progress, assesses student achievements, and tracks graduate outcomes. While there are notable strengths in student employability and Programme coherence, there are also opportunities for improvement in addressing systemic gaps and ensuring sustainability.

The emphasis on preparing students for independent professional activities stands out as a core strength. The Programme employs diverse teaching methods, including theoretical and practical classes, creative projects, and integrated professional exercises, fostering an environment conducive to both individual development and teamwork. This approach effectively simulates the collaborative nature of the film industry, providing students with hands-on experience that aligns with professional realities.

An important form of studying that the students of the Programme have not been using much is prolonged stays at other universities - for instance, by using the Erasmus programme to study for a term in different film schools in Europe. In the interviews, the students expressed that they are satisfied with what the Academy is offering, and they are afraid of staying behind their coursemates. The evaluators suggest that faculty develop ways to promote the relevant offerings by other film schools in Europe (for instance, in the FilmEU consortium) and creates improved opportunities for students to study abroad. The diversification of experiences and encounters with different schools of thought and practice is an important way to expand students' horizons and is a way to advance Lithuanian film culture and education in the long term.

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

The Academy ensures access to higher education for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs through a comprehensive support system provided by the State Studies Foundation. This includes state-supported loans for tuition fees and living expenses, social grants for disadvantaged students, financial assistance for students with disabilities, and support for Lithuanians abroad. Additionally, high-performing students benefit from tuition fee reimbursements, and those who have completed military service receive compensation. To further reduce financial barriers, socially vulnerable students and those with special needs relocating to Vilnius are offered reduced residence fees. The Study Division provides guidance to help students access these resources, creating an inclusive and supportive academic environment that prioritizes equity and accessibility.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

The Film Art MA programme at the LMTA demonstrates a commendable focus on preparing students for professional life, particularly through its use of diverse teaching methods that blend theoretical knowledge, practical exercises, creative projects, and professional collaboration. This approach effectively mirrors the realities of the film industry and equips students with skills necessary for independent professional activity and teamwork. However, the programme exhibits limitations in terms of international exposure, as students have underutilized opportunities for prolonged study abroad, such as those offered through Erasmus or the FilmEU consortium. Despite students expressing satisfaction with the current offerings, the lack of participation in exchange programmes restricts their exposure to alternative practices and perspectives, which could otherwise enrich their education and advance Lithuanian film culture. Therefore, while the Programme prepares students well for professional life, fostering international mobility and expanding academic horizons would significantly enhance its long-term impact.

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 system of performance assessment and progress monitoring has been systematically developed. Continuous assessment through intermediate evaluations and detailed feedback mechanisms allows for a robust tracking of student learning outcomes. Teachers engage with students individually and collectively, offering tailored guidance to enhance academic and creative performance. This personalised attention is critical in arts education, where subjective interpretation often plays a significant role. However, the confidentiality surrounding assessment results, while ethically sound, may limit opportunities for peer learning and collective reflection. A more transparent, anonymised sharing of key learnings and outcomes could enrich the educational experience without compromising individual privacy.

The integration of the Education Management Information System (ŠVIS) to monitor graduate outcomes is commendable and a clear and necessary improvement since the assessment three years ago. Still, in SER the Academy acknowledges limitations in updating and utilising this data. This highlights a broader issue of resource management and institutional accountability in tracking long-term program impact. Strengthening these systems and ensuring regular updates would enhance transparency and provide a reliable basis for strategic planning.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

Graduate employability rates are presented as a testament to the program's effectiveness. The data that the Academy provided indicate that all recent graduates are employed, many as freelancers or in highly skilled positions, with a notable proportion earning competitive incomes. Employers' satisfaction was also confirmed during the specialised panel with their representatives. This is a significant achievement, reflecting the program's alignment with industry demands. However, the reliance on self-employment as a primary career path raises questions about the program's long-term adaptability to market fluctuations. While freelancing is an integral part of creative industries, the absence of data on sustained employment or career growth trajectories limits a comprehensive understanding of graduate success.

The report also highlights that some feedback is collected from employers - gathered through occasional surveys, informal interactions during industry events, as well as more formal surveys. This dialogue is crucial for aligning academic outcomes with industry expectations and should be used to inform curriculum development

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

Since the last evaluation three years ago, a set of ethical conduct guidelines has been established. Through these, the aim has been to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination. This institutional policy is claimed to uphold principles of equality, inclusion, and respect for diversity across all activities involving students and staff. The Academy claims to foster a community culture where differences are valued, and every individual, regardless of gender, race, nationality, social status, beliefs, or other characteristics, is treated with respect and given equal opportunities to thrive. The committee believes these measures promote a safe and equitable environment for MA studies.

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

There are appeals processes enabled when it comes to individual courses and the evaluators had no reason to doubt their effectiveness. It needs to be highlighted, however, that currently the students still cannot appeal the grades for their final graduation work. There are different approaches and policies in place at different institutions in relation to appeals. For some of the panel, the justification for not permitting an appeal is difficult to understand. Therefore, the panel suggest that the justifcations for appeals are clearly communicated to students, and that the faculty continue to make sure there is due diligence during the assessment process so that each student is awarded the appropriate grade. This might be through a double marking or verification process and should always include clear assessment criteria that is clearly communicated to students. Therefore, providing the student with a clear mechanism for success and reducing the risk of students appealing on processual grounds.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

In conclusion, the LMTA demonstrates an improved commitment to academic excellence and professional relevance. Its growing emphasis on diverse teaching methods, continuous assessment, and graduate employability are about to become its strengths. However, to fully realise its potential, the institution should consider addressing issues with regard to fairer processes, study internationalisation, feedback utilisation, and long-term career tracking. By adopting a more structured and forward-looking approach, the Academy can ensure that its Programme remains resilient and responsive to both student needs and industry dynamics.

AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. The Academy has successfully implemented a comprehensive student progress monitoring system - this enables more systematic and transparent monitoring of studies.

2. The Academy has developed a Programme where conceptual and practical studies are well integrated, preparing the students for both, PhD studies as well as professional careers. This will enable for students to be able to conceptualise their practice more effectively, learn the ways to make their practice evidence-based and/or contextualised against wider frameworks and bodies of knowledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Students' temporary studies abroad should be better enabled and actively promoted – this will enable the students to learn about wider international experiences and alternative interpretations of their practices and research work.
2. The Academy is in need of an improved alumnae career monitoring system as this would enable it to learn about the long-term implications of the curriculum design and stay connected with their alumnae.
3. Students should gain a right to also appeal the results of their final graduation works – this would improve the fairness and transparency of all phases of the study process.

AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

5.1.	Teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

As of October 1, 2023, in total, 28 lecturers taught film subjects in the Programme, of which 15 lecturers worked at the Academy at least half-time, which is 53.6 percent of all lecturers in the subject (SER, page 46). The Academy states that this number of lecturers working at the Academy at least half-time is sufficient. The remaining time from teaching can be devoted to professional activities in the field of film art and to enriching the taught subject (module) with the acquired experience. October 1, 2023. 21.4 percent of all teachers in the field had at least 2 years of practical work experience. Teachers in other fields had more than 3 years of practical work experience.

The Annex to SER No.3 indicates that 20 teachers have a Doctor of Arts degree, 6 of them are professors and 16 are associate professors. 14 teachers are recognized artists. 89% of teachers have 10 or more years of practical experience.

The ratio of the number of lecturers to the number of students in the field of Film Art is calculated by dividing the number of students by the number of positions held by lecturers in the field. The ratio of the number of students in the study field to the number of lecturers fluctuates between 1.7 and 2.1 in 2021 and 2023, respectively.

Analysing the teaching staff turnover in the field, it was noted that 'it is functional' (SER, page 47). For example, if a teacher's work is not of sufficient quality, they leave the Academy. The way that this is controlled depends on the factors which are affected by the top management of the Academy and faculty. SER states that the "nature of field teacher turnover does not have any adverse effect on the programme in the field concerned, and, on the contrary, new teachers are often more motivated, have new knowledge and information, apply new teaching methods, bring innovative ideas and thoughts to the field studies" (SER, page 47) which in turn helps students to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

According to the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and the requirements of the Descriptor of the General Requirements for the Implementation of Studies, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, at least 80 per cent of the lecturers of the Master's degree study programmes must have a degree in science (art) (be recognised artists and at least 20 per cent of the subjects in the field must be taught by lecturers working as professors.

The data provided in SER, proves the compliance of teachers with the requirements of legal acts is reasonable, i.e. 82.14 percent of postgraduate teachers have an art science degree or art education. 21.4 percent of the scope of the subjects of the study field are taught by teachers holding the position of professor.

"Teachers in the study Programme in the field of Film Art have good knowledge of foreign languages. The absolute majority of them know a foreign language at least at B2 level." (SER, page 48). During the meeting, the lecturers contributing to the panel spoke English well and there wasn't evidence that this wasn't the case for all/most lecturers.

During the meeting, the teachers unanimously claimed they were personally invited to take up work at the National Film School by teachers already working at the National Film School. This practice does not comply with the school's recruitment procedure ("Description of the organization of competitions for LMTA teachers and researchers"), which means that this is not a transparent or appropriate way to recruit new teaching staff.

The employees defended this by saying "it is a small country, everyone knows each other and there would be no one externally to participate in the process". This does not relieve them of their responsibility to comply with the requirements set by the school.

During the meeting, we learned that students are invited to experience working with staff. They are sometimes able to work on location with colleagues. Graduates supervise students, so when someone graduates, they can immediately work with an existing student. It is appropriate to continue and share good experiences. This is a positive element of the structure and good practice, if appropriate safe-guarding measures are put in place for the student when working off campus.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

Most of the lecturers are well-known and recognised artists in Lithuania and abroad. They are active in the film industry, many of them teach only part-time. Many lecturers are Associate Professors and Professors.

Colleagues are competent in their fields of expertise and well-connected with production cultures in Lithuania and abroad, many are actively involved in film production. The examples shared by the lecturers demonstrating their methods of teaching and use of professional equipment ensured a good connection between the National Film School and the modern industry in the field of Film Art.

During the meeting, the lecturers explained how they involved students in their creative activities.

During the meeting, the lecturers unanimously claimed that they were personally invited to work by teachers already working at the school. As mentioned above, this practice does not comply with the National Film School recruitment document: "Description of the organization of competitions for LMTA teachers and researchers".

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

The development of internationalisation and cooperation with European higher art schools that match the Academy's profile is a very important area of activity for the LMTA, and the most strategically important is the regional cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries. According to the data for 2023, the LMTA's network of partners included 173 agreements with 40 countries around the world (of which more than 25 contracts have been signed in the fields of film and audiovisual arts) (SER, page48).

The LMTA actively participates in international associations related to film art studies https://lmta.lt/lt/tarptautiniai-rysiai/tarptautiniai-projektai-2/. The International Association of Film and Television Schools CILECT https://cilect.org/, which unites 180 schools delivering studies in the field of Film in 65 countries, is the main international partner of the LMTA. The membership in CILECT granted LMTA an automatic membership in its European branch GEECT. CILECT (GEECT) provided the Department of Film and Television with new opportunities to be visible in the international context, and teachers in the field of Film Art take part in important training, seminars and projects.

In 2023, the LMTA became a FilmEU (European Alliance for Film and Media Arts) member.

The National Film School participates in important training, seminars, and projects. Improving professional and pedagogical competencies at international events. In the period of 2021-2023 - 13 teachers improved their skills at 5 international seminars and congresses.

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

The SER provides details regarding the numbers of outgoing and incoming lecturers, the countries, and the schools to which they are visiting from or to, as well as the duration of the academic mobility.

The details (SER, page 51) regarding the international mobility numbers are as follows:

In 2021: 22 teachers taught subjects in the field of Film Art. 7 of them were visiting teachers and 2 were outgoing teachers.

In 2022: 22 teachers taught subjects in the field of Film Art. 15 of them were visiting teachers and 15 were outgoing teachers

In 2023: 28 teachers taught subjects in the field of Film Art. 17 of them were visiting teachers and 11 were outgoing teachers.

The mobility of teachers is increasing every year. There is an increase in the number of visiting under Erasmus+ lecturers (2021 – 7 lecturers, 2022 – 15 lecturers, 2023 – 17 lecturers).

The participation of academic and administrative staff of the Department of Film and Television in the Erasmus and Nordplus programs in the table provided in the SER shows that in 2021, 3 lecturers left with the Erasmus program, in 2022 - 9 lecturers, and in 2023 - 9 lecturers. Of these, 1 lecturer was away 8 times, and 3 lecturers were away twice. (SER, pages 50-51)

Benefits of academic exchange of teachers for studies in the field of Film Art:

1. The Programme is being developed, and its quality is being improved.

2. The contribution of visiting lecturers helps create a creative and open study environment.

SER states that in 2021-2023, 39 lecturers from abroad came to the LMTA for practical seminars, lectures, project and other partnership activities (2021– 7, 2022 – 15, 2023 – 17).

In 2021-2023, 28 teachers left for teaching, learning mobility and participation in project activities of strategic partnerships (In 2021–2 teachers, in 2022–15 teachers, in 2023 – 11 teachers) (SER, page 51).

Although good conditions have been created for international mobility, during the meeting teachers said that they do not have time to go on international exchanges because they are working on their own projects.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

Teachers participating in academic exchanges improve their professional knowledge, teaching skills, and strengthen cultural understanding. However, during the meeting teachers stated that they did not have time to go on international exchanges because of their professional activities. This narrows their opportunities to expand upon their pedagogical competences that might be gained from an international pedagogical trip.

Additionally, there was little understanding from the teaching team of the benefits of an international teaching experience. Those teachers who were vocal in the room prioritised their professional industry work over expanding upon their pedagogical skills and experience. The panel felt that teachers focussing primarily on their professional skills and not on their pedagogical development could be limiting. It could prevent a broader and more culturally diverse understanding, and therefore limit the knowledge passed to students.

The teachers are good at sharing their professional practice with students.

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
Second cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

1. More teachers need to participate in Erasmus and other international programs. Participation in international programs broadens the pedagogical arsenal, provides teachers with international experience, and helps them move beyond their local space.
2. Pedagogical methods, like technologies, are developing rapidly. To keep up, teachers need to constantly improve their pedagogical skills. Therefore, teachers must participate in local and international conferences to develop professional and pedagogical competencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. LMTA cannot employ lecturers by private invitation. All but one of the lecturers who attended the meeting claimed they did not participate in an open competition. We reiterate that this is

not appropriate practice. Therefore, we strongly recommend that the school follows the correct process regarding staff employment.

For further improvement

1. Actively participate in teacher training courses and the Erasmus program and expand international and cultural pedagogical horizons.
2. Increase international mobility of teachers.

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

LMTA has many physical resources to support study in the field of Film Art. The Academy manages 35,006.55 sq. m. of real estate under the right of trust and ownership, used directly for studies or study-related activities. One Academy student has approximately 28 sq. m. of total premises area. The main premises and equipment used for film studies are located in Building IV (building at Kosciuškos g. 10, Vilnius) and Building V (building at Kosciuškos g. 12, Vilnius). Also, the new building at Olandų 21 A, 6.9 thousand m2 of specialised space for theatre, dance, and film studies as well as artistic research has been built (it is not included in the SER).

The SER specified 11 specialised auditoriums for conducting film studies: 3 video editing rooms, colour correction auditorium, film screening room, "Šoblės kino klubas", small filming pavilion, editing class, photo studio, sound recording studio/sound editing room, sound editing room.

The Olandų g. town project states:

The cinema hall on the first floor of the Faculty of Theatre and Film will be one of the most innovative in Lithuania. The cinema hall will be equipped with a Dolby Atmos sound system, which will allow you to hear all the sound emanating from the cinema hall (from the sides, from the front and back, from above and below). Film studies and art research will also be inspired by a specific cinema hall projector and a screen in the hall.

Modern innovations in information technology will be implemented in the studios for separating, processing and mixing film sound and colour - the auditoriums. The Filming Studio and its supporting premises will be built on the first floor. The Filming Studio will be one of the tallest in the building, as its ceiling height will be at the same level as the second floor, i.e. the studio will be built over two floors.

The LMTA has a "Music Innovation Centre". This centre provides broad opportunities for theatre/film study programmes to work with sound design, music production, interactive and other modern technologies, and provides methodological and technical support to teachers. The centre is in the Central Building of LMTA and its spaces include: Studio (6 computerised workstations), Auditorium with 7.1. sound and 3D video projection system (12 computerised workstations, 20 audiences), specialised distance learning equipment, Sound editing room for sound and music production with stereo and 7.1 sound systems, Surround sound sphere with 23.2 surround sound speaker system, 30 audience seats, Server, and equipment room.

The Academy's information technology infrastructure consists of: administrative computers, shared-use computers in the reading room, library and media library, auditorium computers, audio and video editing workstations. Annex to SER, No. 7 specifies:

Mac Pro 2012 - workstation (5 pc), Mac Studio 2022 M1 Max workstation (1pc.), Mac mini M1 2020 workstation (1pc.), Editing computers APPLE IMac (2pc.), Dell HD type monitor - 21 pc., Dell 4K type monitor (1pc), Dell WQHD monitor (2 pc), Asus HD 27 monitor (4pc.), Genelec Loudspeaker - (6pc.), Genelec audio speaker (4pc.), Editing computers with MS Windows 10 operating system (8pc.), DaVinci resolve software licences (20pc.), Adobe Creative Cloud software licence (19pc.), AVID Media Composer software licence (14pc.) Paragon HFS+ licence (14pc.), HDMI switchers channels, and more. LMTA has a large Lighting and grip equipment storeroom, Camera equipment, Shooting equipment, sound equipment storerooms.

In the Colour Correction Classroom are High-performance computers for colour processing and correction (1pc.), Professional, Flanders Scientific high - precision computer monitor, Blackmagic Design DaVinci resolve advanced panel colour correction panel.

The department has some filming equipment. Red Scarlet and Panasonic EVA1 are cameras (one each) and one Sony PMW-300K1 XDCAM HD (2pc.) camera used for shooting kits; Sigma Lens kit, Canon18-35mm, Canon 24-70mm, CanonEF -25, CanonEF-12. Camera monitors used in the set; Marshall V-R104D, Small HD, JVC DT- V24G1Z (2pc.).

Sound equipment is used for recording on sets. Arrilites and KinoFlows are available for other lighting equipment. The film production equipment department also uses a number of rental houses (Arclights, Cinevera, Cinskope rental, Kinolab, Prorent) and other facilities provided by external partners like AMII Incubator. The academy cooperates with the following casting agencies: "Actors Agensy", "Editos Kastingas" and prop and costume rental: LKS, RIR, CINEEFEXS.

In 2019, the LMTA signed a cooperation agreement with the Lithuanian Film Centre (LKC) on co-financing students' final films. LKC provides funding of up to EUR 5,000. In 2024, LKC plans to allocate 45 thousand euros for the final theses of the program students.

The SER, page 50 states that "some of the Academy's buildings are classified as cultural heritage or are old buildings with minimal reconstruction possibilities and are not effectively adapted for implementing modern studies, especially unsuitable premises for persons with mobility disabilities." However, since September 2024, the film studies have moved to new premises on Olandų Street, therefore the analysis of the old premises presented in the SER no longer makes sense.

During our visit to the new building intended for film studies on Olandų Street, we saw that the premises are adapted and have equipment intended for persons with special needs. There is a convenient landing track in the stairwell area in the inner courtyard and tactile markings. The building doors open automatically. Inside, rubber strips that can be felt by the foot are installed near the stairs for the blind. Spacious elevators also take you to other floors. The auditoriums have no thresholds. Braille signs are being prepared, which will provide the necessary information for the blind.

The SER also states that Academy's students do internships in various national and international film projects, the advertising industry, and TV. During this time, students use the technical and other facilities of the organisations for implementing the projects. During the meeting, industry representatives confirmed that they closely cooperate with the LMTA and are willing to accept students to do internships with them.

The SER does not provide information on the number, relevance, recency, and suitability of teaching materials available in the higher education institution's library and reading rooms for the field of study.

As stated in SER, page 51, "The Academy has a constantly updated library with a rich collection of publications. More than 1,890 users use the library services. They are served in 4 library

departments equipped with 51 workstations, 36 computerized workstations." In 2023, 31 databases were subscribed, where you can read more than 20,400 titles of periodicals (e-journals, e-conference materials, etc. e-documents), listen to over 2 million audio recordings. The expenses incurred for the renewal of the library(s)' holdings in 2023 amounted to EUR 35,133, but it is not specified how much of this was allocated to cinematographic publications.

However, there is no library in the new building of the Faculty of Cinema on Olandų Street yet. To get paper books, students have to go to libraries in other faculties or cities. This is not convenient for either the lecturers or the students.

There is a lack of DVD and film subscriptions from all over the world. This means that staff cannot easily show many films as examples. Sometimes this creates additional work when staff have to find personal references to get the material. However, access to Lithuanian films is good.

The SER provided links to the library archives. In addition to the paper book archives, which contain many film books, the Library provides students with links to free or semi-paid online bookstores: DOAB: Directory of Open access Books, Google Book Search, JSTOR, Project Gutenberg, OAPEN Library, Open Edition Books and Open Research Library.

Additionally, it should be noted that the National Film School does not have a cafeteria, therefore, lecturers and students do not have the opportunity to receive hot food at the Faculty, but it is understood that there are places for staff and students to eat closeby.

6.1.2. There is continuous planning for and upgrading of resources

The SER, page 51 states that the Film and Television Studio operating under the Department of Film and Television is responsible for planning and updating the resources required for the implementation of studies in the field, taking into account the changing needs of students and teachers. The administrator of this studio draws up two plans – a plan for the renovation of the premises of the film studio (Annex to SER No 8) and a strategic plan for the acquisition of the necessary equipment for the film studio (Annex to SER No 9) and monitors their implementation. Every year, the LMTA allocates financial funds for the renewal of material and methodological resources: in 2021 170,324 euros were allocated, in 2022 - 290,258, in 2023 - 3,025,303 euros. As we can see, an increasing amount is allocated for the renewal of methodological and material resources every year. LMTA expenses for infrastructure improvement: in 2021- 402 200 in 2022 - 1000 000, in 2023- 2 135 200 Eur. A massive portion of the LMTA's funds consist of project funds, writes the SER. The Project Management Department takes care of this.

It is worth noting that one of the strategic priorities in the LMTA's 2030 strategy is Sustainability of Activities, in which the following stands out among the 4 activities:

- Ensure financial stability. In order to ensure the financial stability of the LMTA, it is necessary to increase the diversity of LMTA's funding sources. The main tasks:
  o increase income from scientific research, artistic activities, economic activities and services provided
  o promote cooperation and receipt of funds from state funds, international and foreign funds and organizations, and individuals.

This activity convincingly demonstrates the efforts of the LMTA to find new sources of funding and maintain existing ones.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

The National Film School has many physical resources to support studies in the field of Film Art. The new Film Faculty building on Olandų g. has been constructed and is excellently equipped. The building is fully accessible for people with disabilities and the visually impaired. It is equipped with elevators, automatic doors, wheelchair paths and other equipment.

LMTA has strong ties with many film industry representatives, including the Lithuanian Film Centre and AVAKA, which contribute significantly to the academic program and provide their equipment for student work free of charge or for a small fee. Students also do internships there.

The LMTA has a strong Project Management Department. We see that the amount of financial resources allocated for the renewal of material and methodological resources is increasing every year. However, it should be emphasized that these film studies are the cheapest in the world. This should be brought to the attention of the government or the Ministry of Education, because resources such as film studios are expensive, they require costly and complex equipment, human resources, pavilions, etc. Therefore, further investment needs to be considered.

In the meeting, colleagues from LMTA were happy to have a new building and resources, but as always, thinking about the next investment is essential.

There is a lack of DVD and film subscriptions from all over the world. This means that they cannot easily show many films to the students. Sometimes this creates additional work when employees have to find personal references to get the material. Access to Lithuanian films is good.

There is currently no library in the new building, which is inconvenient for teachers and students. There is also a lack of a canteen where teachers, students and staff would receive hot food. The Lithuanian Ministry of Health recommends that all staff and students have the opportunity to eat hot lunches.

AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 6	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
Second cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. An increase in funding for film studies at the state level is required. Dialogue should be set up with the Ministry of Education and Sports demonstrating the impact that the academy has; Lithuanian film artists are recognized worldwide and receive significant awards.
2. Create a temporary or permanent film library at the faculty. During the meeting, both teachers and students mentioned that they were not completely satisfied with the work of the LMTA library. Teachers and students should have access to electronic publications and paper books when they need them during lectures. It is not best practice that teachers and students do not

have access to materials on campus. Therefore, we recommend creating a new library at the National Film School and transferring all film literature there.

3. Open a cafeteria on the faculty premises. Most students and teachers work at the Lithuanian Film School full-time. Colleagues and students should be provided with the opportunity to get warm drinks and warm food during breaks and between lectures. Therefore, we recommend exploring options for a cafeteria to be provided in the National Film School building.

For further improvement

1. Continue to explore alternative sources of financing to supplement the material base.
2. The library should pay more attention to digital film publications.

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

The Centre for Quality Assessment of Higher Education of Lithuania carried out an external evaluation of higher education institutions between 2021 and 2023. LMTA has been assessed as "very good". After scoring the four assessment areas, LMTA scored a total of 15 points and ranks among the leading positions

https://lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/LMTA_veiklos_ataskaita_2023_PATVIRTINTA-1_Z.pdf (page 41-42)

The Quality Assurance procedures are established according to Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, national guidelines and LMTA provisions

(LMTA Quality Assurance Policy; LMTA Quality Manual, LMTA Regulations for Study Field Committees; LMTA Regulation on Study Programmes and etc).

Field of study quality control is being monitored by the following instances: department, Council of the Faculty, Senate, Committee of the Study Field and also Vice-Rector for Studies and Quality and Strategic Planning Division of LMTA. Quality control at LMTA follows a clearly defined path of the information flow, with a mandatory feedback mechanism, and a rational division of the responsibilities and oversight. Every level of academy's management is involved in the process. Namely, Vice-rector for studies, Quality and Strategic Planning Division, Committee for the study field, Department, Council of the faculty and finally the Senate. The relationship between these separate organs is mapped out in SER. (SER, page 61)

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

The SER lists (SER, page 62) concrete engagement of the stakeholders in the quality assurance process. Namely, they participate in the following 2 committees: study field committee, study subject/module and/or final assessment commission. Also, the SER states (SER, page 62): "Observations and suggestions by stakeholders are taken into consideration when updating the existing study programmes and study subjects/modules constituting them, designing new study programmes and study subjects/modules." Also, (SER, page 62) "stakeholders (students and other interested parties) participate in internal quality assurance in various forms". Furthermore, the

academy stated, that (SER, page 66) "All stakeholders have a formal possibility to submit observations and suggestions for improving the quality of film studies."

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

The study programmes delivered at the Academy are reviewed and/or updated at least every two years in accordance with the plan drawn up by the Quality and Strategic Planning Division; Updated descriptors of study Programme profiles are published on the LMTA website.
The LMTA stores, analyses and uses information that helps manage study programmes and other activities:
Statistics on delivered study programmes are being collected by Quality and Strategic Planning Division. Analysis of information available is provided in the LMTA annual reports at https://lmta.lt/lt/lmta-dokumentai/veiklos-ataskaitos/.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

Apparently, students are present in the quality assurance process (SER, page 64): "Committee for Film Study Field, the Council of the Faculty of Theatre and Film, and the LMTA Senate, which also includes student representatives as its members".

The LMTA collects and/or makes publicly available a wide variety of data on admissions, drop/outs, employability, etc. Also, the academy emphasised the importance of students' opinion (SER, pages 63-64) "student surveys on the quality of teaching the study subject or the study programme are carried out constantly".

Students have input when it comes to quality assurance. Student input is being exercised through (SER, page 64): "participation in the processes of self-evaluation of study programmes, meetings with the administration, membership in the LMTA Senate and Council, faculty councils, study field committees, etc."

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

The information gathering and academic process monitoring system is in place and is fully compliant with national provisions stipulating quality assurance in higher education.

in 2022 LMTA became a member of FilmEU+ alliance (a consortium of 8 European film schools) which aims to: "Engage students, staff and teachers across institutions via novel joint activities with embedded and innovative forms of live, blended and virtual mobility that foster inclusiveness and are supported by intra-alliance mobility."

"Student surveys on the quality of teaching the study subject or the study programme studied are carried out constantly" (SER, page 64). However, there are no examples of survey data presented within the SER or any other material provided.

Analysis of information available is provided in the LMTA annual reports at https://lmta.lt/lt/lmta-dokumentai/veiklos-ataskaitos/ however, the link doesn't contain any examples of analysis relevant to the quality assurance aside from policy manuals.

The statement (SER, page 62) "Stakeholders (students and other interested parties) participate in internal quality assurance in various forms" doesn't clarify in what exact capacity other stakeholders are present in quality assurance.

The previous evaluation (2021) has pointed out a lack of formalised input of industry stakeholders in the quality assurance process (SER, Page 65, Chapter 3). The academy responded focusing on the

surveys, but the information on stakeholder participation in relevant committees, as observers or voting members, is not provided.

Although the Academy stated, that (SER, page 66) "All stakeholders have a formal possibility to submit observations and suggestions for improving the quality of film studies."

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
Second cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

1. A robust 'study programmes' quality monitoring system is in place, involving every level of the schools management from vice-rector for studies, senate, quality and strategic planning division, to the study programme itself.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. A wide range of information is being collected through an effective monitoring system. It is however not clear if such a monitoring system has a practical effect and leads to concrete changes of study programmes and study modules. Deeper survey and also tangible link between feedback and policies is necessary.

2. Although stakeholders participation in the programme's quality assurance is evident, the decision making mechanism of such participation is not clearly defined.

For further improvement

V. SUMMARY

The panel would like to thank colleagues from the Academy, who have been open to speak about their experiences and contributions. The panel had asked some questions and clarifications prior to the on-site visit and colleagues from the school responded promptly. Staff are experienced and are often industry professionals; they bring their commitment to their craft, their knowledge, and their energy to the classroom with passion. Students are clearly inspired by the staff and their experiences, and they speak loyally about their programme. This community relationship is to be commended. The on-site panels were carefully organised and ran to time.

The opening panel was a little confusing, as we had expected management to be present. This may have been a misunderstanding, and we acknowledge that one senior colleague was not able to meet with us due to sickness. Therefore, our first statement below may be a consequence of that confusion, nevertheless, we feel the comment is still warranted:

There is a knowledge gap in the ways that administrative and management colleagues are able to speak about the programme. The panel felt there might be more cohesion in explaining the school's purpose and identity if all colleagues had opportunities to understand the offer holistically. We also respect that people have different roles to play, but more alignment of thinking across the full spectrum of roles would create a wider community who would be able to, more convincingly, advocate for the programme.

We noted two main recurring themes that should be considered further. Firstly, **understanding the identity of the Programme** (from recruitment through to student outcomes, and relationships with industry partners). In discussion with student representatives, the expert panel found that the strong motivator to apply for MA studies is the ability to do research, yet the panel at the end of our on-site visit was largely focussed on how students become part of the industry. We didn't engage in much discussion in terms of PhD or further opportunities for graduates as researchers. Therefore, whether or not the Programme is considered to service the industry or to produce artists and new producers of knowledge through further study and doctoral progression, is not always clear. Maybe it can be both things, but at this moment there is a disjoint between what is said about the programme, the students' intentions, and the outcomes.

The second theme is around **internationalisation**: The students are happy and well supported, but they don't seem to understand the benefits of a wider international experience (Erasmus or similar exchange) and although there are some realistic challenges enabling longer mobility options - such as childcare, work etc., some opportunities and solutions should be more adequately encouraged so that the students don't see this 'very small' (the academy's words) film industry as the centre of the film universe. The benefits of this small tight community are many, but it can also be limiting. This also came across in the staff discussion: the staff recruitment process, although appropriate policies are in place, seems to draw on a limited resource. We appreciate that there are complexities and challenges that are specific to Lithuania in terms of economic and geographical circumstances that may limit recruitment opportunities. However; a recruitment approach needs to be considered in terms of the wider environment, embracing internationalisation and diversity, if it is to change and improve in the future, and that should include the approach to recruiting students and bringing new staff hires, even if they are part time.

Students feel represented and included in enhancing the quality of their studies. They have access to psychological consultations and financial support; however, there is a noted lack of technical resources to implement smaller projects. A funding strategy is something that was briefly discussed during our on-site visit, and would be beneficial to develop; however, without more international

partners (and the offer of English-speaking courses and teaching opportunities) it may prove difficult to create wider research and funding opportunities.

VI. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Examples of excellence should include examples exhibiting exceptional characteristics that are, implicitly, not achievable by all.