



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

---

## **TOURISM AND LEISURE FIELD OF STUDY**

**at Kauno kolegija**

### **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**Expert panel:**

1. Panel chair: Assoc. prof. dr. Rong Huang ..... (signature)
2. Academic member: Prof. dr. Agita Livina
3. Academic member: Assoc. prof. dr. Philipp Wegerer
4. Social partner representative: Zita Krūkonytė-Teryaeva
5. Student representative: Rugilė Kriauciūnaitė

**SKVC coordinator:** Ieva Žemaitaitytė

Report prepared in 2025  
Report language: English

# CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS .....	3
1.2. REVIEW PANEL .....	4
1.3. SITE VISIT .....	4
1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW.....	5
<b>II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM .....	8
AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS .....	15
AREA 2: LINKS BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC (OR ARTISTIC) RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION (Agita).....	16
AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS .....	18
AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT .....	20
AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS .....	25
AREA 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT ASSESSMENT, AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT .....	26
AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS .....	31
AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF .....	32
AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS .....	35
AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES.....	36
AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS .....	38
AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION .....	39
AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS .....	41
<b>V. SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>42</b>

# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

The evaluation process consists of the following main steps: 1) Self-evaluation and production of a self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by an HEI; 2) A site visit by the review panel to the HEI; 3) The external evaluation report (EER) production by the review panel; 4) EER review by the HEI; 5) EER review by the Study Evaluation Committee; 6) Accreditation decision taken by SKVC; 7) Appeal procedure (if initiated by the HEI); 8) Follow-up activities, which include the production of a Progress Report on Recommendations Implementation by the HEI.

The main outcome of the evaluation process is the EER prepared by the review panel. The HEI is forwarded the draft EER for feedback on any factual mistakes. The draft report is then subject to approval by the external Study Evaluation Committee, operating under SKVC. Once approved, the EER serves as the basis for an accreditation decision. If an HEI disagrees with the outcome of the evaluation, it can file an appeal. On the basis of the approved EER, SKVC takes one of the following accreditation decisions:

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

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

- To be accredited for the remaining term until the next evaluation of the field of study and cycle, but no longer than 4 years, if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).
- To not be accredited, if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points) or unsatisfactory (1 point).

## 1.2. REVIEW PANEL

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

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: **Assoc. prof. dr. Rong Huang**
2. Academic member: **Prof. dr. Agita Livina**
3. Academic member: **Assoc. prof. dr. Philipp Wegerer**
4. Social partner representative: **Zita Krūkonytė-Teryaeva**
5. Student representative: **Rugilė Kriauciūnaitė**

## 1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 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.

Although the meetings were conducted in English, there was a need of translation for the meeting with teaching staff, alumni and social partners.

## 1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

### Overview of the HEI

Kauno kolegija (KK) is a state multidisciplinary higher education institution in Lithuania, established in 2000 by order of the Minister of Education and Science. It operates as a public non-university institution, accredited in 2005 and internationally re-accredited in 2014 and 2022. The institution is managed by a Director with two deputies and two collegial bodies—the KK Council (11 members) and the Academic Council (38 members). KK comprises five faculties: the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Technologies, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Arts and Education, and a faculty in Alytus, along with a regional subdivision in Tauragė. The college offers 62 study programmes across 35 fields of study, serving around 5,100 students and employing about 850 staff members.

### Overview of the study field

The study field of Tourism and Leisure at KK is well integrated into the institution's broader framework of applied research, innovation, and international collaboration. Implemented within the Faculty of Business, the field aligns with KK's strategic objectives to strengthen applied science and art activities, promote entrepreneurship and creativity, and enhance internationalisation. KK actively participates in over 20 international projects annually and maintains partnerships with more than 200 foreign institutions, many within the Erasmus+ network, fostering mobility and cross-cultural learning. The Tourism and Hotel Management programme contributes to this ecosystem through close cooperation with industry partners and participation in research and development projects that support regional and national tourism growth.

### Previous external evaluations

An international expert team has carried out an evaluation of the Tourism and Hotel Management (THM) programme, and Wellness and Spa Management in 2022. The evaluators presented a positive assessment and recommended an accreditation period of 3 years as a result.

### Documents and information used in the review

The following documents and/or information have been requested/provided by the Higher Education Institution (HEI) before or during the site visit:

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

### Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

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

1. Internship documents.
2. Module descriptions for Business Management THM, Final Thesis, Hotel Management II, and Tourism Management II.
3. Study module description form.
4. Final thesis schedule 2024–2025.
5. Methodological guidelines for Bachelor thesis.
6. The revised Annex 1.
7. IP student evaluation form (EN).
8. KK answer.
9. THM study plan 2023–2024.

## II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

### First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	<b>Tourism and Hotel Management</b>
State code	6531LX093
Type of study (college/university)	Collegiate
Study cycle	First Cycle
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years)
Workload in ECTS	180
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Professional Bachelor in Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian English
Admission requirements	Secondary education
First registration date	<b>1/9/2000</b>
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	

### III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **first cycle** of the Tourism and leisure field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

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

---

\*

**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

According to Annex 2, the aim of the study programme is to train a tourism, hospitality, and wellness manager capable of managing the functional activities of tourism, hospitality and wellness sector companies, analysing and assessing the business environment, creating and selling competitive tourism, hospitality and wellness products, applying the knowledge necessary for professional activity, acting independently and creatively in changing market conditions, communicating professionally and responsibly in a multi-cultural business environment.

Furthermore, Annex 2 also explains ten anticipated learning outcomes of the study programme. Among them, there are three learning outcomes for 'Knowledge and its application', two learning outcomes for 'Research skills', three learning outcomes for 'Special skills', one for 'Social skills', and one for 'Personal abilities'.

To examine whether the aims and learning outcomes of the THM programme conform with the needs of society and/or the labour market, as shown in the SER (pp. 5–9), the THM programme team firstly considers the global significance of the tourism sector, which contributed USD 11.1 trillion to global GDP in 2024 and employed 348 million people, with projections of further growth by 2034. These data indicate the importance of tourism as a global employer and justify the need for well-qualified professionals able to adapt to technological and social changes. Secondly, the programme team reviews national priorities, noting that the tourism sector is identified by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation of Lithuania as a strategic area for economic development, supported by cooperation with the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Thirdly, the team analyses national and regional economic indicators, such as the recovery of domestic and inbound tourism after the pandemic, showing a 20 per cent increase in tourism service exports in 2023 compared to 2019. Fourthly, the team identifies skills shortages within the sector, confirmed by OECD and European Travel Commission reports, and highlights the structural lack of qualified professionals in hospitality, catering, and transport services. In response, the programme integrates modules focused on digitalisation, sustainability, and innovation, in line with global market needs and the Lithuania 2050 Progress Strategy, which emphasises critical thinking, creativity, and social competencies. Finally, the programme's specialisations—Tourism Management, Hotel Management, and Wellness and SPA Services Management—are strategically designed to address emerging industry demands. According to national rankings (Reitingai, 2023–2024), the study field of Tourism and Leisure at KK was ranked first among Lithuanian colleges, reflecting strong graduate employability and alignment of programme outcomes with labour market requirements.

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

As revealed in the SER (p. 8), the mission of KK is to provide innovation-based higher education studies focused on practical activities and to promote applied science and art activities that contribute to the development of society. The aims and learning outcomes of the THM programme correspond to this mission by emphasising the development of professional, practical, and research-based competencies required in the tourism and hospitality sectors. In alignment with KK's strategic goals, the programme promotes sustainable development, digital innovation, and internationalisation, ensuring that graduates are prepared to respond to societal and economic challenges.

KK's strategic objective to conduct practical and innovation-oriented studies is implemented in the THM programme through active involvement of social partners in lectures, programme improvement, thesis evaluation, and joint project activities. The strategic direction of efficient management and optimised infrastructure is reflected in the decision of the Study Field of Tourism and Leisure (SFTL) Committee and the Academic Council to implement a single programme—THM with three specialisations (Tourism Management, Hotel Management, and Wellness and SPA Services Management)—from 2022. This restructuring followed consultations with students and social partners and responded to overlapping programme content, evolving market needs, and a growing demand for professionals with a comprehensive understanding of the tourism industry.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)**

Based on the evidence presented in the SER and supporting documentation, the aim of the THM programme is fully met with the country's economic and societal needs as well as the strategy of the KK. The programme demonstrates a clear and consistent alignment between its aims, learning outcomes, and KK's mission to deliver innovation-based, practice-oriented higher education that contributes to societal and economic development.

The THM programme responds effectively to national and regional labour market priorities, recognising tourism as a strategic economic sector in Lithuania, supported by government and international partnerships such as with the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). The inclusion of specialisations in Tourism Management, Hotel Management, and Wellness and SPA Services Management ensures that the programme directly addresses the skills demand in these growing industries, particularly in sustainability, digitalisation, and service innovation. Regular consultation with social partners and employers further confirms the relevance and responsiveness of the programme to workforce needs. Based on the available evidence, the review panel concludes that the aims and learning outcomes of the THM programme conform with the needs of the society and the labour market.

From a strategic perspective, the programme fully supports KK's goals to foster applied scientific activities, internationalisation, and lifelong learning. It incorporates bilingual instruction (Lithuanian and English), opportunities for student mobility and double degrees, and integration of digital technologies and AI applications, thereby enhancing both employability and global competitiveness of graduates.

Overall, the THM programme's aims and outcomes fully correspond to the socio-economic priorities of Lithuania and the institutional strategy of KK. The programme's structure, stakeholder engagement, and continuous curriculum enhancement collectively ensure that it meets the national demand for qualified tourism professionals and advances KK's mission of practical, innovative, and socially responsible higher education. Therefore, the Panel concludes that aims and learning outcomes of the THM programme conform with KK's mission, goals and strategy.

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**

Annex 2 presents the aims and learning outcomes of the THM programme. Table 1 of the SER (p. 12) provides detailed information on the structure of the THM programme, including the allocation of credits, final thesis, internships, general study areas, practical training, contact hours, and self-study hours. Table 2 outlines the academic workload across the duration of the programme. Annex 1, the Study Plan, summarises the programme's units and corresponding courses, the number of credits,

and the distribution of hours. The Study Plan is reviewed and updated annually as required, under the supervision of the Study Field Committee (SFC).

Prior to the visit, additional documents were requested, including the internship documentation, samples of module descriptions, thesis guidelines, information on the supervision structure, and the correct version of Annex 1. KK provided all requested materials in a timely manner and submitted written responses to the Panel's questions regarding specific abilities required by the programme descriptor.

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

Annex 2 presents the aims and learning outcomes of the THM programme and demonstrates how individual modules contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

According to Point 41 of the SER (p. 13), a variety of active learning methods are employed in the study process. These include case studies, discussions, simulations, problem-based learning and decision-making exercises, analysis of visual materials, brainstorming, role-playing, analysis of scientific literature, team-based integrated projects, presentations, creative workshops, design thinking, report writing, and reflective activities. These methods are designed to foster active student engagement and facilitate the practical application of knowledge.

Furthermore, Point 43 of the SER (p. 13) indicates that the programme uses clear and criteria-based assessment methods to evaluate students' learning achievements. These include open and closed question tests, reports, situation analyses and their presentations, team project reports, research reports, practical assignment solutions, individual and group task presentations, internship reports and presentations, self- and peer-assessment of team members, integrated project presentations, and final project presentations. This range of assessment methods ensures a comprehensive evaluation of both theoretical knowledge and practical competencies.

Prior to the visit, the Panel requested samples of module handbooks related to the THM programme. KK provided four module handbooks—*Business Management*, *Final Thesis*, *Hotel Management II*, and *Tourism Management II*—along with a generic study module description form.

### 1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

As indicated in Annex 2 and the study plan (the correct version Annex 1 which includes three specialisations), the programme addresses a comprehensive range of competences, including specific, social, and personal competences. The modules are arranged sequentially by semester, following the principles of systematicity, logical sequence, integrity, and compatibility, allowing students to acquire and apply knowledge in an increasingly complex professional context.

The programme structure (the correct version Annex 1) provides a gradual transition from general to professional competences. From the first year, students study modules that build general collegiate competences alongside introductory professional modules that develop foundational knowledge of tourism, hospitality, and intercultural environments. In the second year, students deepen and apply this knowledge through modules in business management, sustainable hospitality, business law, and entrepreneurship, and complete a professional internship. In the third year, students specialise in one of three areas—Tourism Management, Hotel Management, or Wellness and SPA Services Management (WSM)—and undertake a final internship and Professional Bachelor Thesis, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical problem-solving in the chosen field.

The curriculum design places strong emphasis on practical learning and self-directed study, with 36 ECTS credits of professional internships ensuring continuous development of practical skills. All module descriptions and study materials are available on the VLE Moodle, which provides consistent access to course content, assessment criteria, methodological materials, and schedules, supporting transparency and continuity of learning.

The composition of modules is periodically reviewed, taking into account feedback from students, academic staff, employers, and the SFC. Programme enhancement issues are discussed at meetings of the Dean's Office, the SFC, and the Department, and module certification by the SFC (2021–2024) ensures that only validated modules are implemented.

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

Students in the THM programme are provided with extensive opportunities to personalise their studies in accordance with their individual learning objectives and anticipated learning outcomes. In line with the Description of the Procedure for Personalising Studies at Kauno kolegija (KK) and the KK Study Procedure, students may follow either the full programme or selected modules through an individual study plan developed collaboratively by the Head of Department, academic staff, and the student. Such plans are approved for reasons including personal circumstances, illness, bridging study differences, or other justified cases, ensuring a minimum annual study load of 45 credits.

Personalisation is further supported through the selection of a 15-credit Freely Elective Module (FEM) from an annually reviewed list and the opportunity, in the third year, to choose one of three specialisations—*Tourism Management*, *Hotel Management*, or *Wellness and SPA Services Management*. Furthermore, students are free to choose different 2<sup>nd</sup> foreign languages (German/Russian/French) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Additional flexibility is provided by optional short courses and seminars, the possibility to undertake an additional internship, and the freedom to select topics for integrated projects, final theses, and internship placements.

The KK Study Procedure also allows for the recognition and crediting of prior learning achievements, including partial studies undertaken at KK or at other recognised national or international institutions. Students with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or family responsibilities benefit from adjusted study conditions or free attendance options in accordance with the KK Equal Opportunities and Diversity Programme. Furthermore, the implementation of micro-credential-based study opportunities under the KK Strategy 2025 demonstrates the institution's forward-looking commitment to flexible, inclusive, and lifelong learning.

The topics of personalisation and flexibility in student learning were discussed during the meetings with teaching staff and students held as part of the visit. Both groups were able to describe a range of opportunities for personalisation and flexibility within the THM programme. Furthermore, students demonstrated awareness of how to make use of these opportunities to support their individual learning needs and interests.

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

At KK, students complete their studies by preparing and defending a Final Thesis (FT), which demonstrates the professional competencies they have acquired throughout the THM programme and during professional internships. The preparation, defence, and assessment of the FT are regulated by the Description of the Procedure for the Preparation, Defence, and Storage of Final Theses and Organisation of Final Examinations, ensuring consistency, quality, and academic integrity across all stages of the process. Thesis topics are proposed by students, academic staff, social partners, and clients to align with the anticipated learning outcomes of the study programme, and the Department discusses and approves these topics. Topics are announced at least three months before the end of studies (or one academic year in advance for SFTL students), and students define their thesis topic before beginning their final internship. The preparation process follows departmental timetables and includes interim and final reviews to monitor progress, assess compliance with academic requirements, and ensure the quality and completeness of the work before public defence.

The main requirements for the FT emphasise practical applicability, relevance to tourism, hospitality, and wellness sectors, and adherence to academic ethics as outlined in the KK Code of Academic

Ethics and the “Description of the System of Plagiarism Prevention at KK.” Reviewers are appointed to evaluate the theses—typically balancing academic and professional expertise—and are given the work at least five working days before the defence. The Final Thesis Assessment Committee, formed by the Director upon the Dean’s proposal, consists of at least five members, including employer representatives and field experts. Only students who have met all study and contractual obligations are permitted to defend their thesis.

Final Theses are prepared based on information from the organisations where students complete their internships, focusing on identifying and solving real business problems. Between 2022 and 2024, 69 theses (44 percent) were completed at the request of social partners, with results shared with those organisations. The theses address current issues in the tourism, hotel, and wellness sectors, focusing on innovation, sustainable and cultural tourism, digital marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and accessibility. Annex 3 of the document provides a list of FT completed between 2022 and 2024, which substantiates the claim that students’ research topics are closely aligned with practical, industry-relevant issues in tourism, hospitality, and wellness management. Through this process, students demonstrate their readiness for professional work by applying research and analytical skills, proposing practical solutions, and developing competitive service products that reflect both academic learning and real-world application.

Thirty-eight theses were provided in electronic format. A review of these theses indicates that they address practical and real-world issues relevant to the tourism, hotel, and wellness sectors. Discussions with students, alumni, and social partners during the visit further confirmed that thesis topic selections are closely aligned with these industry areas.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)**

An analysis of Table 1, Table 2 and Annex 1 study plan of the THM programme indicates that the programme is designed in line with the requirements of the Description of the Framework of Qualifications for Lithuania and the Description of the General Study Requirement. Furthermore, credits of different subjects of the study programme in Annex 1 demonstrate that the study credits of these subjects are developed in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System ECTS.

However, an analysis of the programme learning outcomes of the THM programme listed in Annex 2 in relation to the with description of learning outcomes of first cycle programmes set by Order of Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania on Approval of the descriptor of study cycles (2022), it reveals discrepancies as show below:

<b>Legal area</b>	<b>Coverage</b>	<b>Comments</b>
20.1 Knowledge & application	Fully covered	Strong match.
20.2 Research skills	Fully covered	Strong match.
20.3 Special abilities	Partially covered	Missing explicit analysis/research & financial/international aspects.
20.4 Social abilities	Largely missing	Only communication (no teamwork, ethics, foreign language, etc.).
20.5 Personal abilities	Partially covered	Lifelong learning covered, but lacking IT, confidentiality, ethics.

Following a review of the additional documents submitted (including the updated Annex 1, internship documents, module descriptions, and the IP student evaluation form), as well as KK’s written responses to the questions raised prior to the visit, it is evident that the initially identified gaps have been addressed within the modules delivered in the programme.

Meetings with the SER team and teaching staff further confirmed that the abilities previously considered missing from the Programme Learning Outcomes are in fact covered through various

modules. Discussions with students also corroborated that key aspects—such as teamwork, research skills, international perspectives, and ethics—are embedded within the curriculum. In addition, the SER team confirmed that an annual review process for the Programme Learning Outcomes is in place and followed.

Based on this evidence, the Panel concludes that while the current Programme Learning Outcomes do not explicitly reference certain special, social, and personal abilities as required in the descriptor, these competencies are effectively delivered through the programme. The Panel therefore **recommends** that KK needs to undertake a review of the Programme Learning Outcomes for the THM programme to ensure that all relevant abilities required by the Descriptor are explicitly articulated in the revised version.

The aims and learning outcomes of the THM programme are clearly presented in Annex 2. The additional module handbooks, together with discussions held with the SER team and teaching staff, demonstrate that the aims and learning outcomes of the programme are coherently aligned in both design and implementation. A review of the corrected version of Annex 1 confirms that several subject-related modules are introduced in the first year of the programme, while students begin to take specialisation modules in Semester 5.

A review of the additionally submitted module handbooks indicates that they are well structured and contain comprehensive information to guide students effectively. The expected learning outcomes at the module level are clearly aligned with the Programme Learning Outcomes, ensuring internal consistency. Study methods and assessment methods are specified for each learning outcome, and the teaching plans provide detailed integration of topics and assessment arrangements. The inclusion of practical activities offers additional insight into the delivery and guidance of learning. Furthermore, cumulative assessment arrangements are clearly described in all reviewed module handbooks.

Section 10 of the module descriptions outlines the material resources required for each module, and references include up-to-date Lithuanian and English academic sources, many published from 2019 onwards. These module descriptions are consistent with the information provided by the teaching staff during the meetings. The Panel **commends** the quality of the module descriptions, noting that they are well designed, comprehensive, and reflect current developments and advanced knowledge relevant to the industry.

The corrected version of Annex 1 also confirms that the credit distribution across semesters is balanced and that student workload is appropriately structured. Considering the evidence provided in the SER, Annexes 1 and 2, the module handbooks, as well as input from teaching staff, students, and alumni, the Panel concludes that the programme's aims, learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, and assessment approaches are well aligned.

Annex 2 and the corrected version of Annex 1 clearly illustrate the structure of the programmes and how they are designed to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. The supplementary module handbooks provide further detail on how individual modules contribute to the development of specific learning outcomes.

KK's responses to the clarification questions, together with input from the SER team and teaching staff, confirm their clear understanding of the programme structure and their effective implementation of the designed curriculum. The annual review process further supports the continuous enhancement of the programme, ensuring that it remains current, responsive to societal needs, and reflective of student feedback.

The WSM specialisation has been effectively integrated into the THM programme, as indicated in the corrected and subsequently shared version of Annex 1. This integration provides students with multiple specialisation options while ensuring that all students acquire a strong foundation in tourism and hospitality knowledge and skills during the first two years of study.

Based on the available evidence — including KK’s responses to clarification questions and discussions with the SER team, teaching staff, and students — the Panel concludes that the overall design and implementation of the THM programme ensure the consistent and coherent development of student competences

Based on the analysis of the various opportunities available to THM students to personalise their curriculum in line with their individual learning goals and intended learning outcomes, and supported by the comments and feedback from teaching staff and students, the Panel **commends** KK for establishing a comprehensive and flexible framework that enables students to effectively personalise their learning pathways. The wide range of options for individual study planning, elective and specialisation choices, recognition of prior learning, and the introduction of micro-credential initiatives reflect a strong institutional commitment to student-centred, inclusive, and lifelong learning. Therefore, the Panel concludes that opportunities for students to personalise their curriculum according to their individual learning goals and intended learning outcomes are clearly ensured.

Based on the available evidence, the Panel agrees that the Final Thesis module complies with Order No. V-1547 of 30 September 2022, which approves the Descriptor of the Study Field of Tourism and Leisure. The module meets the requirements for professional bachelor studies in both structure and content. The reviewed theses demonstrate applied research focused on practical issues within the tourism, hospitality, and wellness sectors, effectively integrating theoretical knowledge with real-world problem-solving in line with the Descriptor’s expectations.

The process for thesis preparation and evaluation includes supervision, interim and final reviews, and public defence before a committee that includes employer representatives and field experts, thereby fulfilling the procedural and assessment standards established by the Order. While 44% of the theses were completed at the request of social partners, the remaining works also align with the Descriptor’s requirement for practice-oriented research within the tourism and leisure field.

Discussions with students, alumni, and social partners further confirmed that Final Thesis topics are relevant and aligned with industry needs. Therefore, the Panel concludes that the Final Thesis module ensures full compliance with the requirements for the field and cycle.

## AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. The quality of the module descriptions, noting that they are well designed, comprehensive, and reflect current developments and advanced knowledge relevant to the industry.
2. A comprehensive and flexible framework that enables students to effectively personalise their learning pathways.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. KK needs to undertake a review of the Programme Learning Outcomes for the THM programme to ensure that all relevant abilities required by the Descriptor are explicitly articulated in the revised version.

For further improvement

- NONE

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

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

According to the Point 81 of the SER, The research conducted within the study field of Tourism and Hotel Management is situated within the broader discipline of Management, under the Social Sciences domain. It also integrates interdisciplinary perspectives from Economics, Psychology, Philology, Communication and Information Sciences, Law, and Education.

The KK aim is to provide solutions of the issues identified by society at different levels. As stated in the SER (pp.1–9), the KK focuses on practical and applied research and uses principles of open science in practice.

The KK Applied Research / Art Activity programme was approved with amendments in 2023. The KK The applied science and art activities (ASSA) Plan for 2024-2025 includes research areas with allocated funds and anticipates results (SER, Annex 4).

SER Annex 4 outlines the planned research activities and related funding for 2024–2025. The direct contribution allocated in the field to tourism and hotel management research amounts to €1,600 in 2024 and €1,800 in 2025, with two peer-reviewed publications annually. Additionally, leisure and recreation research is supported under a broader interdisciplinary framework, with larger budgets €4,500 in 2024 and €8,000 in 2025.

According to SER Annexe 5, each academic staff member in the Tourism and Hospitality study field has identified their 3 most significant scientific works in the last 5 years. While several publications are directly linked to tourism and leisure, others are only indirectly related. Some of these publications are not publicly accessible online.

A search of the Scopus database using institution`s name identified one article directly associated with tourism during the evaluation period: (2025). Heritage Management Models for Sustainable Community Tourism Development. *Tourism and Hospitality*. 6(2) 111 (MDPI) (SCOPUS database, retrieved on 19.10.2025.)

The Department of Tourism and Leisure Management (DTML) organises an annual World Tourism Day forum dedicated to a specific theme. However, the report does not present details of the forum's program or link its content to the research work`s outcome (Point 83, SER, p. 20). The DTLM organises open lectures to disseminate and discuss research findings (Point 84, SER, p.20). The theme and relevance of the study during this period has been influenced by the European Capital of Culture.

According to the Point 84 of the SER, The report highlights cooperation with industry partners through applied research, event organization, and guest lectures delivered from other universities in Lithuania and international universities.

Point 87 of SER emphasises international research cooperation in tourism, however, it does not specify the exact nature of these activities, e.g. the development of a common methodology, data collection, processing or the description of results in joint publications.

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

Research results are integrated into studies in various ways: the work of foreign lecturers, the inclusion of lecturers' research results in study courses, practical research tasks included in study courses, the conversion of student research work results into publications, mainly at student conferences, but also in higher-level publications.

Based on the evidence presented in the SER (pp. 22–23), applied research findings are integrated in several study modules and study courses, for example, Tourism Management 1, Tourism Management 2, Hotel Management 2.

The module Hotel Management 2 includes practical assignments, including a real advertisement campaign on a digital platform using Meta Business and Google Analytics for evaluating the return on investment (SER, Point 102, p. 23). Entrepreneurship skills are developed among students through a simulation games, for example, CIESIM Global Challenge.

On the basis on the ArcGIS platform, the interactive map is created for the final thesis (SER, Point 102, p. 23).

Practical research tasks are included in the study courses through field research and problem-solving approach.

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

105 Point of the SER indicates opportunities for students' engagement in research activities are systematically integrated throughout the study cycle. Active involvement enables students in Tourism and Leisure to apply theoretical knowledge to practical solutions and to conduct applied research (26,6% of students conducted research and carried out scientific activities).

Research is mainly conducted at the regional and national level, but there are also joint study courses with other countries, in which teams of students carry out practical research, e.g. NEWELRA or joint research activities with Poland, Slovenia etc.

The primary methods of student participation in the research include:

- Generating ideas for tourism and leisure development (for example, to extend the tourism season, to provide marketing activities, including advertisement campaigns etc.).
- Conducting field trips aimed at collecting and obtaining primary data for research.
- Analysing specific case studies (for example, Lazdijai district, Birštonas).
- Applying digital tools such as ArcGIS for spatial analysis and tourism mapping.
- Conducting independent research work for a Bachelor Thesis.

The annex 5 shows the academic teaching staff contributions in research by scientific publications and study modules taught. The title of the publication indicates valuable research topics for students in the field of study, but the courses taught are on a different topic.

During the on-site meeting with employers, it was noted that data analytics skills could be further developed. Social partners are not active in ordering contract research for KK in the field of tourism.

The Entrepreneurship and Creativity Centre *ideaPoint* was established in 2023.

According to Table 4 of SER, during the period from 2022 to 2024, a total of 34 students participated in writing articles and 30 students prepared and presented scientific work in national events and 109 students in international events (SER, Point 104, p. 23). During the visit at the meeting with teachers and students, confirmation was received regarding student involvement in the preparation of research papers.

## **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)**

The applied science in the THM programme is integrated by including research results in the THM programme modules and by involving students in case studies during their studies, in order to gain practical knowledge of research methods and provide solutions to problems that the organization of the case study can evaluate for implementation or partial implementation. Taking into account the opinions of social partners can improve analytical skills, and this can be done through research work and further development.

The research topics are influenced by activities taking place in the city, which shape the research demand. This also demonstrates the cooperation between the field of study and social partners. At the same time, the industry is only partially prepared to invest in strengthening research by commissioning contract research work from KK.

In some study modules led by individual lecturers, it is difficult to see how the results of their research work are integrated into the courses. Given the importance of the publication topic for tourism students, it is important that these ideas reach students, at least by illustrating examples with relevant research topics.

Based on recommendations from the previous period regarding targeted research in the field of hospitality, studies have been conducted, for example, "Development of Wellness SPA Services in Lithuanian Resorts", "Application of technological innovations in wellness services in wellness and SPA service companies in the resorts of Birštonas and Druskininkai", commissioned by the Research Council of Lithuania (SER, p. 25).

Based on the available evidence and meetings with the teaching staff, the students, alumni and social partners, the Panel concludes that research work is fully linked to the study program and that progress is being made in this area.

## AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. A large number of students are involved in preparing scientific articles and presenting results.
2. The KK ASSA Plan for 2024–2025 clearly defines the funding and the results to be achieved over a two-year period for each research area.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

- NONE

For further improvement

1. Strengthen cooperation with social partners in order to increase contract work orders in practical research and student involvement in their implementation.

2. Strengthen data analytics skills in study courses with examples from practical research.
3. Purposefully continue and improve research in international projects specializing in hospitality.

## 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

Admission to the first-cycle study THM programme KK is organised through the national electronic admission system *LAMA BPO*, ensuring full transparency, standardisation, and compliance with national legislation. Admission rules are approved annually by the KK Academic Council and published publicly in Lithuanian and English on the institutional website and the *LAMA BPO* platform. Candidates are admitted based on secondary education results, with clearly defined subject-specific weighting coefficients that correspond to the learning outcomes of the study programme. Emphasis is placed on communication, foreign language, and management-related subjects, reflecting the competencies required for the tourism and hospitality field. Additional admission points are awarded for achievements in entrepreneurship, foreign languages, and relevant vocational activities, promoting the selection of motivated and well-prepared applicants.

Equal access is guaranteed by the *KK Equal Opportunities Policy* (updated in 2022) and the *Equal Opportunities and Diversity Programme* (adopted in 2023), which ensure that gender, disability, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background do not affect admission decisions. Special admission pathways are available for applicants with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Admission procedures are transparent, merit-based, and consistently implemented. Since 2022, the admission criteria have been reviewed to better align with the updated learning outcomes that emphasise digital, intercultural, and sustainability competencies.

Over the last three years, the programme has attracted a fluctuating number of applicants, with a noticeable decline in first-priority applicants due to national demographic changes and new compulsory exam requirements, while lower-priority applications remained relatively stable. Each year, the institution signs both *state-funded* and *non-state-funded* agreements through the *LAMA BPO* system, ensuring transparency and equal access. Admission score data show that the lowest competitive scores ranged from 4.33 to 3.20 (reflecting the changed legal threshold), the highest scores reached 8.2-8.7, and the average scores remained consistent at approximately 5.8-6.1. These values indicate that, despite national applicant fluctuations, the programme continues to admit students whose academic preparation aligns with the intended learning outcomes.

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

KK follows nationally approved procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications in accordance with the *Lisbon Recognition Convention* and SKVC guidelines. Applications are reviewed by the *International Relations Unit*, which verifies academic credentials and ensures alignment with Lithuanian qualification levels.

Recognition of periods of study abroad is carried out automatically through the Erasmus+ mobility framework and based on Learning Agreements approved before the mobility period. Credits obtained at partner institutions are fully recognised upon return, provided that learning outcomes correspond to those of the home curriculum.

Recognition of prior learning and informal learning is possible through clear institutional procedures, allowing up to 75% of programme credits to be recognised. Although this pathway was not widely used in recent years, it remains a key tool for flexibility and lifelong learning. For Erasmus+ mobility, credit transfer is managed transparently under the Procedure for Crediting Learning Achievements. The institution also applies a clear Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedure, enabling applicants with relevant professional experience or informal learning to obtain credits for specific

study modules. This procedure is regulated by the KK Academic Council Resolution (No. AT-43, 2021) and ensures both academic integrity and accessibility for lifelong learners.

KK consistently applies clear and well-established procedures for recognising foreign qualifications, Erasmus+ study periods, and prior learning. Learning outcomes achieved abroad are recognised through standardised Learning Agreements and transparent ECTS credit transfer, with all cases during the review period processed smoothly. The RPL system allows recognition of formal, non-formal, and informal learning for up to 75% of the programme, providing flexibility for diverse learners and supporting student mobility and academic progression.

Recognition processes at KK are consistent with Lithuanian and European standards. The Academic Recognition Unit evaluates qualifications from abroad, using the 2021 Ministerial Order (No. V-908). Between 2022-2024, KK processed 314 recognition cases, including 121 foreign students entering SFTL programmes.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)**

KK demonstrates a well-organised, transparent, and inclusive student admission process that directly supports the study field's aims and learning outcomes. Selection criteria ensure that entrants possess the foundational knowledge and motivation necessary for success in the tourism and hospitality profession.

Recognition mechanisms for foreign qualifications and prior learning are consistent, efficient, and in line with SKVC requirements. The improvements made since 2022 - especially the revision of admission weighting and the introduction of stronger equality and diversity measures - have strengthened alignment with institutional and programme-level goals.

Challenges such as decreasing domestic applications are primarily demographic and external, not procedural. The institution actively adapts—for example, introducing general aptitude tests for foreign students and enhancing promotional strategies abroad.

Based on the analysis of the available evidence, the Panel concludes that student selection and admission is in line with the learning outcomes.

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**

KK maintains a strong mobility culture through its International Relations Unit and faculty-level coordinators. Students can participate in Erasmus+, Nordplus, and bilateral exchange programmes. The institution offers both long-term mobility (studies/internships) and short-term blended programmes (e.g., BIP projects).

KK actively promotes academic mobility as an essential component of study quality and internationalisation. The institution has more than 200 active international partners, 166 of which participate in *Erasmus+* cooperation. Tourism and Leisure students are encouraged to undertake a semester of studies or an internship abroad, with academic credits fully recognised upon return.

In 2023–2024, participation in mobility programmes increased by 30% compared to 2021. Students can also study in *English-taught courses*, making internationalisation accessible to incoming students. The double-degree agreement with *LAB University of Applied Sciences (Finland)* provides additional mobility and qualification opportunities.

Incoming mobility remains lower (around 4–10 students annually), partly due to language barriers and global restrictions. KK mitigates these challenges by expanding English-taught courses and international partnerships.

Mobility selection is conducted twice yearly with transparent criteria and financial aid for disadvantaged students. A mobility window is built into the curriculum, ensuring that all students can experience international study or internship.

Over the last three years, the number of students participating in part-time (minimum 15 ECTS) field studies or internships abroad has increased significantly. In 2022, a total of 9 students from the study field participated in Erasmus+ long-term mobility. This number grew substantially in 2023, and by 2024 the number reached 53 outgoing students, reflecting a more than fivefold increase compared to 2022. These mobilities included both study periods and professional practice placements in partner institutions and tourism or hospitality companies abroad. The growth demonstrates the effectiveness of institutional measures to promote mobility, including improved communication, expanded partnerships, and targeted support from the International Relations Unit.

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

KK provides a comprehensive network of student support services: Academic support, tutorials, consultations, and a Moodle-based “Information for Your Studies” platform. Library training on academic writing, AI ethics, and plagiarism prevention. Financial support, over €11.5 million in scholarships (2022–2024). Students receive incentive scholarships, one-off grants, and social or disability allowances. Psychological support, two psychologists offer free, confidential counselling in Lithuanian and English. The number of sessions grew from 190 (2022) to 453 (2024). KK offers dormitories for 1200 students, discounts for orphans, and accessible facilities for students with disabilities.

Students confirm satisfaction with these services; feedback highlights easy access, fast response and supportive staff. The student support coordinator And Students’ Representative Council ensure ongoing improvements, such as financial literacy seminars and stress management workshops. Comprehensive support services are provided by the Students’ Affairs and Career Unit, in collaboration with the *Community Welfare Manager* (position introduced in 2023). Academic tutoring, career consultations, and mental health counselling are available to all students.

Financial support includes state scholarships, social grants, and mobility stipends. Students with disabilities receive tailored accommodations and individual study plans. Social integration is strengthened through the *Students’ Representative Council*, which organises events, mentorship activities, and advocacy for student interests in institutional governance.

The introduction of systematic psychological counselling and the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Programme (2023) reflect the institution’s growing focus on student well-being, inclusion, and tolerance.

### 3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

Information dissemination is systematic and multi-channel. During Introductory Week (which was introduced in 2025) students are oriented to the study structure, final assessments, appeals procedures, scholarships, and the use of the Moodle system.

Throughout the year, the Dean’s office, tutors, and student mentors hold meeting to provide updates and counselling. Students can contact administrative staff anytime in person or online. A monthly student newsletter (since 2024) and Moodle FAQs keep information updated.

Surveys indicate that students feel informed about academic requirements, opportunities, and support mechanisms. Alumni and staff interviews confirm that KK maintains a culture of open

communication and personal approachability—students feel comfortable approaching faculty and administration.

Information for prospective and current students is readily accessible through multiple communication channels—KK’s official website, social media, the Google Workspace-based intranet, and academic advisors. First-year students receive structured orientation sessions and continuous counselling from academic tutors.

Information regarding study plans, mobility, financial aid, mental support, and career opportunities is updated regularly. Internal communication mechanisms ensure that students receive timely notifications on academic changes, internship opportunities, and institutional initiatives.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)**

The student support system at KK is comprehensive, inclusive, and well-structured to promote students’ academic success, well-being, and overall study experience. Evidence from the SER, as well as discussions with the self-evaluation team, teaching staff, and students, confirms that the institutional framework integrates academic, financial, social, and psychological support in a coordinated and effective manner.

Since 2022, KK has demonstrated notable progress in expanding its mobility, psychological, and career support services, showing a proactive response to evolving student needs. The support structures are data-driven, benchmarked against European good practices, and regularly reviewed to ensure continuous relevance and quality. Transparent and inclusive admission procedures, aligned with national legislation and programme learning outcomes, help ensure equal access and early identification of individual learning needs.

The institution provides a well-coordinated range of services, including academic tutoring, financial aid, and psychological counselling. However, the current capacity of psychological support (two psychologists for the entire institution) is approaching its operational limit. KK has already recognised this need and expressed its intention to expand this resource; therefore, further strengthening this area will be essential to sustain service accessibility and quality.

Students benefit from a strong digital communication infrastructure, personalised study plans, and responsive administrative support. The institution’s digital platforms facilitate timely communication, contributing to a positive and transparent study environment. Moreover, the growing international mobility and partnership initiatives reflect an institutional commitment to internationalisation. Nonetheless, challenges remain in increasing inbound mobility and fostering deeper social and linguistic integration of international students within the academic community.

The data from the last three years show a clear and consistent upward trend in part-time (minimum 15 ECTS) outgoing mobility for both studies and internships. The number of outgoing students increased from 9 in 2022 to a significantly higher figure in 2023, and reached 53 students in 2024, representing a more than fivefold growth within the evaluation period. This demonstrates that the institution’s mobility support mechanisms—such as strengthened communication with students, increased visibility of mobility opportunities, enhanced financial guidance, and improved cooperation with international partners—are functioning effectively. The sharp increase also suggests that students feel confident in applying for international experiences and that academic recognition procedures are reliable, reducing barriers to participation. While incoming mobility remains comparatively lower, the steady rise in outgoing mobility indicates that the HEI successfully fosters internationalisation and provides meaningful opportunities for students to acquire practical and intercultural competencies aligned with the study field. Overall, the available evidence confirms that the student

support system effectively enables learners to maximise their academic progress through international mobility.

To maintain and enhance current achievements, KK may further strengthen the student selection process to better identify language and digital skill gaps, and continue developing systematic performance indicators to monitor the long-term impact of support services on retention and academic success. Expanding digital mentoring and peer-support initiatives could further personalise learning and enhance student engagement.

Based on the available evidence and the meetings with the SER team, teaching staff and the students, the Panel concludes that KK's student support system is robust, coherent, and demonstrates continuous improvement. The integration of academic, psychological, financial, and mobility-related services ensures that students are well-supported throughout their studies. Continued investment in data monitoring, psychological services, and the integration of international students will further consolidate the institution's strong foundation and align its development with strategic priorities and European good practice.

## AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. Comprehensive support framework combining academic, financial, social, and psychological assistance.
2. Significant progress in international mobility and partnership expansion since 2022.
3. Comprehensive student support ecosystem addressing academic, financial, and psychological needs.
4. Proactive communication culture, ensuring every student is well-informed and supported.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

- NONE

For further improvement

1. Enhance the student selection process by further developing interview procedures to identify and address potential deficiencies in English or Lithuanian language proficiency and basic computer literacy skills.
2. Establish systematic performance indicators to monitor and evaluate the long-term impact of student support services on retention, academic progression, and overall study success.
3. Expand and formalise digital mentoring and peer-support initiatives to promote personalised learning pathways and strengthen student engagement throughout the study cycle.
4. Increase incoming mobility by expanding English-taught courses, offering integration programmes, and improving visa support.
5. Strengthen domestic recruitment strategies, especially in light of declining applicant numbers and changing state exam requirements.
6. Enhance systematic data tracking of dropout reasons and intervention effectiveness.
7. Increase the number of psychologists from 2 to at least 3–4 full-time equivalents (FTEs), ideally with one specialising in international student support and another trained in crisis intervention.

## **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**

The study programme is the full-time mode with 55% of students' workload for self-study, including internship of 36 ECTS and elaboration of the Final Thesis (220 hours). Other self-study workload includes fulfilling practical tasks, developing integrated projects and other assignments, for example study module on Business Management includes Integrated paper and assessment of self-study, which are tests (Description of Business Management Module). The study module on Hotel Management II includes Integrated project for a selected hotel in Vilnius. Contact activities are carried out in different formats as in person, hybrid or blended mode remotely (SER, Points 159, 160, 161 and 162). The Description of the Procedure for organising students' internships at KK was approved by the last edition in 2024.

Orientation (Introduction) Week was organised for first-year students in September 2025 by involving alumni to provide an understanding of the studies. The administration meets with first-year students after the first two months to discuss how they are feeling and how they are doing. A study guide has been created (Onsite meeting, 22.10.2025).

The meeting with the students during the onsite visit highlighted that lecturers teach as colleagues rather than students. They are very responsive lecturers.

According to the Point 163 of the SER, the students can continue postgraduate studies in business, tourism management or other fields of study in Lithuania and foreign countries.

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

Description of the procedure for personalising studies at KK approved in 2024. The description includes procedures for students with individual needs. The KK Statute provides alternative ways of assignments in cases of special needs (SER, p. 38).

The Students Support Coordinator takes care of individual needs related to the study process considering the available financial and human resources. In the first semester, students are asked about their special needs. If information is received, it is forwarded to the lecturers. In situations where lecturers need training on special needs, this is provided (Onsite meeting, 22.10.2025).

The report does not indicate whether and to what extent an individual approach was required during the assessment period to ensure that special needs were met during the study process. The report shows that one student of the study programme applied and submitted the allowance from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (SER, Point 149, p. 34).

Furthermore, the first-year students have begun their orientation week (Introduction), to which alumni are also invited.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)**

According to SER and onsite meetings, the study field is implemented in a manner that enables students to achieve study outcomes, including self-study volume. The self-study workload is mentioned in the descriptions of study modules by providing hours for each theme, and also

describing the type of independent work. The self-study workload includes internship and elaboration of the final thesis. There is an approved procedure for both internships and final thesis.

Since the previous evaluation, improvements have been made to the study program by introducing an Orientation Week and approving procedures for personalized studies.

A system has been developed to support students with special needs, and training is provided to lecturers where necessary. A support system for students with special needs operates at the national level.

Based on the available evidence, the Panel concludes that the students are prepared for independent professional activity.

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**

KK has a joint system of student assessment explained in two documents (updated in 2024): KK Study Procedure and Description of the procedure for assessing learning achievements. The academic staff must follow the principles of clarity, objectivity, impartiality, openness to the assessment procedure, mutual respect and goodwill. The methods for students' assessment are oral assessment, written assessment, graphic and visual assessment, and cumulative integrated assessment.

The report provides precise instructions on the assessment period in days, but it is not possible to track how often assessments are given for coursework within the study module (SER, Points 167-173).

Monitoring of student learning progress at KK is continuous, structured, and supported by digital systems. The Academic Information System (AIS) and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE - Moodle, Google Workspace) allow teachers to record assessments, track attendance, and analyse learning outcomes in real time.

Each subject includes formative and summative assessment methods aligned with learning outcomes. Students are informed about assessment criteria at the start of each semester, and results are transparently accessible through AIS. Continuous assessment (e.g., mid-term tasks, project work, and presentations) provides timely feedback to guide students' self-evaluation and progress planning.

Teachers provide feedback through online comments, individual consultations, and group discussions. Students are encouraged to engage in self-assessment and peer review activities, promoting reflective learning practices. The Vice-Dean for Studies and SFC analyse academic results, identify trends, and proposes improvements to teaching strategies and assessment practices. The meeting with the students during the visit also noted that feedback is taken into account in the study program and that the program is being improved accordingly.

Compared to 2022, student progress monitoring has become more systematic and data-driven, ensuring transparency, early identification of challenges, and consistent feedback loops.

### **4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored**

The employment of graduates of the study program is analyzed both on a national scale (the Government Strategic Analysis Centre) and in a graduate and employers' survey conducted by the KK, as well as by members of the Alumni Club.

The report shows the responsiveness of graduates in surveys, which in 2024 showed higher responsiveness than in 2023 and 2022 (SER, Table 12, 39 p.)

Graduate employability and career outcomes are regularly monitored through institutional Tracer Studies, alumni surveys, and national data from the Lithuanian Employment Service and *Reitingai* rankings.

According to the latest data (2023–2024), the THM programme ranks 1<sup>st</sup> nationally among Lithuanian colleges for graduate employability, income level, and employer satisfaction (SER, p. 9 ). Over 80% of graduates find employment within six months after graduation, primarily in tourism, hospitality, event management, or related sectors. Many graduates establish their own businesses or work in managerial positions within tourism agencies and hotel chains.

Employer feedback is collected annually and discussed by the SFC and the Faculty Council. This information directly informs curriculum updates, practical training placement strategies, and skill development initiatives. Alumni are engaged through the KK Alumni Network, contributing to mentoring and career guidance to current students.

During the visit, it was pointed out that lecturers are active members of industry associations, which also serve as a bridge between studies, internships, and employment. Social partners also pointed out that sometimes, after an internship, students become employees of the company.

The graduate monitoring system is comprehensive, frequent, and directly linked to programme improvement—a clear advancement since 2022 when career-tracking mechanisms were less formalised.

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

The backbone document is KK Code of Academic Ethics (updated 2022) that explains transparency of the study process, academic integrity, equality, non-discrimination, justice, protection of intellectual property. No reports of violations have been provided, if any have occurred.

Description of the Plagiarism Prevention System at KK was updated (2023) and supplemented to include aspects of the use of AI tools. The KK use tool *Turnitin* in the *Moodle* learning environment. Training on academic integrity and citation practices is provided to students each semester by the Library and Scientific Communication Centre. Violations of academic ethics are investigated by the Academic Ethics Commission, which applies corrective or disciplinary measures when necessary.

KK is committed to fostering an inclusive and tolerant academic environment. The Equal Opportunities and Diversity Programme (2023) promotes non-discrimination, cultural awareness, and gender equality, while the Community Welfare Manager ensures psychological and social support to maintain a safe, respectful learning atmosphere.

The institution demonstrates a proactive and systematic approach to ensuring ethical and inclusive academic practices that fully meet ESG and national requirements.

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

KK has transparent, well-documented procedures for handling student appeals and complaints. The Regulations on Appeals and Complaints (approved by the Academic Council) outline clear steps, deadlines, and responsible units.

The Procedure for assessing learning achievements at KK (updated 2024) provides procedure of appeal. The Boards of Appeal must take a decision within 15 working days after the receiving the appeal.

Students can submit appeals regarding academic assessment, disciplinary decisions, or administrative matters either in writing or electronically. Appeals are reviewed by the Faculty Appeals Commission, while serious cases are escalated to the Institutional Appeals Commission. Outcomes are communicated in writing and are based on clear evidence and documented deliberation.

Complaint statistics are monitored annually by the Strategic Planning and Quality Management Unit, ensuring that recurring issues are addressed through preventive measures or process adjustments. The SER does not show any registered appeals in the last three years, nor were any mentioned at the onsite meetings.

The appeals and complaints system functions effectively, ensuring fairness, impartiality, and accountability. Students are informed about their rights and procedures during orientation sessions and via the intranet. This area was noted as an improvement since 2022, when feedback channels were less formalized.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)**

KK has established a comprehensive, transparent, and student-oriented framework for monitoring academic progress, graduate employability, and ethical compliance. Evidence from the SER and discussions with the self-evaluation team, teaching staff, and students confirms that the institution systematically collects and analyses data to support continuous improvement at both programme and institutional levels. The digital platforms (AIS and *Moodle*) enable data-driven monitoring of learning outcomes, early detection of academic underperformance, and timely intervention by academic staff. These mechanisms demonstrate a mature approach to quality assurance and effective use of evidence to guide decisions.

Graduate career tracking and employer engagement indicate that study outcomes remain relevant to labour market needs. Alumni and employer feedback are actively used in programme enhancement, supporting a close alignment between graduate competencies and sectoral expectations. However, the current self-evaluation report provides only limited analysis of graduate survey results, restricting a deeper understanding of longer-term employability trends and alumni career development. A more systematic and longitudinal approach to graduate monitoring would strengthen the institution's evidence base for curriculum review.

Institutional policies on academic integrity, equality, and inclusion are well-developed, clearly communicated, and implemented in practice. Students and staff demonstrated a shared understanding of ethical expectations and tolerance values. Nevertheless, further enhancement of ethics awareness—through innovative formats such as gamified training or interactive workshops—could foster even stronger engagement with these principles.

The system of appeals and complaints is formalised, accessible, and transparent, reinforcing a culture of trust between students and the institution. However, the current timeframe of 15 days for the Board of Appeal to review and decide on an appeal may be too long to ensure timely resolution for both parties. A more efficient procedure could enhance responsiveness and user confidence in the system.

Regular feedback from students is collected and systematically analysed, with clear evidence that improvements to study programmes have been made based on this input. To ensure full accountability and traceability, documentation of follow-up actions resulting from feedback and appeals could be further standardised and centralised.

Based on the available evidence and the meetings with different stakeholders, the Panel concludes KK has an effective and transparent system for student assessment, progress monitoring, and

assuring academic integrity. The system demonstrates continuous development and alignment with European good practices. Continued enhancement of graduate tracking, ethics engagement, and documentation processes will further strengthen the sustainability and transparency of the institution's quality culture.

## AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. Systematic and data-based monitoring of learning progress supported by digital platforms (*AIS, Moodle*).
2. Excellent graduate employability results and effective integration of alumni and employer feedback into programme development.
3. Strong institutional framework for academic integrity, ethics, tolerance, and non-discrimination.
4. Clear, accessible, and transparent system for managing student appeals and complaints.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

- NONE

For further improvement

1. Develop a longitudinal graduate career monitoring system integrating quantitative data with qualitative interviews to better assess employability trends.
2. Enhance student awareness of integrity and ethics through gamified training tools and interactive workshops.
3. Continue strengthening the mechanisms for early academic risk detection to provide proactive academic support.
4. Further standardise documentation of follow-up actions resulting from student feedback and appeal resolutions.

## 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

In 2024/2025, the programme employs 27 academic staff members, including 2 assistant professors (7.4%), 2 junior assistants (7.4%), 16 lecturers (59.3%), and 7 lecturer practitioners (25.9%). The share of permanent academic staff—those holding long-term or indefinite contracts—has increased from 55.2% to 59.3%, while the number of guest lecturers has decreased. This shift reflects a deliberate institutional effort to reinforce staff stability and ensure sustained academic engagement. During the visit, senior administration clarified that there is a clear career progression path between academic positions, that a PhD is a requirement for all professor-level roles, and that the institution provides support for employees pursuing doctoral studies.

As of 1 October 2024, the THM programme enrolled 150 students, representing a moderate decrease from 194 students in 2022/2023. Correspondingly, the number of academic staff decreased in line with reduced enrolment to maintain balanced workload ratios. The current student-to-academic ratio stands at 5.56 students per academic, compared to 6.69 students per academic in 2022, and 24 students per full-time academic position, indicating an improved alignment between staff capacity and student numbers.

The qualification profile of the THM academic staff meets all national and institutional requirements. All members hold at least a Master's degree or equivalent qualification and possess a minimum of three years of professional or teaching experience. The number of staff with doctoral degrees has grown to five (from four in 2022 and three in 2023), and two additional academics are currently pursuing doctoral studies. Consequently, 13.6% of courses are taught by researchers or doctors of science, exceeding the legal requirement that at least 10% of courses be delivered by researchers.

All academic staff teaching in the English-taught study programme possess English language skills at a level of at least B2. One staff member is a native speaker, while the remaining staff demonstrate their proficiency through completed studies in English, or officially recognised B2, C1, or C2 certificates. Consequently, 100% of the staff meet or exceed the B2 proficiency level. In addition, KK supports continuous improvement by offering English language courses to staff each academic year.

To support staff recruitment and retention, KK has implemented a comprehensive induction and mentoring system for new academics, including an "Introductory Training for New KK Academic Staff" programme covering institutional policies, teaching systems (SVIS, Moodle), and didactic fundamentals. New staff without prior pedagogical training are required to complete 14 hours of pedagogical preparation, and mentoring is provided by experienced colleagues. Initiatives such as "3Cs – coffee, colleagues, cooperation" foster integration and a sense of academic community.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

Overall, the composition, qualifications, and workload distribution of the academic staff comply with national higher education regulations and reflect steady improvement in academic capacity and stability. While progress in increasing the number of PhD-qualified staff is ongoing rather than fully achieved, the current staff structure ensures that the programme's academic and practical teaching requirements are effectively met.

The academic staff structure is generally adequate to support programme delivery, with all staff holding relevant qualifications and professional experience. The student–staff ratio is favourable and allows for sufficient individual support, and effective supervision. The balance between full-time and part-time staff is appropriate, and the institution has made efforts to stabilise the core academic team

by increasing the proportion of permanent lecturers. However, the low proportion of PhD-qualified academics remains a concern. Currently, 13.6% of courses are taught by researchers, exceeding the legal minimum of 10% by 3.6%. Based on the available evidence, the meetings with the SER team, the teaching staff and the students, the Panel concludes that the teaching staff at KK is adequate to achieve learning outcomes.

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

KK provides structured and well-managed opportunities for academic staff mobility, primarily through Erasmus+ and Nordplus programs. Mobility activities are coordinated by the International Relations Unit and the International Coordinator of the Faculty of Business. Staff selection for mobility is conducted by the Staff Selection Committee at least four times per year, following clear and publicly available criteria that consider the relevance of the visit to KK, the faculty, and the staff member's professional development. Staff members have the right to appeal decisions within two working days if they disagree with selection outcomes.

Between 2022 and 2024, THM academic staff participated actively in mobility, with 43 outgoing visits and 29 incoming academics delivering lectures or practical classes. Each year, 28–37% of the academic staff participated, indicating a substantial level of engagement. In 2023, the number of incoming staff exceeded outgoing, demonstrating the programme's growing attractiveness to international partners. By May 2025, six THM academics visited partner institutions in Poland, Turkey, Finland, Portugal, and Switzerland, while three international academics were welcomed to KK.

KK's mobility activities are diverse and impactful. Visiting staff not only teach students but also engage in international academic communities, gain insight into host institutions' programs, teaching methods, and technologies, and apply this experience to improve their courses upon returning. Mobility also supports joint research, project collaboration, professional development, intercultural competence, and dissemination of research results.

Academic mobility strengthens KK's strategic international partnerships with institutions across Europe, North America, and beyond, including Thomas More UAS (Belgium), LAB UAS (Finland), Avans UAS (Netherlands), and EHL Hospitality Business School (Switzerland), among others. These collaborations support the internationalisation of the study programme, enable staff involvement in international projects such as Horizon Europe and MSCA Staff Exchanges, and foster student mobility initiatives through partner institutions like Aspira University College (Croatia).

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

KK runs a structured training for academic staff in line with the Guidelines for the Improvement of Competences of Higher Education Academic Staff and the Description of the Procedure for Improving Competencies of KK Staff. Academic staff are actively encouraged to participate in training relevant to their teaching modules and professional development. Responsible for managing the training activities are Heads of Departments, Deans, Heads of Service Units, and the Lifelong Learning Centre. Competence development needs are identified based on self-assessment reports, departmental input, and institutional goals.

The Lifelong Learning Centre organises the internal training programs according to the annual KK Staff Competence Development Plan, which is communicated via Intranet, email, and information screens. Staff can propose topics for training, and programmes are revised annually based on employee surveys and participant feedback. Lecturers are sourced internally and externally, and participation is free of charge. Areas of Competence Development are pedagogical competences,

research competences, digital competences, AI integration, International, cultural and leadership skills, social and emotional competences, innovative teaching methods, and practical experience and internships.

Between 2022–2024, training focused on developing pedagogical, digital, research, international, and general competencies. Particular attention was given to modern teaching methods, assessment strategies, and student engagement. Research capacity was strengthened through courses on applied research methods, qualitative data analysis, publication practices, and AI tools for research. Digital competence development was prioritised, with training on Moodle use, interactive content creation, and online assessment. Integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into teaching became a strategic focus, with courses such as “The Use of AI Tools in Higher Education” and “AI Tools Bootcamp for Researchers.” Training on internationalisation, cultural diversity, leadership, and emotional well-being was also offered. Professional experience was refreshed through industry internships—six academics (13–14%) undertook internships in tourism, hospitality, healthcare, and communication organisations.

Competence development is financed through KK funds, EU structural funds, and occasionally by employees themselves. During 2022–2024, the Faculty of Business allocated €62,600 for seminars, training, conferences, and guest lecturers. Staff also have the opportunity for informal education, with up to two paid working days per year for self-directed learning.

During the visit, teachers clarified that there is no formal incentive system for PhD completion or research publications, although time between teaching and research activities can be allocated individually.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)**

The academic staff of KK benefits from a well-structured and actively implemented system of international mobility through Erasmus+, Nordplus, and other exchange programmes. The clear procedures, regular selection calls, and transparent selection criteria ensure fair access and encourage participation. The level of engagement—up to 41% of staff annually—is commendably high for a professional bachelor’s programme and demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to internationalisation. Overall, academic mobility opportunities at KK are well-established and widely utilised, contributing to the professional growth of staff and the international visibility of the THM programme. The balance between outgoing and incoming mobility has improved, but the strategic use of mobility outcomes—for example, through joint publications or long-term collaborative projects—remains an area for development. To further enhance effectiveness, the institution could focus on deeper integration of mobility experiences into teaching innovation, research cooperation, and curriculum renewal, thereby maximising the long-term benefits of international engagement.

The system for staff training at KK is well-structured and strategically aligned with institutional and national priorities. The presence of clear procedures, annual competence development plans, and diverse training topics reflects a strong institutional commitment to continuous professional growth. The wide range of courses—particularly in digital literacy, pedagogy, and AI integration demonstrates responsiveness to evolving educational trends and supports the development of modern teaching competencies. However, while the scope of activities is broad, the impact and long-term outcomes of training could be more systematically evaluated. There is limited evidence of how training results are translated into measurable improvements in teaching quality, curriculum innovation, or research productivity. Moreover, participation in external professional development and internships, though supported, appears relatively limited and could be expanded to strengthen practical and international dimensions.

Overall, based on the available evidence, and the meetings with the SER team, teaching staff, students and alumni, the Panel concludes that the teaching staff at KK is ensured opportunities to develop competences, and they are periodically evaluated.

## AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. The teaching staff bring strong qualifications and rich professional experience, ensuring a high level of academic and practical competence in delivering the programme.
2. KK maintains an appropriate balance between full-time and part-time staff, with a favourable student-to-staff ratio that allows for effective supervision and individual student support.
3. The high level of staff participation and balanced incoming–outgoing exchanges reflect a strong culture of internationalisation and collaboration, contributing to both staff development and programme enrichment.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

- NONE

For further improvement

1. KK should continue efforts to recruit and retain PhD-qualified staff, encourage doctoral studies among existing lecturers.
2. KK should further leverage the results of academic mobility by systematically sharing best practices and incorporating international experiences into curriculum development.

## 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

KK provides a well-developed infrastructure that supports the effective implementation of the Tourism and Leisure study field. All study activities are concentrated at the Faculty of Business (Pramones Ave. 20 and 22, Kaunas), where facilities have undergone major upgrades since the previous 2022 external evaluation. Modern lecture halls—9 lecture theatres with 60–100 seats and 13 lecture theatres with 30–50 seats, multimedia classrooms, computer laboratories, and simulation rooms are equipped with up-to-date hardware and specialised tourism software (e.g. reservation and event-management systems), staff's computers, speakers, whiteboards, and video cameras for hybrid teaching. These upgrades directly address the 2022 panel's observation that *digital tools and practice-oriented spaces required further development*. Investment of €219,079 was allocated for the purchase and upgrading of computer equipment at the Faculty in 2021–2024.

The Entrepreneurship and Creativity Centre *IdeaPoint* provide an innovation hub for applied research and business cooperation, allowing students to test project ideas and entrepreneurial initiatives in a professional environment. For leisure and wellness modules, facilities of the Wellness and Sports Centre are also used for practical training.

Information resources have expanded significantly through the upgraded Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) integrating *Moodle* and *Google Workspace* platforms. Students benefit from blended learning options, digital content libraries, and online assessment tools. The Library and Scientific Communication Centre provides access to extensive international databases (EBSCO, Emerald, SpringerLink, UNWTO publications), e-resources, and training sessions on data literacy and referencing. The library operates from 08:00 a.m. to 07:00 p.m. on weekdays only. Student feedback highlights the need for extended access to library facilities during evenings and weekends to support flexible learning.

Financial resources are stable and well-managed. Besides state funding and tuition fees, KK actively participates in EU-funded projects that directly improve infrastructure and teaching resources—e.g. 57 projects in 2022, 69 in 2023, and 52 in 2024, with a total value exceeding €10 million. These funds were used for digitalisation, laboratory renewal, and facility renovation. Compared to 2022, there is clear evidence of *both quantitative and qualitative enhancement of learning facilities*, ensuring the resources are now fully sufficient for achieving study outcomes.

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

Continuous upgrading of resources is ensured through a systematic institutional framework. The Strategic Planning and Quality Management Unit monitors the adequacy and accessibility of facilities and coordinates long-term infrastructure development according to the KK Strategy 2025 objective: Efficient management and optimised infrastructure.

Resource planning is data-driven feedback from SFC, student surveys, and annual faculty reviews feed into financial planning cycles. Digitalisation and sustainability principles are integrated into procurement and renewal processes, ensuring that energy efficiency, accessibility, and green campus objectives are met.

KK ensures that premises, facilities, and equipment used in the Tourism and Leisure study field are adapted to the needs of students with disabilities. Accessibility measures include the installation of

elevators and ramps, appropriately adapted classrooms, and furniture that accommodates different mobility needs. Digital assistive tools—such as screen readers, speech-to-text applications, and adjustable digital interfaces—are available to support students with visual, hearing, or learning impairments. Clear signage, accessible restrooms, and barrier-free pathways further contribute to an inclusive learning environment, consistent with universal design principles.

According to the SER, environmental sustainability is promoted through the implementation of energy-efficient technologies, intelligent lighting and heating systems, and responsible waste management practices. These initiatives support long-term resource sustainability and align with broader institutional commitments to environmental stewardship.

The evidence confirms that KK operates a continuous and proactive planning system that maintains resource sustainability and ensures responsiveness to technological and pedagogical developments. This demonstrates tangible progress in addressing the 2022 recommendation to establish a structured, systematic approach to resource renewal and maintenance.

During the site visit, evaluators observed that the KK building is spacious, modern, and well-maintained; however, a significant proportion of classrooms appeared underutilised. To ensure sustainable and efficient use of institutional space, it is recommended that the college continues to monitor room occupancy, utilisation rates, and student flow patterns, and refines space planning strategies accordingly, based on systematic data analysis.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)**

KK demonstrates substantial progress in the provision and management of learning resources since the previous evaluation in 2022. Evidence from the SER and discussions with the self-evaluation team, teaching staff, and students confirm that facilities, information systems, and learning environments are sufficient, modern, and well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the study field. The physical and digital infrastructure supports the acquisition of practical skills through contemporary technologies and industry-standard tools, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the professional context of tourism and leisure.

The institution's continuous investment policy and sound financial management enable regular and sustainable upgrades of resources. The use of EU structural funds and institutional financing follows a clear strategic rationale based on data and student needs. As a result, the study field benefits from up-to-date teaching and learning environments that meet both national requirements and international standards for professional bachelor-level education.

Sustainability and accessibility principles are consistently integrated into campus development and facility planning. Buildings and classrooms are equipped to accommodate students with diverse needs, and energy efficiency measures are actively pursued. KK systematically monitors the adequacy and effectiveness of learning resources, ensuring evidence-based decision-making in resource allocation and renewal planning.

Digital learning platforms and information systems are effectively used across programmes, providing students and staff with reliable access to study materials and communication tools. Nevertheless, the institution could further enhance the monitoring of how infrastructure and digital tools impact actual student learning outcomes. The introduction of measurable performance indicators would strengthen the capacity to link investments with educational effectiveness.

Partnerships with tourism and hospitality businesses play an important role in maintaining professional relevance. Collaborative use of industry environments—such as co-working spaces, training labs, or joint projects—has been initiated, and further expansion of these initiatives could enhance students' applied learning experiences. Similarly, systematic evaluation of internship and volunteering opportunities would ensure that practical training remains responsive to current labour market needs.

While the library and study facilities are generally adequate and well-used, students have expressed growing interest in more flexible access. Regularly monitoring demand for extended opening hours, including potential 24/7 study access, could inform future decisions on resource optimisation and student support.

Based on the available evidence, it is clear that KK’s management of learning resources is strategic, evidence-based, and strongly oriented toward continuous improvement. The alignment of infrastructure, technology, and financial planning ensures that the learning environment supports high-quality professional education. Therefore, the Panel concludes facilities, informational and financial resources at KK are sufficient and enable achieving learning outcomes. However, ongoing enhancement of impact assessment mechanisms, external partnerships, and facility accessibility will further consolidate the institution’s achievements and sustainability in the long term.

## AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. Significant modernisation of physical and digital infrastructure since 2022, ensuring contemporary and inclusive study environments.
2. Effective use of EU and institutional funds for continuous infrastructure development.
3. Integration of sustainability and accessibility principles into campus planning.
4. Comprehensive and well-coordinated monitoring of resource adequacy by the Strategic Planning and Quality Management Unit.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

- NONE

For further improvement

1. Develop performance indicators to regularly assess the impact of infrastructure and digital tools on student learning outcomes.
2. Continue strengthening partnerships with tourism businesses for joint use of professional environments (e.g., co-working spaces or labs), and improve internships and volunteering activities.
3. Ongoing planning for the sustainable and efficient use of KK facilities should be guided by evidence derived from regular data analysis and performance monitoring.
4. Systematically monitor students’ demand for extended library opening hours, including the feasibility of providing 24/7 access to study facilities.

## 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

KK has established a robust Internal Quality Assurance (QA) System, which operates in accordance with the ESG and the KK Strategy 2025. The system covers all stages of the study cycle—from programme design and implementation to monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

The QA system is coordinated by the Strategic Planning and Quality Management Unit (SPQMU), in close cooperation with the Vice-Dean for Studies, SFCs, and the Quality Management Committee at the institutional level. The SFC for Tourism and Leisure plays a central role in monitoring learning outcomes, reviewing course content, evaluating teaching quality, and coordinating improvement actions.

Internal quality assurance at KK follows a continuous annual cycle supported by regular monitoring activities. Study Field Committee meetings are held at least every six months, while lecturers review and improve their modules each year based on student feedback. Academic staff prepare annual activity plans and self-assessment reports, and Departments and Faculties likewise develop yearly self-assessment reports and action plans. These recurring processes—together with systematic data collection, benchmarking, and stakeholder involvement—ensure consistent oversight and ongoing enhancement of study quality.

The process includes regular collection and analysis of key indicators such as student performance, graduation rates, employability, and satisfaction surveys. These data are systematically discussed in departmental meetings and integrated into annual improvement plans. The quality cycle (Plan–Do–Check–Act) is applied consistently across all study fields.

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

Stakeholder participation in quality assurance is an established and well-functioning practice. Students, employers, alumni, and social partners are actively involved in QA processes through representation in the SFC, Faculty Council, and Student Council.

Regular consultations are organised with representatives from tourism and hospitality enterprises, municipal tourism departments, and professional associations. Their input is used to review programme relevance, identify new skills needs, and propose curriculum updates.

Student participation has also been strengthened. Students contribute feedback through structured surveys each semester, participate in course evaluations, and are invited to periodic meetings with programme administrators to discuss academic and organisational issues.

During the visit, alumni and employers confirmed that they are incorporated into the program in various ways, for example by participating in final thesis assessment committees, reviewing and developing thesis topics, and proposing new topics relevant to current professional practice. And, students confirmed that the program includes numerous real-world examples, such as excursions, guest lectures from external professionals, and case studies drawn from their own work experience.

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

KK systematically collects and uses information on the delivery and evaluation of studies in the field of Tourism and Leisure. Data are gathered through student surveys (module-level surveys four times a year and annual surveys for first-, second-, and final-year students), graduate and employer feedback, final thesis Assessment Committee reports, and internal self-assessment and benchmarking processes. This information is analysed at multiple levels, including Department meetings, Study Field Committee meetings, and Dean's Office meetings, and is used to guide decisions on study programme content, module delivery, student support activities, and the optimisation of study processes, such as final internship duration.

The results are communicated to stakeholders through meetings, the KK Intranet, and the KK website, including the "YOU SAID, WE DID" section, ensuring transparency and public accountability. Detailed information on study programmes, admission requirements, learning outcomes, graduate employment, and external evaluation results is publicly accessible via KK's website, intranet, and social media. Annual performance reports, self-evaluation summaries, and improvement plans are shared internally and discussed with academic staff, students, and administrative units, demonstrating a systematic, evidence-based, and transparent approach to improving study quality.

#### 7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

Student feedback mechanisms are systematic and continuous. Surveys are administered after each semester and cover aspects of teaching quality, study organisation, support services, and overall satisfaction. Results are analysed by the SPQMU and the Faculty's Quality Coordinator, then communicated to lecturers and discussed during departmental and SFC meetings. During the visit, academic staff noted that student evaluations are most useful at the module level, while student surveys provide the greatest value through qualitative comments. During the visit, the SER Team clarified that the student evaluation return rate is approximately 30–40%, and that marketing initiatives are conducted in schools to attract prospective students.

Corrective measures, such as course adjustments or methodological improvements, are documented in annual reports. Students are informed of actions taken based on their feedback through follow-up announcements and meetings - ensuring a transparent feedback loop (*You said—We did*).

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)**

KK demonstrates a mature, data-driven, and participatory quality assurance system that effectively ensures continuous improvement of the Tourism and Leisure study field. Internal quality processes are well-documented, inclusive, and aligned with European and national standards.

Stakeholder engagement—including students, employers, and alumni—is consistent and meaningful, contributing to programme relevance and responsiveness to labour market changes. The public dissemination of study information, external evaluations, and improvement results enhances institutional accountability.

Student feedback mechanisms are structured, transparent, and effectively used to guide evidence-based decision-making. Overall, the internal QA system is embedded into the institutional culture and supports the long-term development of the study field.

Based on the available evidence, and discussions with various stakeholders during the visit, the Panel concludes that the development of THM programme is based on an internal quality assurance system involving all stakeholders and continuous monitoring, transparency and public information.

## AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

<b>AREA 7</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory - 1</b> Does not meet the requirements	<b>Satisfactory - 2</b> Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	<b>Good - 3</b> Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	<b>Very good - 4</b> Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	<b>Exceptional - 5</b> Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
<b>First cycle</b>				v	

### COMMENDATIONS

1. Well-established and integrated internal quality assurance system consistent with ESG principles.
2. Effective participation of all stakeholders—students, employers, and alumni—in QA and programme improvement.
3. Transparent and bilingual (LT/EN) dissemination of study programme information and evaluation results.
4. Systematic and responsive use of student feedback leading to tangible improvements.
5. Clear documentation and evidence-based management of the “Plan–Do–Check–Act” quality cycle.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

- NONE

For further improvement

1. Organise regular stakeholder meetings for aligning institutional goals with business sector needs, promoting joint research initiatives and collaboration.

## V. SUMMARY

The Panel extends its sincere appreciation to KK for the comprehensive and well-prepared SER, the provision of additional documentation, and the professional organisation of the site visit. The Panel particularly values the open, reflective, and constructive discussions held with the self-evaluation team, teaching staff, students, alumni, and social partners, which enabled a thorough understanding of the THM study field and its development since the previous evaluation in 2022.

### **Main Strengths**

The Panel recognises that KK demonstrates a clear strategic vision and strong institutional commitment to delivering practice-oriented, innovative, and socially responsible higher education in tourism and leisure. The aims and learning outcomes of the THM programme are well aligned with the institution's mission, national priorities, and labour market needs. The inclusion of specialisations in Tourism, Hotel, and Wellness & SPA Management ensures close correspondence with Lithuania's evolving tourism and hospitality sectors.

Curriculum design and delivery are coherent and systematically structured to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes. The annual review process and active stakeholder involvement confirm that the programme remains relevant, up to date, and responsive to societal and employer needs. The integration of bilingual teaching, digitalisation, and sustainability principles supports both employability and international competitiveness. Students also benefit from flexible learning pathways, including personalised study plans, elective options, recognition of prior learning, and micro-credential initiatives that encourage lifelong learning.

The learning environment and resources at KK have improved significantly since 2022. Investments in modern facilities, digital platforms, and teaching technologies have resulted in an inclusive and contemporary study environment. Resource allocation is data-driven and strategically managed, with sustainability and accessibility effectively embedded into campus planning. The Strategic Planning and Quality Management Unit ensures systematic monitoring and continuous improvement of infrastructure adequacy.

The student support system is comprehensive and inclusive, offering academic, financial, social, and psychological assistance. The institutional culture reflects strong care for student well-being, supported by an effective digital communication framework and an expanding mobility network. The Panel commends KK for its proactive approach to enhancing international mobility, building global partnerships, and integrating student feedback into programme enhancement.

The academic staff are appropriately qualified, professionally experienced, and committed to student-centred learning. The institution has made progress in increasing staff stability and participation in international mobility programmes, thereby strengthening the programme's international dimension. Staff training and professional development activities are extensive and aligned with institutional priorities, particularly in pedagogy and digital skills.

The quality assurance system is mature, participatory, and embedded in the institutional culture. It ensures systematic data collection, stakeholder involvement, and continuous improvement. Student feedback and external evaluations are effectively used to guide programme enhancement, while transparent dissemination of quality information reinforces accountability and trust.

### **Shortcoming:**

KK needs to undertake a review of the Programme Learning Outcomes for the THM programme to ensure that all relevant abilities required by the Descriptor are explicitly articulated in the revised version.

### **Areas for Further Improvement**

While the Panel acknowledges the substantial progress achieved since the last review, several areas warrant continued attention and further enhancement:

- Cooperation with social partners should be strengthened to increase applied research opportunities, while study courses should further develop data analytics competencies and deepen participation in international hospitality-focused research projects.
- The student selection process would benefit from more robust interview procedures and expanded monitoring indicators, alongside enhanced digital mentoring, strengthened domestic and incoming recruitment, improved dropout tracking, and increased psychological support capacity.
- Graduate monitoring should evolve into a longitudinal system, and student awareness of academic integrity and early academic risk detection should be further improved, with clearer documentation of follow-up actions arising from feedback and appeals.
- Efforts should continue to recruit and retain more PhD-qualified staff and to ensure that outcomes of academic mobility are more systematically shared and integrated into curriculum development.
- KK should develop indicators to assess the impact of infrastructure on learning, strengthen partnerships with tourism businesses for shared facilities, maintain evidence-based planning of resources, and monitor demand for extended library opening hours.
- More regular stakeholder meetings would support better alignment of institutional goals with sector needs and promote joint initiatives.

## **Overall Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Panel finds that KK delivers a well-structured, relevant, and high-quality Tourism and Leisure study programme. The institution has demonstrated a strong culture of reflection, improvement, and stakeholder engagement. Substantial progress has been made in curriculum design, student support, resource management, and quality assurance since 2022. The remaining improvement areas relate mainly to enhancing systems already in place—ensuring that data use, monitoring mechanisms, and student services continue to evolve in line with European good practice.

The Panel commends the dedication of KK's leadership, academic staff, and students to maintaining high standards of professional education and continuous development in the field of tourism and leisure.