STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BUSINESS FIELD OF STUDY

Utenos kolegija

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. REVIEW PANEL

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

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: **Prof. Dr. Hab. Joanna Ejdy**s - Dean of Faculty Engineering Management, Bialystok University of Technology, Poland
2. Academic member: **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vitor Lélio da Silva Braga**. Head of the Department of Business Sciences, Director of the Master's Programme in International Management, Porto Polytechnic (*Instituto Politécnico do Porto – IPP*), Portugal;
3. Social partner representative: **Edmund Lisovski,** Technology Director at *Altas Auto, UAB*, Lithuania;
4. Student representative: **Tomas Vitkauskas**, Graduate of the Bachelor's Programme in *Sports Management* at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences, Graduate of the Master's Programme in*Strategic Management of Organisations* at Vytautas Magnus University, and current first-year student of the*Pedagogy* Programme at Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania.

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 9th December 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.

There was a need for translation during the meeting

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

Utenos Kolegija / Utena Higher Education Institution (hereafter – "Utena HEI") (website: https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/) was founded in 2000 through the restructuring of two institutions: the Utena Medical School of Advanced Vocational Education and Training and the Utena Business School of Advanced Vocational Education and Training. Following the approval of its Statute by Resolution No. 948 of 18 July 2012 issued by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Utena HEI acquired the status of a public legal entity. It is the only higher education institution in the Eastern Aukštaitija region of Lithuania that provides college-level studies with a strong focus on practical professional skills. Utena HEI is overseen by a single executive authority - the Rector - along with two collegiate bodies: the Board and the Academic Board. Its organisational structure includes two principal academic units responsible for studies and research: the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Business and Technology, which are further divided into five academic departments.

Overview of the study field

Utena HEI delivers first-cycle (undergraduate) study programmes. As of 1 January 2025, it has over 1,763 students studying in both full-time and part-time modes. The institution currently offers 18 study programmes across 16 different fields. The Faculty of Business and Technology consists of three departments: Engineering and Technology, Business and Public Management, and Law — collectively responsible for the implementation of 11 study programmes.

The Transport and Logistics Business (TLB) study programme (state code 6531LX074) was approved in 2021. Since 2022, the curriculum has been adjusted annually in line with the recommendations of international experts.

Previous external evaluations

In 2022, the Transport and Logistics Business (TLB) study programme underwent external evaluation by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, resulting in a three-year accreditation (Order No. SV6-1, dated 17 January 2023). Based on the recommendations from this evaluation, the programme was revised and improved in 2023. Selected recommendations from the previous evaluation include:

- Learning outcomes could include a more varied theory and practical tools application scenarios, problem based and/or case-based approach relevant to specific business situations.
- International character of the study programmes could be highlighted with the use of a more forward looking approach addressing future knowledge and skills.
- Weak evidence of links between the content of studies and the latest development of science and technology based on the subject content.

Documents and information used in the review

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

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

Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

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

- *sample exams for the course Management of Transport Expedition Activities;*
- *Methodological Requirements for Preparing Independent Writing Assignments and Final Theses;*
- *Utena Higher Education Institution Optional Subjects;*
- *syllabi for selected courses, including Economics of Transport and Logistic Enterprises, Information Systems in Transport, and Management of Transport Expedition Activities.*

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	**Transport and Logistics Business**
State code	6531LX074
Type of study (college/university)	First-cycle higher college studies
Study cycle	First
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)
Workload in ECTS	180
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Professional Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Not lower than secondary education, at least one state maturity exam passed
First registration date	2021
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 **Business** field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points[1*]
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	3
	Total:	24

1*

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

IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

Transport and Logistics Business study programme (TLB) aims and learning outcomes conforms to the needs of society and the labour market, while reflecting transport and logistics' trends.

The labour demand in the transport and logistics sector is supported by both qualitative and quantitative evidence. The programme's focus is closely aligned with the regional need for specialists and the employment prospects within the Utena area. Utena College prepares future managers for public and freight transport providers, logistics and forwarding enterprises, distribution centres, and organisations engaged in warehousing operations.

When presenting the societal needs that justify the study programme and its learning outcomes, Utena HEI refers to key European Commission documents (e.g., the *European Transport Survey* (2024)), highlighting the significant contribution of the transport sector to Lithuania's GDP. It also cites data from the *Employment Opportunities Barometer in Lithuania (2023–2024)* and labour market statistics related to job offers. An important source of information on societal and labour market needs is the ongoing cooperation with local enterprises, based on signed partnership agreements and regular meetings.

The societal needs at the local, national, and international levels regarding the study field and the learning outcomes have been comprehensively justified.

During the visit, the representatives indicated that stakeholders strongly emphasize the following scope of competencies and skills: the development of innovativeness, an understanding of sustainable development, an innovative approach to problem-solving, and the ability to conduct research at a basic level. During the visit, the company representatives pointed to the strong practical competencies developed through the study program.

Stakeholders (students and business representatives) have a real influence on the shape of the curriculum. During the visit, the teachers indicated that students requested an extended coverage of WMS topics, and these elements were subsequently incorporated. However, the teacher was not able to specify which WMS software is being used. Employers emphasized the need to further strengthen students' data analysis skills. To address this, students conduct such analyses using Tableau software.

During the visit, the teachers provided examples of final thesis topics commissioned by warehouse companies, as well as case studies assigned to students (e.g., sustainable consumption). This information was also confirmed by company representatives who proposed topics for final theses.

Social partners also have a real influence on changes to the study program. During the visit, the teacher stated that in meetings with social partners, they suggested introducing a Supply Chain course, which was subsequently implemented. Representatives of the social partner (HERMES INVESTMENT HOLDING, UAB) also indicated that their suggestion regarding the inclusion of a specific IT tool in the curriculum was supported and subsequently integrated into the study program.

Representatives of the companies (HERMES INVESTMENT HOLDING, UAB; Švyturys–Utenos Alus from the Carlsberg Group) confirmed that they regularly organize meetings with students, during which they present their company and the field of transport and logistics. These meetings also

include discussions with students, allowing them to gain insights into real business operations and to engage directly with industry professionals.
Logistics Business study programme (TLB) aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the needs of society and/or the labour market.

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

The main aim of the TLBSP is to "train a specialist who can apply in their professional activity the managerial, technological and informational processes of transport business development characteristic of the modern economy, and who possess the general abilities that enable them to adapt to the changing conditions of the business environment and the requirements of the labour market, as well as to cultivate a wide range of creative and critical thinking, and to develop a positive attitude to lifelong learning for professional and personal development" (SER, p. 7).
According to the information provided on the Utena HEI website (Utenos kolegija | Mission and vision): The **mission** of Utena Higher Education Institution (HEI) is to train professionals with higher college education, through applied research, lifelong learning and value creation for the region and the country. The aim and intended learning outcomes of the TLBSP are closely related to the HEI's mission.
The **vision** of Utena HEI is to be an innovative, nationally, and internationally recognised higher education institution that meets the expectations of society, based on high quality, responsible social partnership, the development of a sustainable environment for the region and the country, and the promotion of democratic values and tolerance. In the context of aligning the program objectives with the university's vision, it would be advisable to include aspects related to internationalization in the objectives of the TLB program, especially considering that Utena Higher Education Institution undertakes various activities aimed at internationalization.
The internationalization dimension of Utena HEI is reflected in its participation in Erasmus cooperation, including International Week and international conferences attended by foreign partners and the participation of visiting professors in the curriculum. The institution aims to become a member of the Erasmus Mobility Network and has previously offered Erasmus mobility opportunities for students and teachers as well. Utena HEI has also hosted a visiting professor from Ghent University who delivered a lecture in the TLB program. Furthermore, partnerships have been established with universities in Poland, Riga, and Valencia, leading to joint activities such as collaborative publications.
Logistics Business study programme (TLB) aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the HEI's mission, goals, and strategy.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

The aims and learning outcomes of the Logistics Business study programme (TLB) are aligned with the higher education institution's mission, goals, and strategy. However, to strengthen the alignment of the programme objectives with the university's vision, it would be advisable to explicitly incorporate elements related to internationalization into the TLB programme aims, particularly given that Utena Higher Education Institution undertakes a range of activities aimed at internationalization.

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The structure of the TLBSP is grounded in Lithuania's higher education legislation and the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, which aligns with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning, as well as with the first-cycle qualification standards of the European Higher Education Area. TLBSP study program demonstrates compliance in terms of level to the relevant Cycle Descriptor approved by the Minister of Education, Sports, and Science available.
The program spans three years and comprises 180 academic credits, equal to 4,800 academic hours, with each semester carrying 30 credits. The program meets the legal requirements, as outlined in Table 1.
Table 1. Study Programme's TLBSP compliance to general requirements for first cycle study programmes

Category	Required credit ranges	Transport and Logistics Business
Total programme workload	180 ECTS	180 ECTS
Credits for the study field[2]	No less than 120 ECTS	157 ECTS
Credits for practice based learning	No less than a third of the programme	79 ECTS (44%) full-time 66 ECTS (37%) part-time
Internship, placement, or other practical training	No less than 30 ECTS	36 ECTS
Credits for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9 ECTS
Contact hours/onsite contact hours	No less than 20% of total hours/no less than 10% of total hours	1360 hours (26,3%)
Independent student work	No less than 30% of total hours	51% of total hours

Throughout the program, students complete several professional practices (internships) – Business Communication Practices (sem. I), Entrepreneurship Development Practice (sem. II), Professional Skill Development Practice (sem. IV), Transport Management System Practice (sem. V) and Final Internship (sem. VI). A total of 36 ECTS credits have been assigned to the internships. Internships are an important source of practical knowledge and skills, as emphasized by both students and external stakeholders. During the visit, students provided examples of practical skills they have acquired during their studies. They mentioned the ability to analyze vehicle load capacity, as well as proficiency in using Microsoft Office and SPSS for analyzing survey research results.
The alignment of the field study programme's aims, intended learning outcomes, curriculum structure, and subjects/modules with the relevant study type and cycle, as well as academic and/or professional requirements, is demonstrated, and the programme's duration is sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

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

The main aim of the TLBSP is to "train a specialist who can apply in their professional activity the

[2] Includes internship and final thesis (project)

managerial, technological and informational processes of transport business development characteristic of the modern economy, and who possess the general abilities that enable them to adapt to the changing conditions of the business environment and the requirements of the labour market, as well as to cultivate a wide range of creative and critical thinking, and to develop a positive attitude to lifelong learning for professional and personal development" (SER, p. 7). In Annex No. 2 main objective of the TLBSP is defined a little bit in a different way of meaning.

The objective of the TLBSP study programme is appropriate; however, it may be worth considering further clarification of what is meant by the "modern economy" in the context of transport and logistics, and referring to sustainable and smart mobility as an element of the European Green Deal strategy. Likewise, it could be beneficial to specify more clearly that the study programme responds to labour market needs at the local, national, and international levels.

The aim and learning outcomes of the TLBSP are consistent with the provisions of the qualification description for level 6 of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework. The learning outcomes of the TLBSP are linked and aligned with the type, field, and cycle of study, taking into account the SFBS Descriptor approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, order No V-1664 of 14 September 2021.

With regard to the formulated conclusions from the previous evaluation, it should be noted that:

- The learning outcomes are coherent and comprehensive, indicating the knowledge, research skills, special abilities, social skills and personal abilities that graduates of the programme will acquire.
- Overall, the learning outcomes (15 in total) have been formulated correctly. The learning outcomes relate to global trends concerning sustainable development, digitalisation and circular economy.
- Only LO 3.5 "To create optimal freight and passenger transportation routes, applying the concept of sustainability, green course requirements, and modern transport and logistics management programs and system - is very detailed and should rather refer to a specific course than to the entire programme.

The programme's learning outcomes are aligned with its profile and correspond to the forward-looking responsibilities of transport and logistics professionals. They emphasise managerial (e.g. LO 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4), technological (e.g. LO 4.3), and informational competencies (e.g. LO 1.2, LO 2.1., LO 5.3) essential for contemporary business practices and for supporting the growth of the transport and logistics sector. Also important social competences (LO 51, 5.2) are reflected in learning outcomes.

Some learning outcomes should be more specifically aligned with the study programme related to transport and logistics. For example, LO 4.1. *To critically assess social phenomena and communicate fluently and persuasively in Lithuanian and foreign languages, both orally and in writing, in a professional and intercultural Environment* – does not reflect the transport or logistics issues.

One of the learning outcome was formulated: 4.3. To apply modern digital technologies, including the capabilities of artificial intelligence, to solve technological, managerial and social problems. This learning outcome has been assigned to the courses Psychology and Sociology. During the visit, the teacher responsible for the subject explained that he uses AI tools to stimulate students' creativity during classes.

The TLB study programme employs a coherent alignment between subject learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, and assessment practices, as documented in the subject descriptors. A wide range of instructional methods is used to support knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, and practical problem-solving skills, tailored to students' needs and learning characteristics. Assessment methods are appropriately selected to evaluate the intended learning outcomes, ensuring that students can systematically understand and effectively apply the acquired knowledge and competences in professional contexts.

During the visit, students provided examples of innovative teaching methods, such as case studies and games. Teachers assess critical thinking and argumentation skills through a variety of interactive and problem-based methods. These include debates, where students must defend their viewpoints with evidence, and problem-based discussions that require them to analyze real logistics challenges and propose justified solutions.

To ensure the achievement of learning outcomes by applying innovative teaching methods the staff have participated in various professional development activities aimed at enhancing both their didactic and subject-related competences. These include involvement in the DigiTech Project and a range of training sessions on Moodle and its new functionalities. They also attended courses on topics such as “100 Threats to Democracy,” AI in didactics and science, as well as methodology-focused and discipline-specific training. In addition, new employees are introduced to internal training on how to use institutional models and tools, and staff have completed courses related to academic ethics.

With reference to the first-cycle learning outcome descriptors, students of the TLB program gain practical knowledge grounded in the newest scientific evidence. During the visit teachers gave some examples. A doctor of law teaches students how to prepare and analyze practical contracts related to cargo operations, while a doctor of social sciences develops students’ entrepreneurial competences and their understanding of how businesses operate within global networks. Courses taught by sociologists strengthen research skills, enabling students to collect and interpret data relevant to logistics processes. In marketing and distribution modules, students learn how product distribution systems function and explore the impact of emerging vehicle technologies on the automotive and logistics industries, including the ability to propose innovative solutions. Additionally, students develop professional English vocabulary specific to transport and logistics. Employers confirmed that students have good data analysis skills.

The teaching methods are aligned with the intended learning outcomes. For example, to develop critical thinking and argumentation skills, teachers use various interactive learning activities.During the study visit teachers gave a lot of examples such as: students prepare and deliver presentations followed by discussions where they must justify their viewpoints. Teachers also conduct short, practice-oriented debates based on real problems. In addition, the teacher uses videos and asks targeted analytical questions to stimulate critical reflection. Students also work in groups to analyze scientific articles related to marketing and are required to draw evidence-based conclusions from the content, which helps them develop both critical reasoning and argumentation skills.

The content of the study subjects integrates the results of applied scientific research in several ways. During the visit teachers gave a lot of examples. Teaching Transport Terminal topics, teachers incorporate not only their own research findings but also research from other sources related to internal logistics and sustainability. Students are introduced to studies on vehicle energy efficiency, including testing and evaluating energy systems for selected types of vehicles. Topics related to sustainable development are also applied in practice, as students design and propose innovative logistics solutions that respond to current environmental challenges.

Considering the global trend toward sustainable development, the teachers provided examples during the visit of how these topics are integrated into the curriculum. For instance, in the Supply Chain Management course, sustainability and risk management are embedded in the learning content. Students complete a final project that includes a risk analysis in which they also review sustainability reports and assess the company’s alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Programme aims, learning outcomes, and teaching/learning and assessment methods are well described and logically linked. The teaching and assessment methods used confirm the effectiveness of the programme in enabling students to acquire both theoretical knowledge (based on the latest trends and research findings) and practical competences.

1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

TLBSP full-time studies last 3 years, part-time studies last 4 years. Students must collect 30 compulsory credits during the semester. The learning outcomes of the TLB study programme, mapped to the categories of (1) Knowledge and Its Application, (2) Research Skills, (3) Special Skills, (4) Social Skills, and (5) Personal Skills, have been formulated in a clear and logically structured manner.
The individual courses/subjects are arranged logically across the semesters. In the first year, students acquire fundamental knowledge in sociology, applied mathematics, micro and macroeconomics, fundamentals of transport Technics, while in the following semesters the course content becomes more specialised.
An interesting solution is linking the length of the examination session to the number of exams taken by students in a given semester.
Taking into account the definition given by Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) - Logistics is the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the efficient and effective flow and storage of goods, services, and related information from the point of origin to the point of consumption in order to meet customer requirements, it can be observed that the study programme, at the level of the curriculum structure, is strongly oriented towards transport, while addressing other logistics processes only to a limited extent, such as warehousing and packaging, distribution, reverse logistics or production logistics. The names of these processes are not reflected in the titles of the courses. During the meeting with students, they pointed out warehousing as another logistics process, but for example, they did not mention distribution, reverse logistics, green logistics, or production logistics. The study program should more extensively address the other logistics processes.
An important component of the programme is the practices, carried out in almost every semester, which ensures continuous access to practical experience. Students acquire practical skills during internships carried out either at the HEI or in enterprises. During the site visit, students confirmed that the internships carried out at Utena HEI are valuable and provide them with practical knowledge. They gave the example of becoming familiar with the documentation used in transport companies during Internship at HEI. They also noted that during university-based internships they learn document management systems, and later, when they go to external company placements, they already know how to use these systems. The internship in the final semester also provides students with an opportunity for potential employment.

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

The possibilities of individualisation of studies are regulated by the Study Regulations of Utena HEI. Students at Utena HEI may individualise their studies by:

- following an individual study plan adapted to their needs, including a customised sequence of modules and examination schedule;
- using an individual study timetable, especially when extending the session period or taking assessments earlier than scheduled;
- studying according to an individual study programme that specifies compulsory and elective subjects for one semester or up to two years;
- choosing distance learning for selected study components.

The Utena HEIoffers a wide range of elective courses for students across various fields of study. Students can choose courses and work together with peers from other programmes.

Personalisation of learning is also reflected in students' ability to select case studies for discussion during classes. For example, in the course Sustainable Consumption, representatives of a transport company present a real-life problem, and students work on developing and proposing solutions.
Teachers also enable students to complete assessments and sit examinations individually, depending on their needs. Students confirmed that they make use of these flexible arrangements, and faculty leadership is responsive and flexible with regard to examination dates.
Utena HEI also offers hybrid learning, mainly for students working outside the country. From the students' perspective, it is also more advantageous to conduct classes online, as students gain access to lecturers from other institutions. For them, the mode of study is less important than the knowledge students acquire.

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

The topics of the final theses are generally consistent with the study field. Three randomly selected final theses were evaluated in details: Arijus Maniušis: UAB ,,Rokiškio pienas" improvement of fresh dairy product warehouse operations; Deividas Dijokas, Analysis of the organizational commitment of the employees of the transport company "UAB IMGROTA" and Sigitas Balčius, Analysis and forecast of the business development potential of the Transport Company Vežu.
The review of the theses made it possible to identify areas for improvement. In some works, the description of sampling and interviews is limited, and the number of interviewees as well as the selection criteria should be clarified. In addition, data collection and analysis methods could be presented more rigorously, for example by explaining how interview responses were coded or by using a structured observation sheet.
At the same time, the reviewed theses demonstrate several strengths. The research objectives align well with the Transport and Logistics study programme, and the studies are applied and practical, addressing real problems and providing value to the companies under analysis.
During the visit, the teachers and social partners provided examples of final thesis topics commissioned by warehouse companies, as well as case studies assigned to students (e.g., sustainable consumption). A representative of the company Hermes indicated that the results of one of the final theses, concerning route optimization, were very useful for their company.
The procedures related to thesis preparation, the selection of topics and supervisors, and the thesis defence are appropriate and clearly defined. The roles and responsibilities of the individual participants in the process (committee members, teachers) are clearly and precisely defined.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The study programme is characterized by strong cooperation with social partners, whose genuine input has a tangible influence on its content and development. The curriculum incorporates the latest scientific and industry advancements in transport and logistics, particularly in areas such as digitalisation, the green economy, and sustainable development, while also drawing on the institution's own research conducted by academic staff. A key strength of the programme is its clear emphasis on developing practical skills that are highly valued by employers. These strengths are supported by appropriate and effective teaching and assessment methods that enable reliable verification of the achievement of the programme's learning outcomes.

AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and

		substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	shortcomings to be eliminated	without any shortcomings	internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

1. A strong linkage of the education programme, on the one hand, with the expectations of the socio-economic environment and, on the other hand, with the latest knowledge and research findings in the fields of transport and logistics.
2. The curriculum has a strong practical orientation, underpinned by close cooperation with companies.
3. Active and continuously developing international cooperation forms the basis for improving the curriculum, advancing research, and creating development opportunities for students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. The study program should more extensively address the other (than transport) logistics processes.
2. It is advisable to improve the research methodology on which final theses are based.

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

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

Utena HEI maintains a systematic approach to Applied Scientific Research and Experimental Development, based on the Utena HEI Strategic Activity Plan for 2022-2024 and the scientific research Strengthening Strategy for 2024-2029. The Academic Board is responsible for defining the direction and specific topics of this applied research.
The main scientific thematic focus for the business studies field is Business Environment Research. This research explores business creation, innovative enterprise development, competitiveness, and the impact of economic factors on business.
Indicators show a positive trend in scientific output. The weighted sum of Utena HEI points, based on the formal assessment of research works by the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL), has steadily increased from 29.6 in 2020 to 59.28 in 2022, reaching 91.72 in 2023. This progress allows Utena HEI to obtain incentive funds for the development of scientific activities.
During the ongoing assessment period (2023 to 2025), SFBS faculty published 38 scientific articles (59 papers when papers with students are included) and delivered 25 presentations at various scientific conferences. Utena HEI also publishes its electronic journal, "Įžvalgos/Insights," twice a year, which is indexed in Copernicus database.

Nonetheless, the institution’s research would benefit from a higher predominance of papers published in high-ranked journals, indexed in Web of Science and through the participation in high level international conferences. This could strengthen their international network of collaborations for joint research.
Teachers' research skills are strengthened through ongoing professional development. Eight teachers took part in 40 hours training courses under the project "Implementing the European Research Area Priorities at Utena HEI," covering topics like research ethics, commercialization, and the preparation of high-quality international publications. Additionally, internal seminars are regularly held, such as sessions on "Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis" (January 2023) and "Making Data Speak" (March/April 2025), led by experienced staff. Faculty also participate in external programs, for instance, the Erasmus + blended intensive program "From Networking to Grant Concept Development" in Tallinn (November 2024), aimed at enhancing skills in developing HORIZON project proposals.

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

The curriculum is designed to ensure students develop practical skills using modern technologies and innovative business models, directly responding to the evolving environment of the transport and logistics industry.
The curriculum includes modern scientific research findings on data collection technologies, information systems, and networking principles. In response to external evaluation recommendations, the curriculum was adjusted to incorporate principles related to sustainability, the Green Deal, digitalization, and the circular economy into various learning outcomes. Importantly, a new learning outcome (4.3) was explicitly created, requiring students to use modern digital technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), to address technological, managerial, and social challenges. Students are introduced to AI-based solutions for optimizing route planning, automating warehouse management, and enhancing customer service efficiency.
Social partners actively participate in updating the curriculum by providing relevant sector information and sharing practical insights into implemented technologies. Company representatives give lectures to students, highlighting real-world business practices and the latest technological solutions. Examples include speakers from "Equinox Europe," "Nosted &," and the "Teltonika Networks B2B Academy." Students also participate in visits to innovative companies such as the Logistics Department of "Švyturys-Utenos Alus," "Teltonika," and "Hermes Asset Management," giving them the opportunity to observe organizational processes and modern technologies in real-world settings. The partnership with "Hermes Asset Management" ensures students are regularly invited to observe organizational processes.

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

Student engagement in research is designed in line with applied science, aligning with the nature of a first-cycle college study programme, which emphasizes practical activities.
Students conduct applied research through the preparation of their final theses. These theses are required to address ‘real world’ problems of regional and national transport and logistics companies. Topics frequently analysed include transport management systems, innovation implementation and evaluation, competitive environment assessment, and operational efficiency. A key methodological requirement introduced is the compulsory use of foreign sources in these final theses. In the 2023–2024 academic year, all 7 defended final theses addressed real problems faced by regional or national companies/institutions.

Students are provided with opportunities to publicly present their applied research results at conferences such as The biennial international scientific-practical conference or The international scientific and practical conference.
Students also strengthen their competence by participating in international academic activities, such as Erasmus+ blended intensive programs (BIPs) focusing on themes like sustainable consumption and the application of AI in business and technology.
High-achieving students actively involved in scientific and applied activities are recognized and supported with incentive scholarships. For example, a scholarship of 500 EUR was established by "Hermes Asset Management," UAB, for a SFBS student who demonstrated strong achievements and wrote the best final thesis.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

Utena HEI demonstrates a structured and steadily improving approach to applied research, supported by strategic plans and active faculty development. Research output indicators show significant growth, enabling access to incentive funding and enhancing institutional visibility through publications and conferences. The curriculum effectively integrates modern scientific developments, including AI, sustainability, and digitalization, ensuring relevance to industry needs. Student engagement in research aligns with practical, real-world challenges, supported by partnerships and international programs. Overall, Utena HEI maintains a sufficient level of research quality, with clear progress toward internationalization and innovation, positioning itself as a competitive and practice-oriented institution.

AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. The institution follows a clear, long-term strategy for applied research and experimental development, supported by measurable progress in research output and faculty training.
2. The curriculum effectively incorporates modern technologies, sustainability principles, and AI applications, ensuring strong alignment with industry trends and future skills.
3. Students are consistently involved in real-world research projects, present findings at conferences, and benefit from international programs and merit-based scholarships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Utena HEI may increase their international publications profile, namely by publishing in journals indexed in Web of Science, and to improve their network through the participation in international conferences.

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 is organised through the national admission system and aligned with national requirements. The SER (as provided in the evidence package) presents programme-level admission demand and intake data. First-priority demand is stable (34 in 2023 and 35 in 2024), while the number of admitted entrants decreased (from 21 in 2023 to 17 in 2024). The SER reports competitive score statistics and indicates an increase in the mean competitive score from 4.70 (2023) to 6.73 (2024), however, the reported minimum and maximum values for 2024 appear internally inconsistent (minimum higher than maximum) and require clarification to ensure data reliability.
The SER provides overall student numbers in the programme: 66 (2022–2023), 86 (2023–2024), and 83 (2024–2025), indicating growth and subsequent stabilisation. The SER reports dropout as a monitoring indicator, with an average dropout level of 7.3% for the analysed period, below the strategic threshold of 11%. The SER does not clearly disaggregate these overall programme student numbers by funding type (state-funded versus state non-funded), and therefore the breakdown of 66/86/83 by SF and SNF is not explicit in the SER and remains unclear.
During the site visit, interviewed students stated that pre-admission information was clear and not misleading, they also noted that word-of-mouth plays a role in applicant information.

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

The SER (as provided in the evidence package) describes procedures for recognising prior learning/credits and the recognition of study results, including mobility-related recognition. Programme-level evidence indicates that credit transfer is used in practice, with an increasing number of requests over the period (1 case in 2022–2023; 2 cases in 2023–2024, 4 cases in 2024–2025), with corresponding transferred credits reported.
During the site visit, students confirmed that recognition of prior learning/credits (RPL) is understood and applied in practice (“credits are recognised”).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

The admissions framework is procedurally adequate and transparent (national admission, rule-based procedures, and programme-level statistics presented in the SER as provided). Stable first-priority demand indicates consistent programme visibility, however, the reduction in admitted entrants in 2024 (21 → 17) despite stable first-choice demand should be analysed internally and explained (e.g., applicant qualification profile, yield, competition for places, or other factors), because it affects programme planning and sustainability.

A material weakness is the reliability of reported admissions statistics: the internally inconsistent 2024 minimum/maximum competitive-score values undermine confidence in the interpretation of entry preparedness trends and should be corrected/validated.
Site-visit evidence supports the conclusion that pre-admission information is generally perceived as clear and accurate by interviewed students, which is positive for transparency and expectation-

setting. Recognition procedures appear established and used (credit-transfer cases reported in the SER; RPL acknowledged by students during the visit). Nevertheless, evidence remains limited on the breadth/typology of recognition (e.g., foreign qualifications, RPL based on work experience, mobility-period recognition) and on monitoring of outcomes, which would be needed to fully demonstrate the effectiveness of recognition opportunities beyond individual cases.

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

During the site visit, students stated that information about mobility opportunities is sufficient and communicated via Moodle, teachers and flyers. The SER (as provided in the evidence package) describes a broad Erasmus+ framework (approximately 80 cooperation agreements). Mobility participation evidenced in the SER is limited in scale: within the last three years, one outgoing and one incoming mobility occurred in the form of internship - one outgoing student went for an internship to Latvia, and one incoming student arrived for an internship from Poland, the SER also refers to short-term international formats (e.g., intensive training programme / BIP-type activity).
Senior management noted that the SER currently lacks a clear internal analysis of the low mobility participation and, in response, referred to organising blended intensive programmes (one-week format).

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

The SER (as provided in the evidence package) describes a multi-dimensional support system. Documented financial support includes increasing participation in incentive scholarships (5 students in 2022–2023; 12 in 2023–2024; 24 in 2024–2025) and one-time scholarships (2 students in 2022–2023 and 2 in 2023–2024). Social support is evidenced through support via the Department of Disabled Persons Affairs (1 student in 2023–2024 and 1 student in 2024–2025). Psychological counselling is described as available through an institutional arrangement. Accommodation support is available through student residences, supported by internal regulations, and student representation mechanisms are in place.
During the site visit, students confirmed that the programme is flexible for working students (including the possibility to request individual arrangements) and that they are aware of available support and financial assistance options.

3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

The SER (as provided in the evidence package) describes structured counselling and information provision for applicants and enrolled students, including adaptation support and access to core study information systems (AIS and Moodle) and consultation arrangements. The SER links changes introduced after previous evaluation to improved internal processes (e.g., remote study organisation / exam-session model and individualisation measures such as individual assessment schedules and additional consultations).
During the site visit, students reiterated that key information is accessible and clear through the channels used in practice (Moodle and communication by staff).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

The support system is broad and structured (financial, social, psychological and academic/counselling elements are described in the SER as provided), and site visit evidence confirms that flexibility measures for working students function in practice and that students are aware of available support. This supports the conclusion that the support environment is conducive to learning progress and to accommodating diverse student profiles.
International mobility is the main weakness in this aim. While the institutional framework appears extensive (agreement network) and information provision is confirmed by students and staff, the demonstrated programme-level participation is very low (isolated cases over three years) and senior management acknowledged that a documented internal barrier analysis is still not clearly presented in the SER. The reliance on short-term formats (e.g., one-week blended intensive programmes) shows an attempt to create feasible internationalisation opportunities, but does not substitute for a systematic analysis of why longer mobility is low and for targeted measures with measurable objectives.

AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. Site visit evidence confirms that students perceive pre-admission information as clear and accurate, supporting transparency and expectation-setting.
2. The support system is multi-dimensional and includes practical flexibility for working students, which students confirm is functioning in practice.
3. Students report that information on mobility opportunities is accessible through the channels they use (Moodle, teachers, flyers), indicating functioning information dissemination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Strengthen the reliability and strategic use of admissions evidence by correcting/validating inconsistent 2024 competitive-score statistics and providing a documented internal analysis explaining the 2024 decrease in admitted entrants (21 → 17) despite stable first-priority demand.
2. Strengthen implementation and evidence of international mobility by producing a documented programme-level analysis of barriers (internal reasons), consolidating mobility statistics (incoming/outgoing; study vs traineeship; short vs long mobility), and implementing targeted measures with annual monitoring of participation and outcomes.

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 BFS study programme is conducted in full-time and part-time modes. Education completed in different forms of study is equivalent. The total number of credits for college BFS studies is 180, of which 157 are allocated to field studies. The total duration of the programme is 4800 hours. 36 credits are allocated for internships and 9 credits for the final thesis. Full-time studies: 3 years (6 semesters) 60 credits per year; part-time studies: 4 years (8 semesters); 45 credits per year.

Full-time and part-time studies are offered in two training sessions per semester. Part-time students can study independently and in consultation with teachers between sessions. During sessions, there are lectures, practicals, internships, and assessments. Most activities are conducted remotely via the VLE Moodle.

The Utena HEI allows part-time students to switch between lecture and independent study modes. This option is mentioned on the college website and addresses students who work, live, or for other reasons cannot attend Utena HEI regularly.

The study materials for the subjects are published, and the Moodle VLE environment supports the teaching and learning process. Some lectures can take place online: video lectures are delivered, interactive consultations are conducted, group and individual work is completed virtually, and learners can submit their independent work via video conferencing.

The Electronic Learning Centre (ELC) manages the digitisation and accessibility of study information, documents used in the study process, and study materials for Utena HEI students, teachers, and entitled (responsible) employees. Teachers design electronic study courses (e-study courses) for their subjects, and include study subject requirements, study materials, self-discipline, student activities, counselling, and interpersonal communication tools. All prepared e-study courses are fully adapted for students' self-study and individual subject studies.

To achieve specific learning outcomes, the Utena HEI uses both traditional teaching/learning methods and non-traditional lectures. Distance learning via VLE Moodle environment is also used for full-time students, in accordance with legal limits.

The General Requirements for the Conduct of Studies stipulate that contact work (including distance learning) must account for at least 20% of the study time in undergraduate college programmes. Direct contact work between lecturers and students (not remote work) must account for at least 10% of total study time, and students' independent work must account for at least 30%.

Traditional teaching methods, such as lectures, seminars, discussions, group work, project work, laboratory work, exercises, tutorials, questionnaires, tests, consultations, and independent work defences, have been supplemented by modern methods, including situation analysis, brainstorming, and interviews.

Non-traditional lectures outside the Utena HEI, visits to companies (logistics, transport logistics, and other organisations). Guest speakers are also invited to share their practical experience. The mentioned specific methods are listed in (TLBSP) subject descriptions.

The expert panel confirms that non-traditional lectures are held in the TL study programme. Utena HEI is investing in digitalization through the VLE Moodle environment to improve communication between teachers and students, which positively affects learning outcomes.

Students who have obtained a Professional Bachelor's Degree may continue their studies in Lithuania or at foreign higher education institutions, in accordance with the university's first- and second-cycle study programmes or pursue studies in other fields. The conditions under which HEIs graduates are enrolled are left to the discretion of each university.
Students' performance is assessed following Procedure for Assessment of Learning Outcomes approved by Utena HEI.
During meetings with HEI, teachers and students, the expert panel received evidence that, at the start of the course, the teacher provides students with a description of the course and the procedure for assessing the subject's learning outcomes.
The model for organising students' independent work and the methodology for its assessment are developed by the lecturer of the taught subject, taking into account the number of hours specified in the course description.
In assessing student achievement, teachers use various assessment methods, such as a mid-term knowledge test (closed- or open-ended), initiating a case study, self-reflection, and preparing a placement report. The final assessment of study achievements is calculated according to the specific formula, provided in the description of each subject.
Internship placements are offered to students at institutions with which Utena HEI has signed cooperation agreements. An independent internship placement should be approved by the Faculty Practice Supervisor, who, after contacting the company leader and presenting the practice programme, decides on the possibility. The procedure for organising internships is set out in the Description of the Procedure for Organising Utena HEI Student Internships.
The student, having completed the internship, prepares an internship report, attaches the internship supervisor's evaluation, and submits it to the teacher responsible for the internship. The Faculty Practice Supervisor organises public defence of the internship reports, in which the internship company practice supervisor and the teacher responsible for the practice participate.
Students who disagree with their examination or individual work grade may submit an appeal. During the evaluation period, the assessment system received no complaints, and students were assured of this.
The previously mentioned ten-point grading system, a cumulative assessment method for measuring student achievement, is transparent and appropriate for measuring learning outcomes.
Meetings are organised with students and graduates, as well as representatives of businesses, during which good practices and professional career opportunities are shared to promote the study programmes. Success stories of BFS study programme graduates are announced on the Facebook accounts of Utena HEI and Faculty of Business and Technologies, as well as on Utena HEI YouTube channel.
During the expert panel meetings with students and alumni, no comments were made regarding the lack of the aforementioned information.

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

Utena HEI provides extensive support for students with special needs by adjusting study conditions to their individual circumstances. Depending on the type of disability or temporary health impairment, the institution can modify the learning environment, study materials, and reporting formats once appropriate documentation is provided. Programmes may be adapted in terms of organisation, study modes, and assessment methods. Students who cannot attend classes in person are offered remote participation through virtual learning platforms, videoconferencing, or email. Knowledge assessment can also be conducted online. Additionally, students with disabilities may receive personalised study and revision schedules, including tailored exam dates and project deadlines. The Utenos HEI

regulations also allow alternative payment methods for students unable to follow standard procedures, ensuring that intended learning outcomes can still be achieved.
Students with a working capacity of 30% or lower are prioritized for placement in the Student Home upon submission of supporting documents.
State Studies Foundation annually implements a project co-financed by the European Union structural funds called "Inclusive Higher Education", which provides conditions for teachers and/or staff of higher education institutions to participate in training. A third of the BFS representatives participated in the training sessions mentioned above.
Approved by Utena HEI additional support process for Erasmus+ Mobility Projects for College students with disabilities and employees of foreign companies, incoming to HEI for teaching mobility.
During the visit, the expert panel has the opportunity to meet a student with limited mobility during a student meeting. We were impressed that the Utena HEI not only supported the college's learning process but also offered the opportunity to complete an internship at a company.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

The forms of study organization, teaching and assessment methods, and the scope of studies comply with the base requirements of legal acts. Full-time and part-time studies are offered in two training sessions per semester. Part-time students can study independently and in consultation with teachers between sessions. Both traditional and innovative teaching methods are applied.
An expert panel agrees that investing in digitalization through the VLE Moodle environment could improve communication between teachers and students, thereby positively affecting learning outcomes. Students who have obtained a Professional Bachelor's Degree may continue their studies in Lithuania or at foreign higher education institutions, in accordance with the university's first- and second-cycle study programmes or pursue studies in other fields.
The Utena HEI ensures conditions for studying among socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs and has implemented the necessary processes. There is a support process for Erasmus+ Mobility Projects for College students with disabilities and employees of foreign companies who are incoming to HEI for teaching mobility.
During the visit, the expert panel observed how some of the above statements are implemented in practice.

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

Utena HEI has a systematic monitoring and feedback system for students' progress, implemented through the Plan of Measures to Improve Activities, approved in 2022, which begins upon enrolment and continues throughout their studies. Monitoring student achievement helps to ensure academic performance.
The 2022-2024 strategic plan includes a criterion requiring the dropout rate not to exceed 11%. For the evaluated period, there are 7,3%

Table 10. Statistics of BFS expelled students

Study year	Students' number	Number of expelled students		Other reasons	In total	Percentage of drop-out
		On own request	Due to under-performance			
2022-2023	68	5	2	1	8	10.5
2023-2024	91	3	2	-	5	5.5
2024-2025	83	3	2	-	5	5.8
In total:	**242**	**11**	**6**	**1**	**18**	**7.3**

An expert panel has evidence that reducing student dropout rates affects many aspects of the teaching process. Adaptation process for first year students and Academic Progress of Utena HEI Students and Providing Academic assistance have been prepared and successfully implemented.
Students' drop-off is solved by creating better student support: lecture attendance is monitored, academic group tutors work with the students, the Administrator of the Department and the Head of the Department constantly remind students about the consultations, accounting schedules, and flexible payment methods; therefore, all the above-mentioned measures give positive results.
Students' performance is assessed continuously through mid-term and final examinations, and the data collected helps to identify difficulties and provide timely support, such as covering knowledge gaps. Monitoring is conducted at two levels: individual (lecturers and students) and institutional, twice a year (the Dean's Office and the Faculty Board).
Feedback is provided to students verbally and in writing. Adequate and timely feedback allows students to reflect on their work and helps ensure stronger, deeper retention of their learning. This gives the student a better understanding of their level of achievement and motivates them to improve their study process.
During the expert panel discussions with students and alumni, no specific remarks for the system were expressed. A relatively large number of respondents cited strong individualized feedback and support from both teachers and the administration.
Based on the SER report and information from the meetings, practical progress has been made in the mentioned area.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

Monitoring of graduates' employment and career is performed by HEI Career and Communication Department on the basis of the data from Education Management Information System (hereinafter EMIS). The monitoring results are shown on the Utena HEI website.
Utena HEI provides the Alumni Club registration link on the HEI website. Registration makes it easier for the Faculty and Department Management to contact alumni more effectively and conveniently. Registered alumni can provide work, internship, scholarship, and other opportunities to students.
In conducting the employment and career monitoring of 2024 graduates, the survey was carried out verbally by the Career and Communication Department (all graduates were surveyed 6 months after graduation).
The data obtained shows that 86% of graduates are employed. The majority of graduates work in their field of specialty 67% of those employed hold positions that require high qualifications, while 33% hold low-skilled positions. None of them was registered in the Employment Service.
Employers' surveys are regularly conducted, employers' feedback is analysed, which is filled in after the student has completed Professional Activity Practice, employers' representatives participate in TLBSP Committee meetings, where graduates' employment indicators are analysed.
The questionnaire for graduates also includes questions about how Utena HEI has prepared them for the labour market and how in-demand they are. The survey results are published on the website.

During the meeting with participating students, graduates, and stakeholders, no comments were made regarding employment or careers. The expert panel received practical answers that matched the information provided in SER.

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

The rules of ethical academic behaviour followed by members of Utena HEI academic community are determined by Code of Academic Ethics, approved by Utena HEI Adherence to the principles of academic honesty, tolerance and non-discrimination at Utena HEI is also defined by Students' Internal Order Regulations, Equal Opportunities Policy. The implementation of the above principles is taken care of by Utena HEI Academic Ethics Committee.
Academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are also discussed during the introduction and study process. All information is available on the Utena HEI website.
Utena HEI Academic Ethics Committee reviews requests regarding actions by Utena HEI academic community members that violate academic ethics. The Committee makes decisions and provides recommendations on the issues under discussion. Every Utena HEI community member may submit requests to the Committee. Applications submitted to HEI Management, whether directly or electronically, should be forwarded to the Committee within 3 working days.
A student/listener, before commencing their studies, signs the Declaration of Integrity, which obliges them to comply with the provisions of the Utena HEI Code of Academic Ethics and other documents that regulate ethical conduct; to consider their duties as a student responsibly; and to perform them honestly.
During the analysed period, no violations of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination in BFS were recorded. For possible breaches of ethics, students may apply to the HEI Rector or the Faculty Dean, a commission shall be formed.

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

Students of Utena HEI have the right to submit appeals regarding knowledge evaluation scores, violations of knowledge assessment procedures, or the imposition of penalties.
The appeal submission and examination procedure is regulated by the Utena HEI Appeals Submission, Investigation, and Making Decisions Procedure, approved by the Utena HEI Academic Council resolution. The appeal submission and examination procedure is precisely described in the Study Regulations.
During the evaluated period, BFS students submitted no appeals or complaints.
The expert panel received feedback that the processes are understandable to all; no comments or suggestions were made regarding the above. In practice, all disagreements were resolved through direct teacher-student communication, and no further activities were required.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

Utena HEI has a systematic monitoring and feedback system which begins upon enrolment and continues throughout their studies. Monitoring student achievement helps to ensure academic performance.
An expert panel has evidence that reducing student dropout rates affects many aspects of the teaching process. Adaptation process for first year students and Academic Progress of Utena HEI Students and Providing Academic assistance has been prepared and successfully implemented.
Students' performance is assessed continuously through mid-term and final examinations, and the data collected helps to identify difficulties and provide timely support, such as covering knowledge gaps. A relatively large number of respondents cited strong individualized feedback and support from both teachers and the administration.

Based on the SER report and information from the meetings, practical progress has been made in the mentioned area.
The ethical academic behaviour rules followed by members of the Utena HEI academic community are set out in the Code of Academic Ethics. Principles of academic honesty, tolerance, and non-discrimination are also set out in the Students' Internal Order Regulations. All information is available on the Utena HEI website. The implementation of the above principles is the responsibility of the Academic Ethics Committee.
During the analysed period, no violations of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination in BFS were recorded
The appeal submission and examination procedure is governed by the Utena HEI Appeals Submission, Investigation, and Making Decisions Procedure, approved by the Utena HEI Academic Council in a resolution. The appeal submission and examination procedure is precisely described in the Study Regulations.
During the evaluated period, BFS students submitted no appeals or complaints.
The expert panel received feedback that the processes are understandable to all; no comments or suggestions were made regarding the above. In practice, all disagreements were resolved through direct communication between teachers and students, and no further activities were required.

AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. Personalised approach to students, incorporating different study forms: full-time, part-time, remote learning, or individual adjustments for working students.
2. The Expert panel appreciates the progress made in analysing the causes of dropout and implementing actions to increase student engagement in education, especially in the first year of studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Despite favourable labour market conditions, systematically collect data on their career paths several years after graduation

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

The teaching staff in the TL demonstrates adequate size, qualifications, and relevant professional experience needed to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the study program.
The Transport and Logistics (TL) program employs 28 teachers: 12 full-time teachers for core and compulsory subjects; 5 full-time teachers for general subjects; and 11 part-time teachers for core and compulsory subjects. The average teacher-student ratio during the evaluation period (2022–2025) is maintained at 1:3, i.e. one teacher for each three students.
All teachers in the TL program hold a Master's degree or an equivalent qualification. A significant portion of the staff, 42.86% (12 out of 28) hold a PhD. Additionally, 46.43% of the teachers hold at least a 0.5 labor-unit position and have at least 3 years of experience at Utena HEI, indicating institutional stability.
The staff's professional competence is strong, with 75.00% (21 teachers) having more than 3 years of practical experience. This exceeds the statutory requirement that more than half of college study field teachers must possess at least three years of practical work experience related to the subject taught.
The HEI ensures the development of didactic competence, particularly for novice teachers, who receive extensive support. A Supervising Teacher is appointed to new lecturers to assist with the organization of the study process. Novice staff are introduced to the Faculty Dean, the Department Head, and the Faculty Specialist for Studies. Training to acquire pedagogical competencies is recommended for practitioners without prior pedagogical education or experience. The annual workload for teachers is standardized at 1,500 hours per labor unit, with contact hours differentiated by position (e.g., Lecturer: 850 hours; Lecturer Practitioner: 900 hours).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The TL program demonstrates strong staff adequacy and competence, with a favorable teacher-student ratio of 1:3 and all faculty holding at least a Master's degree, the program ensures high-quality instruction. Notably, 42.86% of teachers possess a PhD, and nearly half maintain stable, long-term positions, reflecting institutional continuity. Professional expertise is robust, as 75% of staff have over three years of practical experience, exceeding statutory requirements. The HEI also prioritizes pedagogical development, offering structured support for novice teachers and recommending training for practitioners. Overall, staf quality and professional development practices indicate a well-managed and academically sound program.

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

Utena HEI actively promotes and supports academic mobility for its teaching staff, primarily through the Erasmus+ Programme, as set out in the Description of Organisation of Participation of Utena

HEI Employees in Erasmus+ Teaching and Study Visits and Mobility of Teachers Incoming from a Company/Organisation.
Opportunities for international experience are defined in the Utena HEI Strategic Activity Plan for 2022-2024 and the Internationalisation Development Strategy for 2021-2027. Participation in the Erasmus+ Programme is mandatory for teacher certification.
Teachers demonstrate active engagement in academic exchange:
• In the 2022-2023 academic year, 10 BFS teachers participated in outgoing mobility, representing 17.24% of the HEI's total outgoing staff, traveling to countries including Turkey, Poland, Latvia, and Portugal.
• In 2023-2024 11 teachers participated in outgoing mobility, representing 24.4% of the HEI's total outgoing staff, traveling to countries including Poland, Germany, Latvia, and Estonia .
• The HEI also hosted incoming teachers for mobility, with 12 business-related incoming teachers in 2022-2023 and 13 in 2023-2024..
In addition to Erasmus+ mobility, teachers are encouraged to pursue non-Erasmus+ opportunities, such as applying for internships within institutional projects like EdTech.

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

Utena HEI provides comprehensive and systematic opportunities for its teaching staff to enhance their professional, educational, and scientific competencies, governed by the Description of Qualification Enhancement Procedure for Utena HEI Lecturers and Other Employees.
The development activities focus on professional, educational, and digital competencies, covering topics such as research methodology, study quality improvement, and the application of artificial intelligence in studies.
Teachers participate in various training sessions, including those on effective supervision of final theses ("Academic Mentoring") and the preparation and use of courses in Moodle environment, including the integration of gamification elements. In 2023-2024, 11 teachers improved their pedagogical qualifications.
Internal seminars are organized to strengthen research skills, such as multiple sessions on "Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis" and sessions focused on "Making Data Speak" (2023 and 2025). Five lecturers participated in a 40-hour training course under the project "Implementing the European Research Area Priorities at Utena HEI," covering research ethics, commercialization, and preparation of international publications. Teachers were involved in the project "Digital Education Transformation (EdTech)" and received training to enhance digital competence according to the European Framework (DigCompEdu). Teachers may take a short-term (minimum 5 working days) or long-term (minimum 4 weeks) professional internship once every five years. Three teachers participated in a specific internship at the Teltonika High-Tech Hill B2B Academy in 2023. The HEI provides English language training courses at three levels, with 6 BFS teachers completing the training in 2022-2023.
Teachers' qualifications are assessed through certification every five years, complemented by an annual assessment of academic and scientific activity. Furthermore, teachers may be excused from educational work for a maximum of one year every five years to conduct research and improve their qualifications.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

Utena HEI demonstrates a strong commitment to internationalization and continuous professional development for its teaching staff. Academic mobility is actively promoted through Erasmus+ and other initiatives, with participation rates increasing year-on-year and complemented by incoming teacher exchanges. This reflects an effective implementation of the institution’s strategic goals for

global engagement. Additionally, systematic opportunities for competence improvement are present, covering pedagogical, research, and digital skills, including AI integration and language training. Structured support for internships and certification further strengthens staff qualifications. Overall, Utena HEI ensures a dynamic, internationally oriented, and professionally evolving academic environment.

AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. The teaching team is qualified - All teachers hold at least a Master's degree, with 42.86% possessing a PhD, and 75% having more than three years of practical experience—well above statutory requirements.
2. The HEI provides structured onboarding for novice teachers, appoints supervising mentors, and recommends targeted training to enhance teaching competencies.
3. The institution provides the teaching team with opportunities for academic development and international mobility - the institution is strongly involved with international institutions.

AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The Utena HEI Lectures and practical sessions are held in classrooms at three locations in Utena City (Maironio g. 18, Maironio g. 7, and Utenio a. 2). The schedule is designed so that students do not need to move between Maironio and Utenio on a single day of study.
Short summary of dedicated auditoriums and equipment:

4 classrooms at Maironio Str. 18 with 30 workplace each, including 1 computer workplace for the lecturer. The rooms are equipped with video projection equipment and have internet access.
4 classrooms at Maironio Str. 18 with 14-20 workpaces each, including 1 computer workplace for the lecturer. The rooms are equipped with video projection equipment and have internet access. A few of them have computerized workplaces, and laptops are also available.
2 Computer laboratories at Maironio Str. 18, an additional 2 at Maironio 7, and one at Utenio Sq. 2 with 10-28 computerized workplaces, equipped with software needed for achieving learning outcomes, starting from PSPP statistical data analysis to SolidWorks 3D modelling.
1 Multimedia laboratory at Maironio Str. 7 with 12 computerized workplaces for students, with the option to use Laptops with a wide Software portfolio.
1 Business simulation company at Maironio Str. 18 “Interjeras,” with 6 computerized workplaces for students only, not lecturers. Software includes AIVA 9001, Veda, Stekas, and others.
At Maironio str.7, also located: Career Centre with 25 workplaces, including 5 computerized workplaces; Main auditorium for streamed lectures, with 60 seats for students, and hybrid video and audio equipment; Group work classroom with 5 workplaces, of which 2 are computerized; The library's periodicals reading room has 10 physical workplaces; The online reading room offers 5 computerized workplaces for users and 3 computerized workplaces for staff. There are facilities for printing, scanning, editing, and downloading documents.

The facilities and equipment were adapted to meet the needs of individuals with special requirements.
Ramps have been installed at the buildings located at Utenio a. 2 and Aukštaičių g. 9. The building at Utenio a. 2 also features an elevator accessible for wheelchair users. Additionally, accessible restrooms for individuals with disabilities are available in the buildings at Utenio a. 2 and Maironio g. 18.
A smooth entrance has been created for access to the Electronic Learning Center and the conference hall. During the period under analysis, a student with disabilities from the TLV-23 group is studying at Utena HEI. Consequently, lectures for this group are organized in buildings and classrooms that fully accommodate the student’s needs.

To enhance the integration of students with disabilities into the academic community, Utena HEI has acquired special equipment adapted for individuals with visual, hearing, and mobility impairments.
The Utena HEI computer workstations are equipped with Microsoft software (Windows and Office) and educational software for specific subjects. Active Directory technology enables students and staff to access their work files from any station and securely store completed tasks.
In all Utena HEI premises, students have access to the wireless network and can connect to the EDUROM network. They use the library and computer lab facilities to conduct information and literature searches and prepare individual assignments, academic papers, course projects, and final theses. Students can also access subscribed databases from home by connecting to the Utena HEI Virtual Private Network (VPN).
Since 2016, the Utena HEI has implemented an Electronic Plagiarism Detection System, which operates within the eLABa system and is used to check students' final papers. From 2024, the LMS Moodle platform includes the “Turnitin” text similarity checking tool, which serves as an educational resource to assist students in properly writing academic papers.
During practical sessions, students utilize a variety of software tools. For logistics and route planning, they use platforms like autoroutes.fr, Cargo.lt, and Info Trans., while data analysis employs Stormboard, ArcGIS Online, PSPP, and Tableau. E-business courses. This software suite provides hands-on experience with industry-standard tools, equipping students for real-world applications.
The Electronic Learning Center operates within Utena HEI, which is responsible for organizing distance learning. For the organization of distance studies, the BigBlueButton tool for synchronous communication video conferences is used, which is integrated into LMS Moodle. With this tool, lectures can be broadcast directly or virtual discussions, analysis of examples and situations, consultations, and similar activities can be organized for students connecting from their computer workstations or using smart devices.
LMS Moodle. Currently, 33 of 42 distance courses are prepared, representing 78.57% of all courses.
Resources for practical skills development.
In the simulated company “Interjeras” students apply the knowledge gained during theoretical studies in practice. The simulated company operates within the global network of simulated companies, PEN WORLDWIDE (https://penworldwide.org/, 7,500 simulated companies across 42 countries). The specialized accounting software STEKAS+ is used in the operations.
The Utena HEI Library ensures access to information resources and supports the achievement of study, research, and lifelong learning goals. The library collection is continuously updated with the latest literature, and various periodicals and e-books are subscribed to. Special orders are made twice a year based on the literature needs provided by faculty members.
During the Expert panel visit, all classes and the SER report listed hardware and software, including the library, were reorganized to align with the reallocation of TLBSB objectives. Stakeholders noted that some of the software mentioned at the college was implemented based on recommendations.

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

The planning and updating process of material resources required for study implementation is defined at Utena HEI Quality Management System for Studies
The need for essential resources directly impacting the quality of studies is discussed in the department, study programme committees, and faculty. After summarizing the procurement needs, an annual procurement plan is prepared.
The study infrastructure was updated in accordance with the Utena HEI 2022–2024 Strategic Action Plan and now the Utena HEI Activity Strategy for 2025–2030. Resource planning and updates occur every November–December.,

The Utena HEI places significant emphasis on the development of computerized workplaces, the implementation of new software tailored to study needs. Improvements to the study infrastructure are also carried out through project activities.
The expert panel identifies a systematic process for upgrading material resources, based on statements in the SER report, which will be maintained systematically through 2030. During the visit, the expert panel recorded no complaints or recommendations from the interviewed groups.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

The Utena HEI Lectures and practical sessions are held at three locations in Utena City (Maironio g. 18, Maironio g. 7, and Utenio a. 2). The schedule is designed so that students do not need to move between Maironio and Utenio on a single day of study. The renovated facilities and equipment were adapted to achieve learning outcomes and also meet the needs of individuals with special requirements.
In addition to standard auditoriums, HEI offers specialized classes, including a multimedia laboratory, enterprise simulation, and a group-work classroom, providing resources for practical skills development and the achievement of learning outcomes through unconventional approaches.
HEI recognizes that modern teaching methods and high-quality distance learning require robust IT infrastructure and is continually developing it. The Electronic Learning Center operates within Utena HEI, which is responsible for organizing distance learning. Currently, 33 of 42 courses are fully prepared for distance learning.
The library ensures access to information resources that fully support the achievement of study, research, and lifelong learning goals. The library collection is continuously updated. Special orders are made twice a year based on the literature needs provided by faculty members.
The planning and updating process of material resources required for study implementation is defined at Utena HEI Quality Management System for Studies. The Utena HEI places significant emphasis on developing computerized workplaces and implementing new software tailored to study needs. Improvements to the study infrastructure, excluding HEI annual assignations, are also carried out through EU-supported project activities.
The expert panel identifies a systematic process for upgrading material resources, based on statements in the SER report, which will be maintained systematically through 2030.

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
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Last audit recommendation for Preparing a detailed investment plan that outlines the future material resource needs to support the implementation of the Utena HEI strategy from the Expert panel view, is not only implemented, but is one of the strategic targets, having modern material and informational resources, classrooms, computer labs, laboratories, library, and a sufficient digitalization level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. The expert panel found that one of the submitted works contained content linking errors that occurred during the final binding stage of the thesis. We had a candid discussion on this topic during the meeting. The expert panel recommends the work in a broader scope and determines whether the case is random or systematic, and whether the thesis procedure requires correction.

AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

The SER (as provided in the evidence package) describes an institutional Study Quality Management System established in 2013, originally aligned with ISO 9001 principles and ESG guidelines, with updates including changes to Quality Policy in 2022 and a stated intention to align the system solely with ESG provisions in 2025. The SER describes governance and responsibility distribution for study quality management and a programme-level quality cycle (regular review by a Study Programme Committee and annual programme analysis leading to improvement measures and reporting). In terms of regularity, the SER states that meetings of the Transport and Logistics Business Study Programme Committee are held twice per academic year. In addition, the SER states that the Head of the Department organises faculty meetings at least twice per semester (and more frequently if necessary), where study quality and study-organisation issues, including survey results, are discussed. As part of the monitoring cycle, the SER states that students are surveyed at the end of the autumn semester and graduating students are surveyed at the end of the spring semester (June–July), regarding responsibilities, the SER states that implementation of the Study Quality Management System is coordinated by the Study Quality Committee. The SER further states that the Director is responsible for the overall quality of the Utena higher education institution's activities, and that the Vice Director for Studies and Research is responsible for the quality of studies and for the implementation, monitoring and improvement of the internal study quality management system. The SER states that the Dean of the Faculty organises internal quality assurance of the study process at faculty level. The SER also states that the Head of the Study Department is responsible for the quality of the organisation of studies, and that the Head of the International Relations Department is responsible for the quality of international academic exchanges. At programme level, the SER states that quality assurance of the Transport and Logistics Business study programme is directly overseen by the Study Programme Committee, the Department of Business and Public Management, and the Faculty Council.
During the site visit, senior management provided a programme-level example where student survey results led to a decision/change (a change in the mode of studies), although the site visit notes do not reference specific minutes/action plans where the decision is documented. Teaching staff also confirmed that they receive student feedback results and provided examples of course-level changes made following feedback (introduction of a practical task, use of video materials for complex topics).

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

The SER (as provided in the evidence package) describes stakeholder involvement through formal structures (committees, student representation) and feedback instruments (surveys for students, graduates, employers, internship supervisors; and additional tools such as anonymous Moodle-based evaluation).
Site visit evidence shows that students consider surveys important and see results shared via Moodle, but they could not clearly confirm a visible "you said–we did" loop (they did not perceive notable "bad issues" and therefore did not identify improvements). Alumni suggested strengthening student preparedness for stressful situations ("stress handling"). Social partners identified a skills gap in MS Excel and also evaluated Utena graduates as strong compared to graduates from other HEIs, highlighting stronger practical preparation.

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

The SER (as provided in the evidence package) emphasises public accountability and indicates that programme information and quality-related information (including external evaluation outcomes and survey summaries) are published via the institutional website (including English-language access) and other platforms (e.g., studyin.lt).
Site visit evidence confirms that, at least for students, survey results are communicated through Moodle; however, evidence remains limited on how clearly the institution communicates improvements in an understandable "what was changed because of feedback" format.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

The SER (as provided in the evidence package) describes regular student feedback collection and analysis, and that results are used for improvements through institutional structures.
During the site visit, senior management stated that 30% student participation is considered sufficient for survey results to be representative. Students confirmed that surveys are shared via Moodle, but they did not clearly identify whether their feedback leads to improvements. Teaching staff provided concrete examples of changes in response to feedback, suggesting that feedback is used at course level.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

The internal QA framework is described as structured and systematic in the SER as provided (governance, responsibilities, review cycles), and site visit evidence supports that feedback is actually used at course level (specific examples of changes) and can lead to programme-level decisions (mode of studies change). This indicates that the basic "collect feedback → decide → implement" logic exists.

The main shortcoming concerns the robustness and transparency of the feedback loop. Senior management's stated representativeness threshold (30%) helps to clarify what the institution considers acceptable, but the evidence package does not show actual participation/response rates and trends, nor does it systematically demonstrate how representativeness is ensured in practice. In addition, students' inability to identify concrete improvements linked to their feedback suggests that "closing the loop" communication is not consistently visible to learners through the channels they use, even if actions are taken. A further implementation risk is indicated by teaching staff feedback on the nomination/incentive system: lecturers reported that not all staff are aware of the system, implying that some QA/motivation mechanisms may exist formally but are not fully embedded in staff culture through systematic communication and engagement. Overall, the area meets requirements, but evidence gaps remain in demonstrating the effectiveness and reliability of stakeholder involvement through participation metrics and transparent follow-up.

AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 7	**Unsatisfactory - 1** Does not meet the requirements	**Satisfactory - 2** Meets the requirements,	**Good - 3** Meets the requirements, but there are	**Very good - 4** Very well nationally and	**Exceptional - 5** Exceptionally well nationally

		but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	shortcomings to be eliminated	internationally without any shortcomings	and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle			X		

COMMENDATIONS

1. Teaching staff provided concrete examples of course-level changes made in response to student feedback, demonstrating that feedback is used in practice.
2. Senior management provided at least one programme-level example where survey feedback contributed to a decision (change in mode of studies), indicating that feedback can reach decision-making level.
3. External stakeholders provide specific, actionable input (e.g., Excel skills gap; stress-handling competence), and social partners evaluate graduates as strong in practical preparation compared to other HEIs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Consolidate and present actual participation/response rates (students, graduates, employers) at programme/field level, compare them against the stated representativeness threshold (30%), and explain how representativeness/reliability is ensured when participation is limited.
2. Strengthen the visibility of the feedback loop for students by systematically communicating “what you said – what we changed” after each major survey cycle via channels students actually use (Moodle and programme-level communication), including timelines and evidence of follow-up.
3. Ensure QA-related motivation mechanisms are genuinely implemented by communicating the nomination/incentive system clearly to all teaching staff, and evidencing its use (criteria, nominations/awards, and how it links to quality improvement culture).

V. SUMMARY

The review panel's overall assessment indicates that the Transport and Logistics Business (TLB) study programme at Utenos Kolegija / Utena Higher Education Institution (Utena HEI) is practice-oriented, responsive to labour-market needs, and supported by a functioning institutional framework for teaching, student support, applied research integration, and quality assurance. Across the evaluated areas, the panel found that the programme demonstrates a strong connection to the socio-economic environment, benefits from constructive engagement of social partners, and incorporates up-to-date themes such as digitalisation, sustainability, and green economy considerations into its curriculum.

The main strengths of the evaluated Transport and Logistics Business (TLB) study programme include:

- the programme's alignment with the HEI's mission and strategy, its clear practical orientation, and the meaningful involvement of social partners who have genuine influence on programme development. The curriculum was assessed as current and relevant, reflecting modern trends in transport and logistics (including sustainability and digitalisation) and drawing on the institution's own academic work. International cooperation was also recognized as a positive driver for curriculum improvement and student opportunities.
- The institution structured and improved approach to applied research, supported by strategic planning, faculty development, and measurable growth in research outputs. Students are engaged in practice-relevant research activities and benefit from partnerships and international programmes. The curriculum is strengthened through the integration of contemporary topics (e.g., AI applications, sustainability, digitalisation), supporting its relevance to future skills and industry needs.
- The student support system is broad and well-structured, including academic, social, psychological, and financial elements. Importantly, site-visit evidence indicated that flexibility measures for working students operate effectively in practice and that students are aware of available support channels and information resources.
- There is a systematic monitoring of student progress, continuous assessment practices, and timely support mechanisms addressing learning difficulties. The programme's personalised approach-accommodating different study modes and working students was positively noted. The panel also acknowledged institutional progress in analysing dropout causes and implementing measures to improve engagement, particularly in the first year. Clear rules and procedures regarding academic ethics, integrity, and appeals were reported as understandable and effective in practice.
- The programme benefits from a favourable teacher–student ratio, adequate qualifications (all staff at least Master's-level, with a substantial share holding PhDs), and strong practical experience exceeding statutory requirements. The panel also highlighted structured onboarding for novice teachers, mentoring arrangements, and broad opportunities for competence development (including pedagogical, digital/AI-related, research, and language skills). Teaching staff mobility and international engagement were viewed as evidence of institutional commitment to internationalisation.
- Material and informational resources are modern and sufficient, noting improvements aligned with strategic investment planning. The institution's digitalisation level, laboratories, IT infrastructure, and library resources were assessed as supportive of programme delivery and strategic goals.
- The internal quality assurance (QA) framework to be structured and systematic, with evidence that feedback is used to inform course-level and programme-level decisions.

External stakeholders also provide actionable input, and social partners perceived graduates as well prepared in practical terms compared to graduates of other institutions.

While the overall evaluation was positive, the panel identified a few improvement priorities:

- Although international cooperation exists, the programme would benefit from explicitly embedding internationalisation in its aims and strengthening evidence of meaningful international mobility.
- The panel recommended that the curriculum should more extensively cover logistics processes beyond transport-related aspects, to better reflect the breadth of contemporary logistics management.
- The panel advised improving the research methodology underpinning final theses and, following an identified binding-stage linking error in one submitted thesis, checking whether this issue is isolated or systemic and whether thesis procedures require adjustment.
- While applied research progress is clear, the panel recommended increasing international publication visibility, including publishing more in journals indexed in Web of Science and strengthening international networking through conference participation.
- The panel recommended improving the reliability and strategic use of admissions data by correcting/validating inconsistent statistics and providing a documented internal analysis explaining fluctuations in admitted entrants despite stable demand indicators.
- Despite favourable labour market conditions, the panel recommended systematically collecting information about graduates' career paths several years after graduation to support programme evaluation and continuous improvement.
- The panel noted evidence gaps related to participation/response rates and representativeness, recommending consolidated reporting of participation metrics and clearer communication to students.

The panel would like to thank Utena HEI for the preparation of a comprehensive self-evaluation package, the organisation of the site visit, and the constructive engagement in discussions, which enabled a transparent and evidence-informed assessment of the TLB programme.