



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

MARKETING FIELD OF STUDY

Klaipėda University

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:

1. Panel chair: Prof. Teresa Paiva (Portugal) (signature)
2. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Akos Varga (Hungary)
3. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Vytautas Dikčius
4. Student representative: Benas Verslovas

SKVC coordinator: Daiva Buivydienė

Report prepared in November, 2024
Report language: English

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. REVIEW PANEL

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

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: Prof. Teresa Paiva, *Technology and Management Superior School of Guarda Polytechnic Institute*
2. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Akos Varga, *Corvinus University of Budapest, Institute of Marketing*
3. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Vytautas Dikčius, *Vilnius University, Faculty of Economics and Business Management*
4. Student representative: Benas Verslovas, *Vilnius College*.

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 24 October 2024 onsite.

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

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

There was a need for translation during the meeting with teachers, students, alumni and social stakeholders.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

The Klaipėda University (KU) was founded in 1991 and is a centre of science and education in Western Lithuania. It has three Faculties (Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Faculty of Marine Technologies and Natural Sciences, and Faculty of Health Sciences) and two research institutes (Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology and Marine Research Institute). The university faculties include 17 departments, 8 Centres for Research and Studies, 2 museums, and over 60 laboratories, and all cycles of studies are offered.

Overview of the study field

A short paragraph on the positioning of the study field in the wider context of studies and research / artistic activities implemented by the HEI (including strategic objectives, partnerships and/or projects related to the study field).

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities study programmes are implemented in 4 areas of study and 21 fields of study. The marketing study program is a second-cycle programme that has been implemented since 1997 and is run by the Economics Department.

As defined, I SER, the marketing study programme, intends to combine the studies of marketing opportunities, marketing strategy development, marketing decision-making, and programme creation, and it has been updated to meet market expectations. It is designed to improve scientific qualifications and to prepare any work that requires comprehensive and integrated scientific knowledge and abilities.

Previous external evaluations

The study programme was evaluated before receiving a score of 19 points and conducting a three-year accreditation. Overall, the programme's structure and scope were considered sufficient to ensure the development of competencies, but there was room for improvement. The main issues to overcome were the "Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum" and "Links between science (art) and studies", with the rest of the evaluation indicators receiving a score of Good but with shortcomings. Overall, the programme's aims and outcomes were considered aligned with the needs of marketing and advertising specialists. However, the focus on marketing professionals' specific needs in western Lithuania's economy was still missing. The link between learning outcomes and study assessment methods remains unclear.

Documents and information used in the review

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

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

Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

The review panel has used the following additional sources of information:

- Syllabus of different disciplines
- Marketing related publications
- Clarification of the number of presential hours of the online study programme.

- Clarification of compliance with Lithuanian rules regarding the number of professors and lecturers for a university.

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

Second cycle/LTQF 7

Title of the study programme	Marketing
State code	6211LX082
Type of study (college/university)	university studies
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	full-time, 2 years
Workload in ECTS	120
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Master's degree in Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Higher education (Bachelor's or equivalent)
First registration date	19 May, 1997
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	

III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **second cycle** of the Marketing field of study is given a **negative** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points ^{1*}
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	2
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	3
Total:		20

IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

The experts' panel states that while the second-cycle Marketing study program at Klaipėda University aims to train highly qualified specialists with advanced knowledge and skills in marketing, the extent to which these align with the broader societal and labour market needs is a point of concern. While graduates gain competencies in marketing management and strategic decision-making, there is limited evidence of specific engagement with regional and national industry needs beyond basic alignment with marketing frameworks and guidelines.

1*

1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are substantial shortcomings that hinder the implementation of the programmes in the field.

2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings that need to be eliminated.

3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any substantial shortcomings.

4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings.

5 (exceptional) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

Engagement with industry professionals and local businesses: The expert committee observes that although stakeholders from Klaipėda's local industries are listed as involved in program improvement, detailed, structured engagement mechanisms (such as regular industry panel reviews or mentorship programs) are not clearly outlined in the self-evaluation report and the site visit. During the site visit, there was no evidence of a structured procedure to ask and give feedback to the social partners. This limits the program's responsiveness to rapidly evolving marketing skills required by businesses.

Frequency of program updates to reflect labour market changes: While the program includes recent updates, including elective courses on emerging topics such as Neuromarketing, updates occur on a three-year cycle. The expert committee finds this frequency insufficient for addressing rapidly shifting skill demands, particularly in digital marketing and data analysis skills, which are crucial for graduates' employability in a competitive labour market.

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

The expert committee states that the Marketing study program at Klaipėda University reflects several components of the HEI's mission and strategic objectives, but gaps remain in how thoroughly it embodies core institutional values.

Alignment with mission and strategic objectives: the program aims to develop professionals capable of contributing to regional economic growth, which aligns with the university's mission to foster sustainable development in the Baltic region. Additionally, the program's focus on interdisciplinary studies and regional collaboration supports the strategic objective of creating a community-oriented education environment. However, explicit, measurable links between program outcomes and the broader university mission are limited, making it challenging to assess full alignment. For example, while the program mentions sustainable practices in its goals, it does not comprehensively map these to specific, assessed outcomes (SER). While the program incorporates theoretical and practical aspects of marketing, it lacks specific mechanisms to evaluate its direct contributions to regional innovation ecosystems.

Integration of core values into the curriculum: Core university values, such as sustainability, innovation, and ethical practices, are incorporated into the curriculum through specialised courses (e.g., Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability). Despite the programme's lack of consistency in explicit references to these values across all study units, some of them incorporate these concerns. It is advisable to extend this to all the study programme's courses (e.g., Strategic Marketing, which could better emphasise ethical decision-making principles).

Indicators and outcomes for alignment evaluation: currently, no specific, formal indicators (like stakeholder feedback, regional employability metrics, or sustainability-focused graduate projects) or outcomes exist to assess the alignment of program objectives with the HEI's mission. The panel recommends implementing clear metrics, such as stakeholder satisfaction surveys and graduate employability in regional sectors, to ensure ongoing alignment with institutional goals.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

The expert evaluation highlights that the program's aims and outcomes demonstrate some efforts to equip graduates with competencies in marketing management and strategic decision-making. Stakeholder engagement and curriculum updates reflect responsiveness to market needs to some extent. However, there are notable gaps in the program's explicit engagement with regional and

national industry needs beyond general alignment with marketing frameworks and guidelines. While courses such as “Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability” incorporate core values and regional priorities, the integration of these values across the curriculum remains inconsistent. Additionally, systematic mechanisms for feedback—such as graduate employability metrics in key sectors or targeted stakeholder surveys—are currently underdeveloped. Addressing these areas would enhance the program's ability to align its outcomes with the evolving demands of the region and its strategic mission.

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

1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The study programme is structured and follows the required legal documents for the second study cycle in higher education in the Republic of Lithuania. The full-time study program lasts two years (four semesters) and has 120 ECTS. The first, second, and third semesters are structured around four compulsory and one elective course. Each course has 6 ECTS. The fourth semester is for the final thesis preparation. The thesis accounts for 30 ECTS. The workload per ECTS is 26,27 study hours, including classroom classes, distance learning, independent work, and preparation for reports and exams. The independent student work accounts for more than 50% of the study programme.

The site visit revealed that Final Project 1, Final Project 2, and Final Project 3 are dedicated to writing the Master theses - a total of 18 ECTS. Therefore, 48 ECTS, or 40% of the SP Marketing, are related to writing the master thesis. The experts argue that ECTS related to Final project 1, 2, 3 could be dedicated to other marketing courses related to distribution, advertising, sales management, or digital marketing.

The experts' panel pointed out the importance of the requirement for the programs presented in the remote learning format: “25.2. the amount of contact work (including remote learning) shall be at least 10%. In the case of direct participation of lecturers and students (other than remote contact learning) - at least 5%....”. SER says “According to the KU Senate’s Resolution No. 11-26 one study credit is allocated at least 2 hours of direct contact work, regardless of the cycle of studies. The following amounts to 12 hours per semester for each course unit”. Based on that, it can be counted that 9 compulsory courses and 3 elective courses have (12 courses*12 hours) 144 direct contact hours. However, 144 direct contact hours count for just 4.5% of the total amount of the SP Marketing (144/3200). Thus, the formal requirement is not met due to the fact that some courses (Final Project 1, Final Project 2, Final Project 3, and Master’s Thesis – 48 ECTS in total) have no contact hours at all. Moreover, during the site visit, it was confirmed that just one meeting (2 hours) per month within every course was dedicated to the direct contact meeting. Such amount turns into 8 hours per course during a semester, which is even lower than it was calculated in the KU Senate’s Resolution No. 11-26.” Moreover, a schedule presented on the KU website shows that only 6 hours per course during a semester are dedicated to the direct contact meeting.

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

The experts find that the assessment methods employed in the Marketing study program at Klaipėda University exhibit partial alignment with the program's learning outcomes. However, there are areas for improvement in tailoring assessment methods to specific learning objectives.

Current assessment methods rely predominantly on traditional metrics, including exams, project reports, and presentations. While these methods effectively gauge foundational knowledge and analytical skills, they do not comprehensively evaluate practical and applied competences critical to marketing professionals, such as strategic thinking and problem-solving skills in real-world scenarios. This narrow focus on conventional assessment tools limits the holistic assessment of students' capabilities in practical applications aligned with industry demands.

The teaching methods utilised encompass lectures, group work, case analysis, and digital tools (e.g., CANVA, Tobii for neuromarketing studies). Although these methods cover a spectrum of learning outcomes, their impact varies. Interactive methods, such as case analysis and simulations, are underutilised despite their effectiveness in promoting active engagement and practical application. Based on the SER and the site visit, the inconsistent application of these methods restricts the program's potential to fully align instructional strategies with intended learning outcomes.

Feedback within the program is primarily limited to standard grading and end-of-course evaluations. During the site visit, students confirmed that the absence of more frequent, formative feedback mechanisms, such as mid-term evaluations or peer reviews, reduces students' opportunities to align their efforts with learning objectives and track their progress over time. This gap in continuous feedback limits students' ability to make timely improvements, affecting their overall learning experience and achievement.

1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

The expert committee observes that the structure of the Marketing study program at Klaipėda University provides a foundation for sequential competency development. Still, improvements are needed in elective integration and measurement indicators.

The course progression framework builds on foundational marketing principles, advancing to strategic and analytical skill development. Initial courses introduce essential marketing theories and practices, followed by applied projects and research assignments in later semesters. However, the structure lacks a clear, stage-by-stage competency mapping, which limits students' ability to acquire cumulative and measurable expertise across essential areas like digital marketing and strategic analysis.

Elective modules, such as Neuromarketing and Data Analysis, offer students opportunities to deepen their expertise in specific, industry-relevant areas. While these modules support the development of key competencies like data-driven decision-making and consumer behaviour analysis, they are not systematically aligned with core program competencies. This misalignment creates gaps in ensuring a cohesive and comprehensive competency framework across the curriculum.

Currently, competency attainment is evaluated primarily through final grades and project-based assessments. Both in SER and during the site visit, it was observed that the programme lacks distinct indicators that assess cumulative competency development, such as portfolio assessments or standardised competency benchmarks. This absence of structured indicators limits the program's ability to track and validate students' progressive competency acquisition, thereby reducing the capacity to comprehensively evaluate and refine curriculum effectiveness.

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

The experts observe that the Marketing study program offers some flexibility for students to personalise their learning experience, though additional customisation options may enhance alignment with career paths.

Students in the program can select elective modules such as Neuromarketing and Data Analysis, which allow them to pursue specific areas of interest within the marketing field. This personalisation enables students to tailor their studies toward career aspirations, particularly in digital marketing and consumer insights, thus enhancing relevant competences.

The program also supports personalisation through individual schedules and tailored consultation opportunities. For instance, students are provided with schedules for meetings with faculty members during designated consultation hours, enabling one-on-one academic guidance. This ensures students can receive personalised support for their coursework, research, or career planning. Furthermore, the university facilitates accommodations for students with disabilities or other specific challenges by providing accessible infrastructure and additional support through the Student and Teacher Support Centre. Measures include flexible deadlines, alternative learning formats, and individualised study plans, ensuring an inclusive learning environment.

Information on available electives and specialisation tracks is disseminated through program orientations, academic advising sessions, and university information platforms. However, the expert committee missed a more proactive communication strategy, such as workshops or guidance sessions dedicated to career-aligned elective selection, to better inform students how each elective can support their career trajectory.

A significant number of students reportedly participate in elective courses, especially those focused on emerging marketing skills, which enhance competences in areas like data-driven marketing and consumer behaviour analysis. However, the lack of detailed utilisation statistics on elective enrolment and outcomes limits the institute's ability to assess the impact of these courses on students' preparedness for the job market. This absence of tracking data impedes a comprehensive evaluation of how these personalised learning options contribute to career readiness.

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

The experts find that the final theses in the Marketing study program meet the minimum requirements for the field and cycle, but significant improvements are needed to elevate their quality to better align with advanced program expectations. While the theses reflect some alignment with the program's core learning outcomes, including marketing knowledge, research competencies, and the ability to conduct applied studies, they often exhibit limitations in-depth and analytical rigour.

The final thesis evaluation process follows established criteria, including originality, relevance to current marketing challenges, methodological rigour, and practical applicability. The theses are expected to demonstrate students' ability to integrate theoretical knowledge with empirical research and contribute meaningful insights to the marketing profession. However, the panel noted that many theses exhibit characteristics more typical of bachelor's-level work, such as limited research depth, superficial industry engagement, and insufficiently developed practical implications.

Evaluation of the final thesis involves both internal faculty members and external experts. Faculty members, usually with doctoral qualifications, guide students through the research process to ensure

adherence to academic standards. External reviewers, drawn from industry or academia, assess the theses' real-world relevance and research quality. Their involvement is critical for connecting the academic work to regional and national marketing practices. However, the experts observed inconsistencies in the depth of feedback provided by external reviewers and variability in the application of assessment criteria, which undermines the standardisation of the evaluation process.

While approximately 85–90% of the theses have been deemed to meet program requirements, the panel identified persistent gaps in quality, particularly in the level of research analysis and industry engagement.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The study programme is an online SP. It does not comply with the presential hours ruled in the general requirements for the implementation of studies or even with the KU Senate's Resolution No. 11-26, which defines these contact hours. This is a serious setback for the study programme.

In reviewing the structural and educational quality of the marketing study program, the experts found areas for improvement in its competency development, opportunities for personalisation, and compliance with field requirements for final theses. The assessment methods lack alignment with specified learning outcomes, offering limited formative feedback and over-relying on traditional evaluations that do not sufficiently measure practical skills. Opportunities for student-driven customisation need to be revised, with a lack of proactive guidance for aligning electives with career aspirations, suggesting a passive approach to student development. Finally, while most final theses meet minimum requirements, the lack of empirical (study field) application in many theses highlights a critical gap in achieving field-relevant outcomes. Collectively, these issues raise serious concerns about the program's effectiveness in preparing students for real-world challenges, questioning the justification for its continuation.

AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. The presential contact hours of the study program have to be redefined.
2. Improvements must be made to align the study program with the market needs.
3. Continuous alignment between the curriculum competency development, the assessment methods and specific learning outcomes.
4. Reconsider the importance of the final thesis and use some ECTS for marketing-related courses.

5. Implement more stringent standards for applied research, ensuring the thesis includes detailed, actionable practical implications.
6. Enhance training for the thesis's advisors to strengthen students' research competencies and analytical skills.
7. Establish standardised assessment criteria and processes for providing consistent and constructive feedback from both internal and external evaluators.

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

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

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

The experts' panel admits the strong regional focus of Klaipėda University, including SP Marketing. However, such focus forces the marketing-related staff to publish and participate in conferences, mainly at a national level. The self-evaluation report mostly focuses on the review of the field of management or even economics but vaguely on marketing. In SER "Results of scientific research of teachers of the study field of marketing in 2021–2023", presented 37 scientific publications in WOS and/or Scopus by the Department of Economics and Management. However, a list of marketing-related articles, additionally presented by KU to the experts, revealed that the institution had no marketing-related publications in WOS and/or Scopus in 2021 and 2022, and just three publications in 2023.

The expert panel finds the misleading statement in SER point 46, which states "The analysis of the results of recent years (2021–2023) shows an increase in the number of points obtained in the field of social sciences (see Table 4). Thus it is obvious that the results of the evaluation of the level of activity of the management field conducted by KU show positive trends." The experts point out that data, presented in SER, clearly shows a significant drop in points – the number of RCL points, presented by the Research Council of Lithuania as the annual evaluation of the scientific (art) activities carried, decreased by almost 30% during 2021-2022 (249 in 2021 and only 173 in 2022).

A previous report on self-evaluation (2021) urged Klaipėda University to establish a marketing department to strengthen scientific activity in the marketing area. However, such a department was not established and the program is still managed by the Department of Economics.

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

The expert committee admits there are good intentions in including the latest scientific developments in study activities. Neuromarketing was introduced as an elective course. New research topics were introduced within some courses, while the latest marketing trends were discussed in courses such as Electronic Marketing, Strategic Marketing, International Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communication, Pricing, and Marketing Budgeting.

The expert committee argues that updated sources for most courses could increase a relationship with the latest scientific developments. Analysis of the syllabus, presented on the KU webpage, showed that a large part of the main readings for a course are 5-10 years old (the syllabus was available on October 16-18, 2024). Moreover, adding scientific articles to the course materials could bring the newest findings in science and/or marketing areas.

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

The experts pointed out many possibilities for students to be involved in scientific activities. They could submit applications together with university teachers and participate in a project financed by the Research Council of Lithuania; participate in Erasmus+ projects as well as in scientific, young scientists, and scientific-practical conferences; or write scientific articles. Some students participated in the conference “Insights of Academic Youth on the Progress of Society” in 2023. Plus, the articles of two students from SP Marketing were published in a scientific journal. However, the site visit revealed that students were engaged in their work activities, and most of them were not involved in research enough.

The expert panel argues that the higher quality of master theses could add important input on involving them in scientific activities. Based on the “List Of Final Theses (2021–2023)” of SER, the expert committee pointed out that a large part of the titles of master theses are related to understanding the current situation, which requires a descriptive type of research. Analysis of the presented master theses showed a rare usage of statistical analysis of results and a lack of predictive analysis.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

Despite the efforts made by the SP of Marketing, since it is a second-cycle degree, more is needed to overcome some structural situations that constrain the research orientation. The level of research related to the marketing field could be much higher, and the guidance contribution of the study field included in the Economics department does not help lecturers reorient their research area.

The students have the possibility to be engaged with research, but they do have not enough time due to the high workload in their companies. Additionally, the lecture work and the necessary update of the course resources do not help the SP modernise and meet the more innovative and current marketing fields.

AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. To make strategic research guidelines to enhance the research in the marketing field.
2. To create a Marketing Department or at least to include the SP in the Business Department.
3. Update the SP curriculums with more recent and innovative resources and tools.

4. Increase the scientific level of the final papers, giving special importance to research methodology and analysis of results.
5. Direct the topics of the final papers towards the latest developments in science and marketing.

AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

The admission requirements are well-founded. SP Marketing admits students if: “a) they have completed university first-cycle or integral studies, college studies and obtained a professional bachelor’s degree and meet the requirements specified in the study programme; b) they have completed college studies of higher education and additional studies of the relevant field of study and meet the requirements specified in the study programme”. The admission rules are proposed by the Faculty Council and approved by the Senate. The structure of the competitive score and other criteria are published on the KU website. However, the experts' recommendations provided during the last external evaluation was that “student admission information about the Marketing study programme on the KU website should also be provided in English”. Even though the KU reported that “Updated information about the Department and study programme are provided in Lithuanian and English”, the webpage of KU does not contain information neither about the Department of Economics or Management nor about SP Marketing.

The expert committee noticed that there are no requirements related to the study field for bachelor graduates. The Descriptor of the Study Field of Marketing stated, “the persons may be admitted to the studies of the second cycle in the field of marketing if they have completed the university studies of the first cycle in the group of study fields of Business and Public Administration or Social Sciences conforming to the particularity of the selected study program, and if they satisfy the requirements established by the respective higher education school”. If they “have completed the university studies of the first cycle in other fields, applicants had to take “bridging courses of the subjects complying to the particularity of the study programs of management, the list and content whereof are determined by the higher education institution”.

The requirement for additional studies is applied just to applicants who have completed college studies in higher education. Grades of additional studies are included in the formula for the calculation of competitive score “C is the weighted average of the certificate on the results of additional studies” (SER). However, the same point of SER has neglected the importance of grades from additional studies since “college graduates take additional course units and pass exams while studying in the second cycle study programme”. It means that college graduates could be admitted without additional studies, which contradicts the requirements of The Descriptor of the Study Field of Marketing “The persons may be admitted to the studies of the second cycle in the field of marketing....7.3. if they have completed the college studies in the group of study fields of Business and Public Administration or Social Sciences and bridging courses, the list and content whereof are determined by the higher education institution.” The discussions with students did not clarify the procedure. Some students stated they had to take bridging courses, while others did not mention the bridging courses.

Data on the number of applicants and admitted students in SER shows a continuous decrease in interest in SP Marketing. The site visit does not reveal exact and unique actions or strategies that would increase the market interest in SP Marketing. The main competitive advantage mentioned during the site visit was the remote studies.

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

The recognition procedure is approved by the KU Senate and described in the KU Study Regulations and other documents. Documents include procedures for recognition of learning outcomes (including partial) obtained in a foreign higher education institution or from partial studies in a frame of Erasmus+ learning, as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements. A maximum of 50% of the study program can be credited.

According to the evidence, for the last three years, no foreign students in SP Marketing have been required to have their learning achievements credited, and no information about the recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements. The experts suggest that more efforts can be made to inform and explain to future students about the validations since they tend to be unaware of this process and how to carry it out, which was confirmed during the site visit.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

SER presents contradictions in the requirements for applicants for additional studies from the SP. When comparing SER's information with the public information on the KU website, it is possible to observe incoherence between the sources of information, and no information is translated.

The number of students in the SP is continuously decreasing, and despite the regulation of accreditation of foreign qualifications, no foreign students have been admitted in the last three years.

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

3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

All KU students have an opportunity to participate in short/long-term mobility or professional and postgraduate internships under Erasmus + programmes and bilateral cooperation agreements. There are more than 300 HEI that students can choose from. They can apply for mobility opportunities twice a year during the spring and autumn semesters. However, in the period being evaluated, only one student has had an international mobility experience.

During the site visit it was clear that students desire to go on mobility programs but lack of information and the fact that most of the students are working, as mentioned in the SER, didn't let them take advantage of the mobility programs. So the participation in international mobility and projects is quite disappointing for students.

It is recommended to promote international mobility programmes more and encourage students to take advantage of the university's extensive Erasmus+ network and agreements.

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

KU provides its students with a wide range of academic, social, and financial support services. There are different types of scholarships, as stated in the SER, that help to finance the studies. KU offers incentive scholarships, like the Senate scholarship, Faculty Council scholarship, and incentive scholarship for learning outcomes. There are also Social scholarships and grants for participation in conferences, events, research promotion activities, etc. Disabled persons are provided with financial support for special needs. Students have psychological and spiritual help, and they are encouraged to engage in the events and activities of the university community, social activities, volunteer activities outside the university, and have an opportunity to engage in various student organisations. To support their study, students are provided with very useful individual career counselling to take advantage of their academic results.

KU University meets the needs of the students, offers diverse financial aid and social support, provides resources that allow the students to take advantage of their stay at the university.

It would be advisable to have data that evidences students' use of them and their impact on the academic program, for example, the psychological help service.

3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

KU offers extensive academic and non-academic support for both Lithuanian and international students. Academic consultations are managed centrally in FSSH departments, covering study organisation, tuition fees, agreements, and accommodation, with the Vice-Dean for Studies oversight.

First-year students attend induction meetings in September, where they are introduced to study requirements, lecture schedules, and KU systems such as Moodle and the Academic Information System. Group elders are chosen, and official email accounts are issued. Course unit teachers hold regular consultation times in-person or virtually (e.g., MS Teams, Zoom) to address assignments, course content, and assessments. Thesis guidance is provided by supervisors, with additional support from other faculty members.

The KU library supports research with access to major databases, including ScienceDirect and EBSCO, and guidance from library staff. Non-academic services include financial aid, accommodation, psychological counselling in multiple languages, and career resources like job postings, internships, and alumni mentoring through the KU Alumni Club.

Information is shared through the KU website, social media, newsletters, and a unified student portal. Feedback is gathered via surveys at the end of each semester to enhance services and consultations.

During the site visit, KU students expressed that they are pleased with the amount of information they get surrounding their studies.

New students have introductory lectures at the Faculty, and most of the information is given by their professors, and communication usually occurs via email or during tutoring hours. Also, the information for students is easily accessible on the KU website or other electronic environments. During the site visit, this was confirmed, although sometimes it is not clear why some students can't get credits for their professional and experience path and not do the supplementary lectures.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

The university offers quite a good set of academic, social, and financial support services to meet the student's needs.

Even considering the low number of students in this SP, it is important to promote international opportunities for mobility since, despite their work constraints, the openness of such opportunities is crucial to their experience and acquisition of knowledge.

AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. Good academic, social, and financial support services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Update the website information and coherence with the Marketing SP.
2. Promote the international programme for mobility.
3. Apply formal requirements for bridging courses for applicants who have completed college studies or higher education.
4. Develop a strategic plan and tactical actions to increase the competitiveness of the Marketing SP.
5. More efforts should be made to explain to students about the recognition of learning achievements.

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

4.1.	Students are prepared for independent professional activity
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The SP Marketing is carried out remotely. Study forms and methods combine online, classroom, and independent activities and assignments. Various learning methods are utilised throughout the study program (i.e., formal lecture, engaging/interactive lecture, guest lecture-discussion, literature analysis, individual and team project, case analysis (case study), group work, active discussion, idea (mind) mapping, small group tutorials, reflection on action, etc.). The expert panel pointed out that the traditional lecture still took a significant role in the syllabus of courses, while interactive lectures and other e-learning tools and approaches were not utilised intensively. The site visit revealed that the engagement of students during lectures and seminars is rather low due to remote learning. Thus, the institution could better support the lecturers in the systematic development of their skills in remote teaching methods and tools.

Due to the more traditional type of lectures and the difficulty of integrating new pedagogies more related to online learning, students may not have adequate evaluation, which is focused on traditional exams and is presential. Students have to do independent work, and no constraints from students or lectures were identified in the support and development of this work.

Students have the possibility to select elective courses. However, the site visit confirmed that just one of the elective courses could be selected per semester due to the small number of students in the group. The expert committee suggests that some elective courses could be presented to various SPs of the second cycle at KU. Additionally, the list of elective courses in SP Marketing could be minimised since a student's inability to get the needed course could lead to disappointment.

The SER does not present a relationship between the formulated learning outcomes and the assessment methods. The analysis of the syllabus showed a gap between the formulated learning outcomes and the assessment methods. In many cases, the link is relatively weak and needs further attention.

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

Students from socially vulnerable groups or with special needs are supported with various tailored options to meet their specific requirements. This includes assigning personal tutors, offering special counselling services (from class teachers or support staff), and providing individual study plans, such as customised schedules for exams or classes. Students facing financial challenges can benefit from scholarships, reduced tuition fees, or dormitory discounts. KU's facilities are designed to be accessible, including new campus buildings like the business incubator, Marine Research Institute, and Aula Magna, which are equipped with elevators and restrooms for individuals with mobility impairments.

The university also supports visually impaired students with features such as a special website version, adjustable fonts in the Moodle environment for dyslexia or visual impairments, and library workstations equipped with adaptive furniture and assistive devices. The library provides specialised software and equipment for users with specific needs, and the FSSH library unit offers additional reading room programs for students requiring tailored resources.

KU has a dedicated Disability Affairs Coordinator and participates in the State Studies Foundation's project, Increasing the Accessibility of Studies.

Students experiencing life changes, such as illness, pregnancy, or parental leave, can temporarily suspend their studies through academic leave for up to one year or longer, as stipulated by Lithuanian law. Exams can also be taken individually, and final thesis defences may be postponed for valid reasons without incurring additional fees.

Experts highlight that the institution does a great job supporting students from vulnerable groups and those with special needs, offering them the help they need.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

The study forms and methods combine online, classroom, and independent activities and assignments. The traditional lecture took a significant role in the syllabus of courses, while interactive lectures and other e-learning tools and approaches were not utilised intensively. Therefore, the engagement of students during lectures and seminars is rather low.

Students have elective choices to choose from different options, however, due to the low number, they have to agree on a common option to follow.

The SER does not present a relationship between the formulated learning outcomes and the assessment methods. The analysis of the syllabus showed a gap between the formulated learning outcomes and the assessment methods. In many cases, the link is relatively weak and needs further attention

KU's policies support students with special needs and vulnerable groups.

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

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

Student progress is systematically monitored at multiple levels (module, program) and across various institutional bodies. Feedback is provided through assignment reviews, exam assessments, online comments, self- or peer assessments, and group discussions. Performance is tracked at the department level, with individual counselling offered to students facing difficulties. The final thesis serves as a critical component of the evaluation process.

The institution actively collects feedback from internal and external stakeholders to align the curriculum with labour market demands and research developments. As mentioned in SER based

on this feedback, measures are developed to improve study quality, including enhancements to study programmes, the introduction of new subjects, and addressing student-raised issues. Lecturers are consulted, and the results of this feedback are used not only for improving studies but also for lecturer evaluations, strategic planning, and marketing purposes. Students confirm that their feedback is collected and acted upon, though they noted that results are not always shared promptly.

In the opinion of the experts panel, the KU has a systematic approach to monitoring learning progress but needs a more concrete approach to providing feedback.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

The Student Affairs and Career Group of the KU Office of Studies monitors graduates' employment and advises students during their studies on issues related to employment. Career monitoring of graduates is carried out with the help of tools available in the career management information system (KVIS). As there is quite a demand for experts in the marketing field, the employment rate of the graduates is very high (100 % in 2022, 2023).

The experts' panel advises applying surveys or interviews of graduate students and employers to get information as well. Additionally, information about the employment rate does not reflect the career of graduates, since all of them were working during their studies. SP Marketing aims "to train highly qualified marketing specialists." Thus, the institution should track changes in the positions held by graduate students.

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

The university has a comprehensive framework to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination, incorporating both formal (e.g., Code of Academic Ethics) and informal elements (e.g., awareness seminars on plagiarism). The institution uses an anti-plagiarism system to check final theses and other submitted work, while assignments are alternated annually to minimise opportunities for academic dishonesty. Reported violations are submitted to the Ethics Commission for review. Although no violations have been reported in recent years, the lack of such cases limits the ability to assess the system's effectiveness fully. Students can voice concerns or complaints through the Students' Representative Council, which ensures fair examination processes and supports academic staff. Additionally, the university has formal procedures for addressing issues of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment, with dedicated committees involving external experts when necessary. This well-established framework involves all key stakeholders and ensures both proactive and reactive measures.

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

The SER describes the procedure of submitting appeals and looks like it is formally expressed. The SER states, "The following student rights are publicly available on the KU website (<https://www.ku.lt/studijos/stojantiesiems/studiju-abc/studentu-teises-ir-pareigos/>), presenting the rights and responsibilities of students." The experts noticed that the link did not work, and there is no such information on the KU webpage, or such information can't be found easily.

During the last three years, no appeals or complaints from students have been submitted, which does not present any proof of the system's effectiveness. Plus, students seemed not to be fully aware of the formal procedures.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

Student progress is monitored systematically at multiple levels, and feedback is provided, although sometimes slower than desired.

There are policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination, and procedures are defined for submitting appeals or complaints. However, without examples, the expert's team cannot evaluate their effectiveness.

AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. Student progress monitorisation.
2. Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination and support students with special needs and vulnerable groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Because the SP has a remote teaching and learning process, interactive lectures and other e-learning tools and approaches must be used more intensively.
2. Reconsider the selection process of elective courses
3. Strengthen the relationships between the formulated learning outcomes and the assessment methods.
4. Make the information on the KU website more accessible.

AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

5.1.	The teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The study program, supervised by the Department of Economics, is taught by a team of 12 university teachers (while Annex 1 shows just 11 teachers). The exact number (4) of professors and associate professors from different departments (Departments of Economics, Management, Informatics and Statistics, Communication, and Centre for Studies of Social Changes) teach courses in SP Marketing. Additionally, one teacher has a doctoral degree, and two are PhD students. All that confirms that SP meets minimal requirements for teachers (83 % of teachers of the Marketing study programme have a doctoral degree, and 30 % of the total volume of the study programme are professors). The academic staff turnover in SP Marketing is insignificant.

Even though SER states SP Marketing has “sufficient potential for personnel renewal”, the expert committee argues that there is a serious lack of teachers. Almost half of program teachers have more than one course in the program. Three teachers (Žilienė, Šneiderienė, Baranskaitė) present two courses, prof. Labanauskaitė – three courses, and the head of the program – Juščius – three courses plus three final thesis projects and a Master's thesis. On one hand, such distribution of courses reflects a serious lack of teaching staff. On the other hand, the high workload of teachers minimises their time for scientific work, which is reflected in low output in science. The site visit revealed that Prof. Juščius left the program in 2024, which raised new problems with teaching staff for three courses: Strategic Marketing, Marketing Management Seminar, and Globalisation of Economy and Global Markets.

Although SER reported that the teaching staff's scientific and research interests are directed towards the course units taught in the Marketing study programme, the research topics reported as three major works over the last five years show significant differences in subjects taught.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The SP meets the minimal requirements for teachers, but there is a shortage of them. Almost half of the program teachers have two or more courses. Their high workload minimises their time for scientific work, which is reflected in low science output.

The research engagement levels are adequate, showing involvement in different scientific activities. However, research topics are significantly different from subjects taught.

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

5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

Senate Resolution No. 11-60 On the Approval of Regulations for Improving Qualification of Teachers and Researchers of Klaipeda University regulates the process of university teacher mobility. This resolution discusses opportunities for improving the qualifications of teachers and research fellows and the conditions for academic mobility.

Not only in SER but also in the visit meetings, it was possible to assess the importance of an internationalisation strategy for the university, mainly since they are part of a Strategic Alliance called the EU-CONEXUS (European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability) consortium, which started in 2019. This alliance helps to achieve mobility goals through short-term mobility, research, and lecturing engagement.

Teachers of the Marketing programme are encouraged to participate in Erasmus+ mobilities within and outside the CONEXUS consortium, and there are preference criteria for those who have not attended international mobility before. In terms of incoming teachers participating and engaging in lecturing activities, there are registered participants, mainly through the CONEXUS alliance.

Six teachers visiting partner universities in European countries registered outgoing mobility in SER. This shows a slight decrease from the last evaluation period. However, one of the teachers went three times. The number of incoming teachers was not presented, but there were remote training activities within the consortium.

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

The Description for improving the Qualification of Pedagogical and Scientific Staff at Klaipeda University was updated in 2022. The professional development of teaching staff is a requirement for progress in their academic positions.

There are different sources of funding for qualification improvement (University Research, Studies and International Relations Foundation, departmental funds, support, subsidies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, of the State Commission for International Studies, other Lithuanian and foreign as well as international funds, programmes and projects). So, besides the direct financial assistance they can receive, they may have a one-year licence to improve their research and have a salary definition; since 2019, one part of the salary has been fixed, and the other depends on their work outputs.

Each teacher designs an individual competence improvement plan for each academic year, which is evaluated over five years. They must use at least one of the different forms of improvement (specialised courses, preparation of a research paper or other specialised activities in a research centre, laboratory, company, institution, library, archive, expedition, etc.; scientific trip (long-term or short-term), events for the improvements of professional qualification, scientific research without carrying out pedagogical activities, creative vacation) within these five years.

Since nothing was reported as unusual or dissatisfying for the teachers in the visit meetings, the expert panel's opinion is that the lecturers are satisfied with the procedures and opportunities given for development.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

There is a system of promoting international mobilities and qualification improvements. The teachers questioned in the visit meeting did not express dissatisfaction with the defined rules. However, the low numbers of mobilities, incoming or outgoing, and mainly the focus on international mobilities

within the Conexus alliance, limit the possibilities of increasing the mobilities even though they were an increasing reason for the training received.

AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. There are opportunities for teachers to develop competences that meet their needs.
2. The strategic alliance that the university is part of has boosted the internationalisation path, particularly in terms of mobility engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. It is necessary to hire more teachers.
2. The marketing field should be privileged in the research activities.
3. It is necessary to make a continuous effort to promote teachers' participation in mobilities.

AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

6.1.	Facilities and informational and financial resources are sufficient and enable learning outcomes to be achieved.
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The Marketing study programme is the responsibility of the Economics Department of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. As stated in SER, that includes 29 high-quality classrooms with 780 workplaces, with access to other facilities like the Library or Sports Centres. The infrastructure is being modernised, and some areas are not yet finished. Project No. 09.1.1 – CPVA—V—720 – 13 – 0001 was co-financed from the European Union's structural funds.

As this second-cycle learning program is mainly online, it is important to note that the virtual learning environment contains learning materials and additional materials for independent study and individual and group tasks using Moodle tools and various external programs. It is possible to organise virtual individual and group consultations in real-time and to provide timely consultations to groups of students using environment-based discussion forums. Distance learning is delivered using the MS Teams platform through a centralised hardware and software monitoring system, where the software is audited and updated or added every six months.

The Media Collaboration Laboratory has been established in the Faculty for researchers, teachers and students to apply methods and research on digital media's ways, contexts and effects at different levels. This laboratory has also been adapted to the distance learning mode, ensuring access to the main technological tools and resources necessary for the studies and databases.

Within the visit meetings, teachers and students referred to the software and digital tools identified in SER, which are available for students for free or at a discount. The diversity of software and tools available doesn't fulfil the needs of a research marketing programme since there are still missing some technologies more specific to the area, such as CRM software, dashboards and roadmaps and marketing extended reality and metaverse, particularly if the study programme offers Neuromarketing course which needs different technologies like eye tracking and virtual glasses or ECG caps.

For special needs students, the university has been developing an effort to adapt the old infrastructure building to them, not only having some lifts but also having equipment along the infrastructure to help the accessibility of students in need. Also, it was identified in SER and during the visit meeting to the facilities, different equipment and software for students with limited sight or hearing (e.g. *Dolphin-EasyConverter*, *EasyReader*, and Braille reading and printing services), which is very positive.

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

In SER, it is possible to understand that the materials and technologies are constantly updated. The process of new acquisitions follows the normal procedure in Lithuanian HEIs. The teachers require the needs, which are discussed and analysed in the department and faculty and then sent to the

budget analysis of each correspondent office responsible for the type of material requested for acquisition. This is a yearly plan for budgeting resources for upgrading informational resources.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

The investment in modernising the infrastructure and in technologies to improve the learning process of students with special needs is commendable. However, since some changes were made in the study programme, more specific technologies and tools are still needed to increase the learning and research process quality.

AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. Modern infrastructures are adapted to different students' needs, improving the teaching and learning process.
2. KU is concerned about the accessibility of its infrastructures and facilitating their access conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To further improvements:

1. For the study programme to modernise, new learning materials and software must be acquired continuously and systematically to ensure timely implementation.

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, continuous monitoring, transparency, and public information.
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FACTUAL SITUATION

7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

The university is certified according to the ISO 9001:2015 quality management system standard. Quality management system complies with the European regulations and guidelines on quality assurance in higher education, as well as the main laws and legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania regulating higher education in Lithuania.

In SER, the responsibilities of internal quality management are adequately structured, with all participants having defined roles in the process. The quality assurance of the study programmes is ensured by the Business and Public Management Study Field Committee and the Economics Study Field Committee established by the University's Rector. All decisions on programme management and quality assurance are taken collegially.

During the site visit it was observed that the procedures of quality assurance existed, which is positive, particularly with the collaboration of the Senate participants.

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

According to SER and confirmed in the visit meetings, a standardised study process evaluation is carried out at the end of each semester. Students are interviewed according to a standardised questionnaire after completing the internship and at the end of the study contract.

Evaluations are considered when improving the study programme, making changes, and organising its implementation. They are also discussed in meetings with the Student Union representatives, who independently monitor the study process and the evaluations that take place at the end of each semester.

Regarding other stakeholders, the university invites employers, practitioners, and even alumni to organise practical scientific conferences and lectures on individual topics or outgoing lectures for students and final theses for review. Some discussions occur in these contacts, and the goal is to match the needs of the study programmes and the labour market. This was confirmed in the alumni and social stakeholders meeting.

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

In SER, it is possible to understand that KU engages in a number of internal research initiatives with the objective of assessing a range of aspects of the quality of its academic and administrative operations. These include the evaluation of course content and teaching quality (by students), KU activities (by graduates), and practical training (by students). The implementation of study programmes is assessed by administrative staff and faculty members, while graduates evaluate the efficiency of the study process. Additional research is conducted on an ad hoc basis as required.

The research findings are disseminated to relevant stakeholders, incorporated into departmental reports, and subjected to annual analysis per the Quality Management System. The data is made available to the academic community and is disseminated via the KU website, Facebook page, and other promotional channels. This was a previous recommendation that was fulfilled.

As evidenced in the SER, the aggregated findings from the routine surveys are presented to relevant stakeholders and incorporated into the departmental reports. The annual indicators provided in the relevant descriptions of processes are collated and subjected to analysis. All members of the academic community are invited to participate.

The website serves as the leading platform for publicly sharing information, including admissions, study program descriptions, legal acts, and several activities. However, as analysed in the visit meeting, the information in the website regarding the learning outcomes, was not coherent with the one described in SER.

Mechanisms for Ongoing Feedback from Alumni and Employers: Feedback mechanisms from alumni and employers appear limited, primarily consisting of stakeholder involvement in study committees. This lacks the rigor of structured, systematic feedback channels (e.g., annual employer satisfaction surveys or alumni outcome tracking) that ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and continuously aligned with job market expectations.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

There are defined systems for collecting satisfaction information from the university. During the visit meeting, it was possible to comprehend that teachers and students knew the procedures necessary to use and that they discussed the assessment surveys. This proximity allows problems to be overcome without using the quality assurance system, but it may also limit students' opinions and behaviour. Even though the satisfaction rate is around 85% (stated in SER), it was possible to assess during the site visit that students did not receive feedback from that assessment and consequent changes. Once again, the informal and close relationship between students and lecturers does not help to effectively implement this system of collecting and giving feedback on data analysis.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

Quality management is generalised and centralised, but the university has a well-defined quality assurance system. The distribution of programme implementation, supervision, and decision-making responsibilities is clearly delineated. Furthermore, information about programme implementation is periodically collected and analysed. The findings of internal and external evaluations of the programme are effectively used to enhance the marketing study programme, and the relevant stakeholders are engaged in the evaluation and improvement processes of the programme.

The dissemination of pertinent information has improved using different communication channels, but it was found that the website information is not coherent with the information stated in SER. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse and decide the correct information and update it on the site or in the document.

AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. There is an effective internal quality assurance system where everyone understands their roles
2. There is evidence of the stakeholder's contribution to the study programme

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. The proximity of teachers and students is comprehensive but limits the anonymity of the students' opinions. Automation in collecting satisfaction surveys is imperative.
2. Ensure the SER/website information is correct and update it as necessary.

V. SUMMARY

The Marketing Study Program (SP) at Klaipėda University is well-structured, aligning with industry and academic standards and reflecting stakeholder engagement. However, the program faces challenges in addressing evolving market demands and ensuring compliance with Lithuanian Higher Education recommendations for remote learning. The current alignment of teaching methods, assessment strategies, and final thesis quality with specified learning outcomes is insufficient, raising concerns about practical application and overall program efficacy. Mechanisms for systematic feedback and elective course customisation also need significant enhancement.

Research within the program is constrained by structural factors, with a limited focus on marketing-related topics. It is vital to incorporate innovative resources, define strategic research guidelines, and enhance the alignment between curriculum content and the latest marketing developments. Establishing a dedicated Marketing Department and improving the scientific quality of final papers would further strengthen research and program relevance.

While the program provides robust academic, social, and financial support, promoting international mobility remains critical, especially given the low participation rates. Updating the coherence of information on the university website, including admission and bridging course details, is necessary to enhance accessibility and attract competitive applicants.

The teaching and learning process employs diverse methods to achieve learning outcomes. Still, it needs improvement in integrating interactive e-learning tools, elective course selection, and developing personal and social competencies. Monitoring systems for student progress and policies on academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are effective but would benefit from enhanced feedback mechanisms and anonymised satisfaction surveys.

Teacher shortages and high workloads impede research output and program modernisation. Recruiting additional faculty and fostering international mobility for staff are essential steps. Furthermore, the university's strategic alliance within the Conexus network supports internationalisation efforts but requires expansion beyond its current scope.

The infrastructure at Klaipėda University is modern and accessible, catering to diverse student needs. However, acquiring and integrating new learning technologies, such as advanced software and marketing tools, is crucial to improving teaching and research quality.

Finally, quality assurance systems at the university are centralised and effective, incorporating feedback from internal and external evaluations to refine the program. Strengthening the automation of feedback collection and ensuring consistent communication across all channels will enhance the overall governance and operational efficiency of the Marketing Study Program.

The expert's team appreciates the opportunity to discuss any doubts or questions that arise after reading the Self-evaluation report. It was important to understand the KU and master the marketing situation and its implications.