



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

INFORMATICS ENGINEERING FIELD OF STUDY

Šiauliai valstybinė kolegija

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

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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. Prof. dr. Peeter Normak, Professor at Tallinn University, School of Digital Technologies, the head of the Applied Informatics academic direction (Estonia);
2. Prof. dr. Elmar Cochlovius, Professor at Hochschule Furtwangen University, Dean of Studies Faculty Computer Science and Applications (Germany);
3. Prof. habil. dr. Piotr Artiemjew, Professor at University of Warmia and Mazury Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, Head of the Computer Science Institute (Poland);
4. Justas Selenkovas, Co-Founder Join-Stock company „Softeta” (Lithuania);
5. *Rokas Stankūnas*, Fourth-year student of Vilnius University's first-cycle study program Information Systems and Cyber Security (Lithuania).

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 12. November 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
- Team responsible for preparation of the SER
- Teaching staff
- Students
- Alumni
- Social stakeholders including employers

The meetings were conducted in English. There was a need for translation during the meetings (except for the meeting with students).

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

Šiauliai Valstybinė Kolegija (hereinafter - ŠVK or *the College*) is a public higher education institution offering short-cycle and first cycle degree programs. The ŠVK was founded in 2002 after the reorganization of the higher technical and medical schools. ŠVK has two faculties – the Faculty of Health Care and the Faculty of Business and Technology, which are divided into three and five departments respectively, and offers study programmes in 17 study fields. The

Faculty of Business and Technology comprises the following departments: Engineering Sciences, Informatics Sciences, Transportation Engineering, Management and Communication, Business and Accounting.

Overview of the study field

The Department of Informatics Sciences (hereinafter *the Department*) carries out three programmes in the Informatics Engineering study field: 1) Information Systems Technology (hereinafter – IST) is a first-cycle degree program that has been offered since 2004; 2) Multimedia Technologies (hereinafter – MT) is a first-cycle degree program that was introduced in 2012; 3) System Administration (hereinafter – SA) – a short-cycle study programme at level V, which was introduced in 2023. As of October 1, 2024, 55, 40, and 12 students were studying in these curricula, respectively.

Previous external evaluations

The IST was positively evaluated in 2017. The main recommendations were to increase the number of courses in information systems and enhance the development of transferable skills of students.

The MT was positively evaluated also in 2017. The main recommendations were to consider EQANIE European curriculum guidelines and enhance the development of transferable skills of students.

The SA was positively evaluated in 2023. The main recommendation was to refine the wording of the learning objectives in order to avoid ambiguities and uncertainties.

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.*
- *Regulation of the Study Field Committee.*
- *Summary of the study programme review of external partners.*
- *Recommendations of Invest in Lithuania on improvement of the bachelor's study programme in information systems technology.*
- *Subject descriptions of IST, MT and SA study programmes (in Lithuanian).*
- *Minutes of Informatics Engineering Programme Committee meetings from 28.03.2025 and 19.09.2025.*
- *Questionnaire for alumni to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the studies and their organization.*
- *Questionnaire for alumni on their current professional activities.*
- *Feedback questionnaire from the organization's internship managers.*
- *Questionnaire for representatives of organisations on the needs of specialists.*

- *List of projects and commissioned research in the years 2022-2025 in which students were involved.*
- *Description of the compliance of the intended learning outcomes of the IST, MT and SA study programmes with the learning outcomes of Informatics Engineering of Informatics Sciences Study Fields Group.*
- *Student satisfaction questionnaire “Questionnaire on the Opinions of Students at ŠVK Regarding their Satisfaction with the Quality of Studies”.*
- *Statistical data on students’ mobility and drop out from the study programmes for the years 2021-2024.*

Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

The Review Panel had access to a large number of ŠVK regulations available on public websites, including (a selection):

- *Quality Manual.*
- *Year 2025 Admission Rules for Foreign Students.*
- *Institutional Review Report of Šiauliai Valstybinė kolegija (2022).*
- *Paid Professional Bachelor Studies in Foreign Languages.*
- *List of Erasmus+ partners.*
- *Organisational Structure of ŠVK.*

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

Short cycle/LTQF 5

Title of the study programme	Systems Administration
State code	5701BX005
Type of study (college/university)	college
Study cycle	Short,
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time – 1.5 years Part-time – 2 years
Workload in ECTS	90
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Qualification of a Systems Administrator
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Secondary educational and occupational qualification
First registration date	25 -04-2023
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	

First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	Information Systems Technology	Multimedia Technologies
State code	6531BX021	6531BX022
Type of study (college/university)	college	college
Study cycle	First cycle (professional bachelor),	First cycle (professional bachelor),
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time – 3 years Part-time – 4 year	Full-time – 3 years Part-time – 4 years
Workload in ECTS	180	180
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Professional Bachelor of Computing	Professional Bachelor of Computing
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Secondary education	Secondary education
First registration date	02 -06- 2004	04-04- 2012
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)		

III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **short cycle** of the *Informatics Engineering* field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points ^{1*}
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Student admission and support	4
3.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	4
4.	Teaching staff	4
5.	Learning facilities and resources	4
6.	Quality assurance and public information	3
Total:		23

The **first cycle** of the *Informatics Engineering* field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

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

1* 2*

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
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

ŠVK Informatics engineering study programmes demonstrate strong strategic alignment by positioning graduates to contribute directly to Lithuania's and the European Union's focus on technological development. Given that Informatics forms the essential basis for this progress, the College's programmes are inherently structured to address this strategic priority as outlined in documents like the "Lithuania 2030" strategy. Ultimately, the programmes support the development of a "smart society" by producing skilled professionals who possess the core competencies necessary to drive digitalization and innovation across critical sectors.

The College (ŠKV) successfully differentiates its study programmes from other institutions by maintaining a clear vision focused on practice-based learning and specialized professional training. This strategy successfully attracts and retains students who are highly motivated and possess a clear rationale for choosing ŠVK, often influenced by the external incentives – such as scholarships and internship programs – offered through collaboration with local employers and the Šiauliai Municipality. This collaborative approach actively works to encourage graduates to remain and contribute to the local economy rather than relocating to larger cities like Vilnius or Kaunas.

The feedback mechanisms with social partners are robust and actively used for curricular adjustment. Businesses confirm they hold regular meetings to provide input, and the College successfully demonstrates that this feedback is implemented, evidenced by tangible curriculum adjustments like the inclusion of PHP Laravel programming, network, and analytical skills. The direct responsiveness to market needs is best exemplified by the System Administration (SA) programme, which was initiated specifically at the request of the Telia company. Lecturers maintain their own regular dialogue with partners, and social partners deepen their involvement by providing scholarship and internship incentives tied to joint projects.

Practical integration and student engagement are strong. Students are highly motivated and are regularly invited to events with companies, where they gain explicit knowledge of the skills required for a job. The INOSTART initiative stands out as a strong collaborative mechanism, helping to create and implement real-case projects together with businesses. This structured engagement is critical because alumni confirmed that their mandatory internship programs were essential for achieving a full understanding of industry expectations, often serving as a direct path to employment. Furthermore, the College's close collaboration with companies, particularly in Šiauliai, results in high employment rates. The connection between studies and practical application is solidified by deriving final theses from real-world practical cases provided by companies, with industry representatives serving on the evaluation committee.

Regarding the Information Systems Technology study programme

The Information Systems Technology (IST) programme provides students with a broad and market-relevant skill set, encompassing user needs analysis, system design, network administration, and security assurance. Its excellence was validated in 2022 by the international "Investors' Spotlight" quality label, confirming its strong alignment with foreign investor requirements and providing students with viable career opportunities. Crucially, the programme addresses both the required technical competence and vital social and personal skills — including providing user support and effective teamwork — thereby ensuring graduates possess the comprehensive skill set required by the labour market.

Regarding the Multimedia Technologies study programme

The Multimedia Technology (MT) programme creates possibilities for students to gain niche skills crucial for the multimedia hardware and software labour market. Graduates are prepared to analyse and assess the audio and video technologies used, select multimedia hardware and software, and design, develop, integrate, and manage multimedia products, enabling them to independently adapt to constant professional changes. Crucially, the programme addresses both the required technical competence and vital social and personal skills — including providing user support and effective teamwork — thereby ensuring graduates possess the comprehensive skill set required by the labour market.

Regarding the Systems Administration study programme

The System Administrator (SA) program delivers niche, highly specialized skills essential for managing modern IT infrastructure. The curriculum focuses on technical tasks such as maintaining, installing, and administering computer systems and networks, while ensuring information security and change documentation. Crucially, the programme addresses both the required technical competence and vital social and personal skills — including providing user support and effective teamwork — thereby ensuring graduates possess the comprehensive skill set required by the labour market.

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

The three ICT study programmes under review, Information system technology, Multimedia Technologies and System Administration, demonstrate a fundamental alignment with the country's economic and societal needs and the strategic direction of Šiauliai Valstybinė Kolegija.

The Information System Technology programme is highly relevant, directly addressing the regional labor market's urgent need for high-value ICT specialists, which is essential for advancing national goals related to the digital economy as mandated by the Lietuva 2030 strategy. The Multimedia Technology (MT) and System Administration (SA) programmes provide opportunities for students to develop niche skills that are relevant to the labour market, and are aligned with the ŠVK mission, goals and the strategy. The stated mission of attracting students who seek more practical experience and exposure to real business problem-solving corresponds with the aims of the MT and SA programmes.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

The three ICT study programmes under review, Information System Technology, Multimedia Technologies and System Administration are structurally aligned with ŠVK's strategic goals to meet regional market needs and contribute to national digital advancement. The strength of this alignment lies in the active, targeted collaboration mechanisms established by the College. Senior management's engagement in initiatives and the systematic, responsive integration of business feedback into the curriculum (such as adding PHP Laravel, network, and analytical skills) confirm institutional commitment.

A crucial finding is the success of high-impact practical models:

1. Student Motivation: Students are highly motivated, with scholarships and specific job-focused events serving as strong attractors, indicating clear demand-side responsiveness.
2. INOSTART Initiative: This program effectively facilitates real-case project creation, bridging the theoretical gap.
3. Internship Impact: Alumni confirm the mandatory internship is the single most critical factor for achieving full industry understanding and securing employment, demonstrating that successful integration is currently driven by the practical application phase, not solely the coursework.

However, the collection of stakeholder feedback lacks an overarching strategy. To further enhance this alignment, the College must formalize stakeholder feedback by establishing a structured process, such as a joint industry advisory committee, to guide curriculum enhancement. Urgent action is also required for the System Administration (SA) program; due to low enrolment, a deeper analysis of its market relevance and competitive positioning is necessary to determine its future viability. Finally, the programs should launch a structured alumni outreach program to gather current data on career progression and perceived curriculum gaps, ensuring future programmatic adjustments are based on robust, real-world data. The College's existing quality framework provides the necessary flexibility to implement these improvements effectively.

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

1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The study programmes comply with all legal requirements. They have been developed and are continuously updated in accordance with the legislation in force in Lithuania, such as the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, adopted by the Resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, and the *Descriptor of the General Requirements for the Implementation of Studies* approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania.

The amounts of credits and study hours in each study programme have been selected in such a way as to meet the requirements defined in the above-mentioned documents: The first-cycle programmes IST and MT consist of 180 credits each, of which 30 credits are for practice and 9-12 credits for the final project; the total amount of hours is 4800, of which appr. 50% are contact hours, and 50% are for independent work. The short cycle program SA consists of 90

credits, of which 5 credits are for the applied project; the total amount of hours is 2400, of which appr. 55% are contact hours, and 45% are for independent work; 30 out of 90 credits are for practice, which is appropriate for a short cycle programme.

The number of credits for a course is determined on the basis of the learning outcomes and the amount of time a student needs to work to achieve the learning outcomes. Typically, the share of contact work is about 45% to 50% of the hours of the course, except for the Final Project. For part-time students, less time is allocated for lectures and more time is allocated for consultations.

No more than seven subjects per semester are studied by the participants in these programmes. To adjust the individual workload of the students, an attestation procedure is applied each semester, where students are asked to provide feedback to their study subjects. Each study subject is evaluated at least once every three years.

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

The structure of the study programmes meets the requirements set out in the *Descriptor of the Group of Study Fields of Computing*. The ŠVK faculty follows a well-defined process to align all aspects of the programmes: starting with the programme aim, the intended learning outcomes are defined. For each study subject, the learning outcomes are derived. Depending on the outcome of a subject, its study methods are determined. The learning achievements related to only two out of thirteen learning outcomes are assessed with exams, while all others are assessed using presentations, defence of laboratory reports, defence of practice reports or course papers. This small number of exams in the study programmes may be justified by the focus on practical rather than theoretical competencies.

1.2.3 Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

The layout of the study plan reveals the well-ordered sequence of the study subjects. Students in their early semesters are exposed to material which is focussed on gathering knowledge (e.g. Applied Mathematics), while the later stages of the programmes usually concentrate on developing deeper comprehension, skills and abilities (e.g. Object-oriented Programming in the IST study programme), which will be essential for successful young professionals trying to enter the labour market as smoothly as possible.

This structured approach is also applied to the practice and internships: in all study programmes, these activities are placed in later semesters to enable the reinforcement of the competencies acquired in earlier semesters. At the same time, social partners rely on basic knowledge already available to the participants of the internships they offer to the institution.

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

In both first-cycle study programmes participants are provided with various opportunities to individualize their particular studies. They can choose one out of three professional languages and later on, each student has to select one specialization field out of two for IST students or out of three for MT students.

Further possibilities for individualization are offered via the Erasmus+ program. This program offers a novel approach to mobility of students by combining physical and virtual mobility.

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

The processes of conducting the final thesis in the IST and MT programmes as well as the final Applied Project in the SA programme follow a structured approach involving the head of the Department and the project supervisor. A list of relevant topics, the student can choose from, is compiled by the Department to make sure the graduation projects are relevant to the field of study. In addition, the topics can be proposed by the students themselves, or other stakeholders, like social partners, companies or public sector institutions.

Various measures are applied to make sure that ethical principles of academic honesty are observed by the candidate. These include also the use of the eLABa tool to automatically check for plagiarism. However, it is not specified, to what extent this will also cover the potential misuse of Generative Artificial Intelligence not only in preparing the final thesis paper but also while executing the practical work for it, e.g. developing a Software application.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The study programmes of IST, MT and SA, their structure, the content of the courses, the study results and their consistency with the study methods are all in accordance with the legislation in force in Lithuania and international standards for this type of programmes. Moreover, they are systematically reviewed on an annual basis, regularly discussed with social partners (representatives of companies), and updated when and where needed.

The structure of the study programmes in both first- and short-cycle study programmes is well-thought through, with some options for choices, enabling students to acquire all necessary competences, including practical experience in real-life contexts (project and research work, internships, final degree projects, etc.). Students appreciate the 'learning by doing' approach very much and tend to focus on the practical aspects of their academic education. The graduates are well-prepared to fill the need of the local labour market. One of the programmes has won an award from a local Business panel.

It has been expressed by both the teaching staff and the students, that the collaboration and communication between the faculty and the local companies could be further extended.

AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. The IST, MT and SA study programmes benefit from a well-structured mixture of theoretical and practical course material. Students do appreciate the "learning-by-

doing” approach to acquire the competencies and skills, which the labour market is looking for.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. None

For further improvement

1. Define and apply a more formal process to receive feedback from local businesses and industries on how to develop and enhance the study programmes, e.g. by forming a joint committee.
2. Conduct a deeper and urgent analysis of the SA study programme’s market relevance, title, and competitive positioning to determine its future viability.
3. Initiate a structured alumni outreach programme to gather data on graduates’ current industries, career progression, and perceived curriculum gaps.

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

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

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

The quality of research and its integration with studies is confirmed by external rankings. In the international U-Multirank ranking, ŠVK received four top (A – very good) evaluations for investments in the digitisation of studies, timely completion of studies, impact on the region (income from regional sources) and internationality of studies, which reflects the good performance and impact of the study programmes in the field.

In 2022 - 2025 Programme teachers, researchers prepared 40 articles in peer-reviewed publications, of which 27 (70%) were published in Lithuanian journals and 13 (30%) in foreign journals. 11 of these articles (27%) were published in journals referenced in the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS) database. However, it should be noted that the proportion of publications co-authored by academics is relatively small.

The Scientific Research Development Plan of the Department, updated and approved in 2022, had a clear positive effect, the number of publications in 2023 increased fourfold compared to 2022 and, although the total number of publications decreased in 2024, almost all articles published in 2024 are indexed in CA WoS, indicating a strategic shift from quantity to quality.

During the evaluation period, Programme teachers prepared and delivered 17 papers at national and 38 papers at international conferences (including conferences in Portugal, France, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia and other countries), 24 papers at national seminars, workshops or trainings and 3 papers at international seminars.

ŠVK organises the continuous international conference "Higher Education for Sustainable Development of a Smart Region" (14.04.2022, 16.05.2023, 10.05.2024, 08.05.2025), in cooperation with Rey Juan Carlos University (Spain), Tallinn University of Applied Sciences (Estonia), Porto Polytechnic Institute ISCAP (Portugal) and Selcuk University Faculty of Technology (Turkey). The topics of conference presentations highlight a close link between science and its application to solving practical problems, for example: "The Research of the Effectiveness of the Automated Production Line" (2023), "Opportunities for the Application of Artificial Intelligence Models" (2023), "Electronic Platform of Students' Social Competencies Development as a Learning Management System" (2023), "Stalling in Queuing Systems With Heterogeneous Channels" (2024), "Data Analytics: Definitions, Uses, and Examples" (2025), "Companies and AI: Build Your Own Chatbot" (Portalegre Polytechnic University, 2025). Teachers also present applied research results in open seminars and trainings for the wider public (for example, "Web Application Architecture and Fundamentals of Development," 2022; "MicroPython and CircuitPython Platforms and Alternatives for Those Intending to Use the C Programming Language," 2023; "Challenges of the Digital Age: Artificial Intelligence at School," 2024).

The research carried out in ŠVK is related to the field of study and is implemented through third-party funded projects. During the evaluation period, 41 externally funded research projects were implemented or are being implemented, in cooperation with Šiauliai City Municipality and permanent external partners, as well as through continuous involvement in the INOSTART Programme. The results of these projects are used in teaching and learning within the study programmes. For example, the project "Engineering Literacy Education LAB" (2022) strengthens the integration of engineering and informatics concepts into teaching and provides practical cases for subjects dealing with introductory engineering, informatics education and digital competence development. The "Development of a Production Company Conveyor Works Optimization System" (2022) and "The Research of the Effectiveness of the Automated Production Line" are used as case studies in subjects related to optimisation methods, production systems modelling, industrial informatics and information systems implementation. The "Cloud-based Centralized Warehouse Accounting System" (2023) provides real examples for courses on information systems, databases, cloud computing and distributed systems.

The project "Cyber Security Challenges and Perspectives" (2024) feeds directly into subjects and training on cybersecurity, information security management and risk assessment.

The "Šiauliai Pupils' Social Competence Development Information System" (2024) and the "Programme Planning System for Šiauliai County Television" (2025) serve as applied case studies in courses on information systems analysis and design, software engineering, project-based learning and user interface design, as well as in student final projects and course projects.

In addition, research on artificial intelligence and data analytics (e.g. "Opportunities for the Application of Artificial Intelligence Models," "Data Analytics: Definitions, Uses, and Examples," "Companies and AI: Build Your Own Chatbot") is incorporated into teaching in AI-related subjects, data analytics modules and practical labs.

ŠVK actively cooperates with external partners and universities in carrying out research in the field of study. At the regional level, cooperation with Šiauliai City Municipality and other social partners is implemented through commissioned research, experimental development projects, consulting, seminars and training (e.g. training on cybersecurity and modern e-learning tools for schools in Northern Lithuania). At the international level, ŠVK collaborates with Rey Juan Carlos University (Spain), Tallinn University of Applied Sciences (Estonia), Porto Polytechnic

Institute ISCAP (Portugal), Selcuk University Faculty of Technology (Turkey) and Portalegre Polytechnic University (Portugal) in the organisation of conferences, joint research and Erasmus+ activities. ŠVK staff participate in international Erasmus+ projects, such as "Development of Universal Work Environment-Based Virtual Internship Model and Its Support System for Higher Education" (2023) and the BIP "Artificial Intelligence as a Key Enabler of Digital Transformation" (Portalegre Polytechnic University, 2025), as well as in EC-funded projects like "Transforming Regions for an Inclusive Europe" and the NEOLAiA Alliance (ERASMUS-EDU-2023-EUR-UNIV).

Cooperation with Vilnius University Šiauliai Academy (for example through the RENET Researchers Competence Network, expert activities, competitions for young mathematicians and participation in commissions) further strengthens the research environment.

Research within the field of study at ŠVK is at a sufficient level and is effectively integrated into higher education provision.

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

ŠVK lecturers are active researchers, and the results of research and R&D projects have been transferred to the content of the study courses.

Research on the effectiveness of automated production lines and the development of a production company conveyor works optimization system is used in courses Developing Optimisation, Modelling and Information Systems Implementation.

Research on the opportunities for the application of artificial intelligence models, data analytics and chatbot development is integrated into specialised deepening subjects in the MT study programme and into courses such as Internet Technologies, Information Systems Engineering/Media Systems Design and Modeling.

Research on cybersecurity challenges and perspectives and on cloud-based centralized warehouse accounting systems is incorporated into subjects related to Computer Networks and Cloud Technologies, Cloud Solutions and Security.

The content of study subjects is updated on the basis of topics discussed in scientific articles and conference presentations, for example through the integration of containerization solutions in the course Computer Networks and Cloud Technologies, the use of higher abstract-level administration tools in Software Network Management and the integration of open-source artificial intelligence libraries into deepening subjects of the MT study programme.

Many field/specialisation and subjects are taught by teachers holding doctoral degrees (for example, Software Network Management, Web Services, Internet of Things, Web Design Technologies), and lecturers regularly participate in third-party funded projects, qualification improvement courses, internships at partner companies and international academic visits, which ensures that new scientific and technological developments are continuously brought into the study content rather than leaving any gap in activity.

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

Students of the IST and MT programmes are involved in scientific and applied research activities, and participation: in 2024, around 56% of students in the field took part in such activities.

Throughout their studies, students are gradually introduced to research by searching for, reviewing and analysing scientific publications in selected subjects, and this culminates in course papers and especially graduation projects (GP), which are the main structured opportunity for students to engage in applied scientific research.

At the start of their studies, students are trained to use library resources and scientific databases. Later, through the subject Applied Research Methodology and the Methodological Recommendations for the Development of the Graduation Project of Informatics Sciences Study Field Group Programmes (2022), they are guided to define research problems, select and apply appropriate methods, and link theoretical analysis with practical solutions.

Students receive individual supervision and guidance from teachers in the preparation of research-based course papers, GPs and applied projects, and they work closely with lecturers on third-party funded projects and business orders (for instance systems for production conveyor optimisation, passenger car rental, Docker and Kubernetes container management, TV programme planning), which in practice fulfils a mentoring function.

Students publish together with teachers in ŠVK's peer-reviewed journals Applied Scientific Research and Professional Studies: Theory and Practice, and also in the non-peer reviewed scientific journal Business, New Technologies and Smart Society, gaining experience in academic writing and dissemination. They have the opportunity to present at conferences, particularly at the international student scientific-practical conference Business, New Technologies and Smart Society (2022–2025). Where they deliver papers on topics such as production data collection and monitoring systems, server clusters with high availability and performance, container service interfaces, secure VPN access, Stable Diffusion-based image generation, NeRF-based 3D reconstruction, secure environmental monitoring and private cloud creation. They also take part in a student scientific-practical conference linked to the SSF-funded project KNOW and in various project-related events, seminars, hackathons, entrepreneurship camps and business forums.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

Research activity in the field is sufficient and clearly improving. The number of publications has grown – especially in 2023, when output increased about fourfold compared to 2022 – and there is a visible shift from quantity to higher quality publications, with an increasing share in Web of Science-indexed journals. This is the result of an appropriate programme to stimulate publishing activity - developed since 2022. However, the relatively small proportion of publications co-authored by ŠVK academics suggests that functioning research groups have not been established.

The content of the study programmes does take into account the latest scientific and technological trends, as demonstrated by the integration of topics such as containerisation, cloud technologies, cybersecurity, AI applications, data analytics, IoT, NeRF, modern web technologies and EdTech-driven innovations into courses, and by the fact that many advanced/specialisation subjects are taught by active researchers with doctoral degrees.

Student involvement in research is consistent with the study cycle, from early years they practise literature search and small-scale research tasks, in later years they participate in applied projects, conferences and externally funded initiatives, and this culminates in research-based course papers and graduation projects supported by a dedicated Applied Research Methodology course and methodological guidelines.

Taken together, this shows a coherent and upward-trending integration of research, innovation and studies.

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
Short cycle				–	
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Student involvement in research and applied projects is high and well aligned with the study cycle.
2. Many researchers are very active in research and involve students in their projects.
3. Students have the opportunity to provide feedback in many areas, in particular to submit proposals for the purchase of new devices for their projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. None

For further improvement

1. Define a limited number (for example, up to three) of priority research areas and create research groups around them, along with activities related to the research (including regular research seminars).

AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

Admission to ŠVK for IST and MT first-cycle study programmes operates through either joint admission (for state-funded or SF, and state non-funded or SNF places) or direct (institutional) admission (for SNF places only). All admissions adhere to the procedures set by the Lithuanian Higher Institutions Association for Organizing Joint Admission (LAMA BPO) and ŠVK admission rules, requiring applicants to have at least secondary education. For the SA study

programme, only applicants who finished secondary education in 2024 or later and possess a vocational education are eligible for applying.

Additionally, admission procedures at ŠVK allow for the recognition of previous learning outcomes, enabling admission to a higher year or semester upon the Faculty Dean's proposal, with final formalization achieved via a study agreement and a Director's order. To augment competitive scores, applicants to all first-cycle programmes (except the short-cycle SA programme) may receive additional points, with a maximum value of 2.5 points, based on criteria set by MESS and ŠVK's own rules for SNF places; notably, an extra point will be awarded from 2025 for at least one year of prior higher education study. Foreign applicants are also welcomed, following specific procedures for SF places and specialized rules for SNF places, and since 2022, the IST programme has offered English-language studies for foreign citizens. Information and consultation services are extensively provided to inform prospective students about study programmes and admission criteria by sharing website material, publications, and participating in fairs.

Overall, the total number of admitted students is increasing, indicating the field's programmes remain relevant. The IST programme demonstrates stable interest, while the SA short-cycle programme is steadily growing, although it still attracts fewer entrants than the first-cycle programmes. Conversely, the formerly dominant MT programme is slowly declining in popularity. Over the 2022–2024 reporting period, the number of admitted students for IST ranged from 13 to 23, for MT it declined from 20 to 16, and for SA it grew from 7 in 2023 to 9 in 2024. The analysis of competitive scores confirms that State-Funded (SF) places consistently require substantially higher admission scores - often more than 1.5 times greater - than State Non-Funded (SNF) places across all three programmes (IST, MT, and SA). Complete admission statistics are publicly available on the ŠVK website. As per dropout rates, it's worthy to note that the student yearly dropout rate was relatively high - between 18 and 32 percent.

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

Since 2024, ŠVK has taken over the academic recognition process for secondary education, while in the past it was carried out by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CQAHE). It is noted that during the analysed period, no foreign qualifications were recognized for entry into the IST, MT, or SA study programmes.

The crediting of competences acquired in formal education is managed based on whether the prior study content was reconciled (pre-approved) or non-reconciled. If a student has studied at another institution (domestic or foreign) under a prior agreement where the content was coordinated, the subjects and practices are credited without restrictions. For study content that was non-reconciled, only partial learning outcomes are credited. In all cases, the Head of the Department assesses the compliance of the learning outcomes with the requirements of the ŠVK study programme, following ŠVK's credit accumulation principles. The total scope of credited results cannot exceed 75 percent of the study programme, and the Final Project (GP) is never credited. Students actively utilize this procedure as it reduces study time and costs and allows for enrolment in a higher semester or year. Program-specific trends show that the IST programme is seeing growth in both the number of students receiving credit and the volume of credits awarded, while the MT programme is crediting a significantly increasing scope of credits per student, despite a decreasing number of students utilizing the process.

Additionally, ŠVK recognizes competences acquired through non-formal and informal modes (such as work experience, volunteering, adult education, or self-education) if the applicant can substantiate and prove them as learning outcomes. These acquired competences are recognized as learning outcomes of a study programme, and corresponding study subjects are credited without limitation provided the competences align substantially with the subject's intended learning outcomes, or if the competence acquisition occupied at least 50 percent of the corresponding subject's scope hours. This recognition process is crucial as it facilitates access to qualifications, enhances student motivation, and allows for the shortening of study time. During the analysed period, only students in the MT study programme utilized this process in 2022. No students applied for this type of crediting in 2023 or 2024, and no foreigners required competence crediting during the period.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

ŠVK provides strong evidence of transparent, rule-based, and adequately implemented admission procedures, including clear criteria, recognition of prior learning, and support for foreign applicants - showing alignment with institutional and national requirements. It also presents data on student interest and competitive score patterns, indicating that programmes attract candidates with varying academic readiness.

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

3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

The ŠVK International Relations Office conducts an Erasmus+ selection contest twice annually (October and March), promoting mobility opportunities via the ŠVK website, social media, and direct contact. The institution supports exchange through a mentoring program for both incoming and outgoing students, and organizes an International Week for experience sharing. ŠVK students have extensive options, able to select study destinations from over 130 partner institutions in 21 EU countries, and practical placements with 69 scientific institutions (the most popular destinations include Portugal and Cyprus). Incoming students are offered a list of subjects taught in English, including Lithuanian basics. However, the subject list is given out as “packages”, which can hinder incoming students’ ability to better choose modules that align more with their original study programme learning outcomes. On the other hand, according to the administration, this decision was made because few students got admitted to the same modules and exchange students provided feedback that they’d appreciate having larger study groups. It is recommended to revisit this process and reevaluate the success of this change.

It’s also worth mentioning that during the 2024–2025 academic year ŠVK lecturers collaborated with colleagues from the Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre to develop and implement a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) course titled “Artificial Intelligence as a Key Enabler of Digital Transformation”.

Regarding eligibility and structure, Full-Time (FT) students are encouraged to participate in partial studies from their second year, while Part-Time (PT) students are limited to practice mobility or the Blended Intensive Programme (BIP). Graduates may also pursue a graduate practice within one year of finishing studies. Academic preparation is managed by department

heads, requiring a minimum of 30 ECTS credits for one semester of study mobility and a minimum two-month duration for practice mobility. All successfully completed subjects and practices must be fully credited back at ŠVK. Student mobility increased significantly during the 2023–2025 academic years for both incoming and outgoing students, indicating a strengthening exchange process. All outgoing students' subjects were successfully credited, though one student in the 2023-2024 cohort incurred a debt (requiring completion at ŠVK). Students from the SA study programme did not participate in exchange during the analysed period.

As of the period between 2021 and 2025, 2 IST and 6 MT students participated in outgoing mobility activities, while 8 incoming students were accepted. The overall activity rate for Erasmus mobility remains low. The administration and students, during the site visit, attributed this to low student motivation, student concerns about losing their jobs, and complications related to their marital status.

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

ŠVK provides various forms of academic support and counselling to students. This support includes publishing essential information such as study schedules and consultation times, organizing internal communication, and facilitating the individualization of studies through individual study plans for justifiable reasons (e.g., illness, work, or child care). Students receive continuous academic counselling from group curators, lecturers, department heads, and faculty administration regarding programme content, learning outcomes, and assessment criteria. This counselling is offered both individually and in groups, utilizing various digital platforms (e.g., MS Teams, Zoom). The institution monitors interim assessments, organizes meetings with group monitors, and identifies and advises students experiencing difficulties through interviews with curators and vice deans.

Financial support for students is administered according to the ŠVK Scholarship Awarding Regulations. Students who demonstrate excellent or typical academic achievement in the preceding semester are eligible for incentive scholarships. Additionally, one-off scholarships are granted for specific circumstances: to recognize students who are active in scientific, cultural, sports, or social activities, or to provide aid following a student's accident, the death of an immediate family member, or a difficult material situation within the family. Information regarding both incentive and one-off scholarships is provided by the Faculty Dean's Office, and the awards are decided by the Faculty Scholarship Granting Committee chaired by the Dean. An increasing trend in scholarship awards across the IST, MT, and SA study programmes is visible.

Social scholarships are available to students in both Full-Time (FT) and Part-Time (PT) studies, regardless of whether they are in State-Funded (SF) or State Non-Funded (SNF) places, provided they meet established criteria. Study scholarships are specifically reserved for students admitted to SNF places with the highest competitive scores. Furthermore, Nominal scholarships are awarded by various entities (including the LR President, Ministries, and Municipalities) to students with good academic achievements and active scientific/social involvement. Targeted incentive scholarships (e.g., €200/month) are a key form of support aimed at boosting enrolment and regional investment attractiveness in high value-added sectors, such as SF STEM (Informatics, Engineering) study fields, and are contingent on study outcomes. Finally, students can access state-subsidized loans for covering study costs or living expenses, and those with special needs can use financial assistance from the Department of Disability Affairs.

Students at ŠVK benefit from a range of personal support and extracurricular opportunities, encompassing scientific, cultural, and sports activities. Student Representative Body (SRB) to improve student learning and development conditions, contributes to the study improvement process, resolves student issues, and ensures a positive community atmosphere. The SRB achieves this by mobilizing active students to initiate and organize popular events, such as the annual “ŠVK CAR MEET II” and various themed social evenings (e.g., Halloween, Mafia evenings). Beyond social events, programme students actively engage in a wide variety of sports, including basketball, volleyball, football, and weightlifting.

Free psychological support is provided to all citizens of Šiauliai city (including ŠVK students), which includes six 50-minute confidential individual consultations with a psychologist. As of writing this report, the online registration form for a psychological consultation doesn't work, which can hinder some students' anxiety. However, alternative emails and phone numbers are provided. Additionally, access to designated rest areas equipped with table games and relaxation equipment is also available. Students can also contact the Study Record and Student Support Office, the Student Ambassador Programme. Information about these services is presented on the ŠVK website.

3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

Information and guidance regarding studies are comprehensively provided by various stakeholders, including teachers, curators, the Department, the Dean's Office, and administrative staff. Group curators play a vital role in introducing first-year students to the study system, including plans, schedules, elective subjects, assessment procedures, and available support. The Vice Dean oversees student rotation for potential movement to SF study places and organizes consultation meetings for student monitors. The Department is responsible for discussing attendance, program content, and interim assessments, encouraging a sense of learner autonomy while ensuring adequate group curation, with oral consultation noted as the most effective method.

To aid in social and academic integration, a wide array of support activities are carried out for first-year students, including the appointment of curators, introduction to legal acts, training for using library funds, and the collection of freshman feedback. Specifically designed resources like the Freshman's Guide and Information Leaflet are prepared, and events such as the Introductory Week, "How are you, freshman?" discussions, and Freshman Camp are organized to encourage communication and faster integration. Student inquiries are facilitated through the Student Ambassador Programme and a dedicated email, covering a broad spectrum of issues from study organization to financial support. Students are continuously informed through various tools including the website, social media, and email. Furthermore, the ŠVK Studies and Science Coordination Unit provides specialized support through its various centers: the Library and Self-Study Centre (for resources and training), the Student Admission and Career Centre (for career planning, job offers, and market seminars), the International Relations Office (for mobility information), and the Study Record and Student Support Office (for financial aid, scholarships, and psychological support).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

ŠVK provides substantial evidence of structured Erasmus+ procedures, wide partnership networks, clear crediting rules, growing mobility activity, and comprehensive academic, financial, social, and psychological support. These elements show that mechanisms for mobility and support are formally in place and actively implemented. However, persistent

issues - such as low mobility participation, barriers related to personal circumstances, constrained module selection for incoming students - indicate that these opportunities are not yet fully effective in practice.

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
Short cycle				X	
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Comprehensive academic counselling is provided through curators, lecturers, department heads, and faculty administration.
2. A wide range of personal support, extracurricular activities, sports and student-led events is actively available to students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. None

For further improvement

1. Verify the accuracy of psychological consultation information presented at the ŠVK website.
2. Reconsider the shift from offering subject "packages" to incoming mobility students to providing a detailed list of individual modules available.

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

4.1.	Students are prepared for independent professional activity
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FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The most important documents regulating teaching and learning are *The Study Regulations* and *the Description of Individual Study Procedure*. The latter document sets out the conditions and procedure for choosing individual subjects. Unfortunately, these documents were available only in Lithuanian. Mini-projects are carried out within the framework of some subjects. Students are free to choose their topics, as well as to make suggestions for company visits

within the framework of the subjects. The objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment criteria of the course are introduced to students in the first lecture. A ten-point cumulative grading system is used, consisting of interim assessments (control tasks, tests, written questionnaires, laboratory work, individual assignments, defence of project work, presentations of written work, etc.) and a final assessment (examination or project).

Moodle is used as the main learning management system. It also includes solutions to homework assignments, which students can use to check the correctness of their solutions, as well as self-tests.

There seems to be good cooperation between students and faculty, where student suggestions are also taken into account. As a specific example, one alumnus mentioned that his suggestion to address the topic of IoT in more depth was implemented. Students highlighted that their wishes have also been taken into account when purchasing equipment.

Students can also take courses at other universities, but this has not been done so far. Even more, the students who met with the experts were unaware of this possibility.

The only problem identified was related to the internship. Although company representatives say they inform the College of their wishes before taking on interns, communication between the College and companies is not systematic. For example, internship tasks could be more closely related to the student's thesis (which would be in the company's field of activity) than before. This would also create better conditions for entering a job in the company after graduating from the College.

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

At the start of the academic year ŠVK provides information to students on opportunities to apply for social scholarships or a targeted grant from the State Studies Foundation. During 2021-2025 twelve students from IST, MT and SA study programmes received social scholarships.

The Study Record and Student Support Unit provides consultations to these students, aiming to meet their administrative and academic needs flexibly through trust-building communication. Teachers utilize a student-oriented approach to individualize the study process where necessary, adjusting content, study pace, assignment deadlines, and employing alternative assessment methods while upholding the same achievement criteria. Accommodations for students with disabilities include increased font size, slower speaking pace, extended assessment time, and individual consultations. Only one student with special educational needs had received assistance during the analysis period.

During the site visit it was additionally noted that the physical infrastructure is mostly sufficient for people with physical disabilities - elevators are present for travelling between floors and all commonly used auditoriums are accessible without additional difficulties.

It's worth mentioning that ŠVK doesn't have an equal opportunities policy or declaration in place. During the meeting with the ŠVK administration, it was highlighted that all the necessary information is contained in the *Code of Academic Ethics*. While the document does mention equality, non-discrimination, fair treatment, and accessibility, these points are part of general ethical rules rather than a clear, dedicated commitment. The focus is mostly on what behaviour is not allowed, with less attention to proactive steps, clearly defined protected groups, or detailed procedures for dealing with discrimination. Making these areas more explicit and structured would create a stronger and more complete equal-opportunities framework.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

Teaching and learning meet the needs of students well and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. A good partnership has developed between students and lecturers, which is reflected, among other things, in the fact that student suggestions are taken into account when updating both the content of subjects and the infrastructure.

However, the College's English website is sparse; no English-language regulations regarding academic activities could be found. It clearly does not support the learning of international students. Although cooperation with companies is relatively close, it could be more systematic.

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

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

The system of cumulative performance assessment supports continuous feedback to students throughout the semester. Students' interim assessments are monitored through the electronic exam sheets system. The students have access to their grades and can use them to guide their further learning. During ongoing classes, students receive feedback primarily through the Moodle platform.

Student attendance in studies is constantly monitored. In the event of absence from classes, the reasons for this will be determined (the head of department will also be involved if necessary).

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

Šiauliai Kolegija has a systematic and continuous system for monitoring graduate employability. Career tracking is conducted using interactive data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which provides employment information at 12 months, 18 months, 3 years, and 5 years after graduation. EMIS data is collected and analysed for each cohort, including information on employment rates, positions requiring higher education qualifications, registration with the Employment Service, and cases where data is unavailable.

Across the evaluated period, employment indicators for IST programme graduates remain consistently high, with an average employment rate of approximately 85%. A significant proportion of graduates work in positions requiring higher education qualifications. ŠVK also maintains regular contact with graduates, collecting information about their integration into the labour market and their views on study quality and skills needed for employment. The College analyses cases of unemployment and identifies missing competencies reported by graduates.

In addition, ŠVK organises annual alumni meetings, cooperates with graduates in programme updates, shares job offers, and involves alumni as social partners. The establishment of the

ŠVK Alumni Association in 2024 further strengthens communication with graduates. Survey data show high levels of graduate satisfaction with both their career and study experience.

Overall, a comprehensive and consistent system for monitoring graduate employment and feedback is in place.

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

The implementation of the guidelines on academic honesty, tolerance, and non-discrimination is stipulated in the statutes of ŠVK. Methods for ensuring a learning experience of students are laid down in the *Code of Academic Ethics*, *Study Regulations* and *Description of Assessment of Study Achievements*. The procedure for handling complaints is set out in *the Student Appeals Regulations*. An Academic Ethics Committee has been established in the College to handle relevant cases. Every student signs upon enrolment at ŠVK a declaration of good faith, which is valid for the entire duration of his/her studies, and commits to upholding the principle of academic fairness. *Turnitin* is used as a plagiarism detection system.

During the evaluation period, the Department did not report any violations of the *Code of Academic Ethics* by students in the study programs. Students also did not complain about any problems of this kind. It is worth noting that the question about the level of academic integrity was also included in the questionnaire addressed to alumni.

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

As mentioned above, the procedure for handling complaints is set out in *the Student Appeals Regulation*. A reasoned appeal is submitted to the dean and registered in the ŠVK office. The dean of the faculty initiates the appeals procedure by forwarding the objection to the Appeal Board. During the period analysed, no complaints or objections were received from the students of these degree programs.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

The feedback and self-control system for students has been streamlined to a very good level - the learning environment includes checking the accuracy of the homework solutions by the students, as well as self-tests (review questions) on the topics covered.

Policy documents that ensure academic integrity, tolerance, non-discrimination, and the fair handling of appeals and complaints have not only been established, but also appear to be working.

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
Short cycle				X	
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The learning management system supports students' self-directed learning, including the ability to check the correctness of independently solved tasks and test questions to check the acquisition of what has been learned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. None

For further improvement

1. When developing an English-language website, take into account the interests and needs of international students, as well as potential international cooperation partners.
2. Develop and implement mechanisms for systemic cooperation with companies.
3. Develop a clear, standalone equal-opportunities policy that explicitly defines protections, responsibilities, and procedures for preventing and addressing discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities.

AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

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

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

ŠVK in the field of Study meets the general requirements for conducting studies in the Republic of Lithuania, which specify that at least 10 percent of college study field subjects shall be taught by scientists and that more than half of the teaching staff must have not less than 3 years of practical work experience in the subject area. In 2023–2024, around 45 percent of the scope of study subjects in the field is taught by teachers with a scientific degree (2 professors and 7 with PhD), while all other teachers in the field have at least 3 years of practical work experience in the subject of the course or have recently renewed their competences in practical

internships. There are 25 teachers employed in the study programmes, of whom 15 teach study field subjects, and 107 students, giving a ratio of approximately 1:7.1. During laboratory and practice classes the number of students in a group does not exceed 20, which supports high-quality practical work, close cooperation and individual consultations.

Teachers' full-time workload is regulated by the ŠVK Description of Teachers' Full-time Workload Design.

ŠVK teachers have pedagogical, scientific and practical experience, and their research activities are related to the courses in the field of Study, as demonstrated by their publications and participation in applied research and third-party funded projects presented.

Teaching staff are recruited and regularly evaluated through public competitions and attestation procedures carried out according to the *2024 Procedure of Teachers' and Scientific Researchers' Attestation*. And *Contest for Post Taking* and the *Description of Positions Qualification Requirements of Teaching Staff*, which assess compliance with position requirements, research interests and results, teaching and practical experience, and the use of innovative teaching methods and tools.

Studies in IST, MT and SA are conducted in Lithuanian, while from 2023 to 2025 separate IST groups for Ukrainian students and Erasmus+ students are taught in English.

Around 75 percent of all study field teachers speak English at least at B2 level, and ŠVK supports further development of teachers' language competences through annual English training and Erasmus+ or BIP teaching/learning visits.

Overall, the number, qualification and scientific, didactic and professional competence of the teaching staff are sufficient to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the field study programmes.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The evaluation criterion is fully met. The number of teaching staff and the student–staff ratio (1:7.1, with less than 20 students in practice groups) are sufficient to ensure individual support and high-quality practical training.

Qualification requirements are satisfied: 45% of the study field subjects' is taught by staff with a scientific degree (well above the 10% minimum), while all other teachers have at least 3 years of relevant professional experience, and around 88% have 10+ years of pedagogical experience.

Stable core staff (about 85% permanent) is complemented by practitioners and social partners, ensuring academic depth and up-to-date industry input. Workload regulation and regular attestation/competitions provide a structured framework for maintaining and improving quality, and approximately 75% of teachers have at least B2 English, supporting studies for foreign and Erasmus+ students.

However, students and graduates express their opinion that the Department could involve more industry experts and guest lecturers from abroad to discuss the emerging trends in the area. During the meeting with employer representatives, they expressed their readiness to do so.

Together, this demonstrates that the qualifications, experience and competences of the teaching staff are sufficient and appropriate to achieve the learning outcomes of the field study programmes.

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

5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

ŠVK has a sufficient number of Erasmus+ agreements with foreign institutions in the field of Study, and teaching staff are actively encouraged to use the Erasmus+ mobility programme for teaching and training, as well as to participate in other international project-based mobility activities. During the assessed period, 24 outgoing teaching and learning visits were carried out to countries such as Latvia, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Hungary, Albania, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Estonia, Vietnam and the Dominican Republic, while 20 foreign teachers visited ŠVK from partner institutions in Hungary, Spain, Moldova, Portugal, Kosovo, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia (Sakartvelo), Ukraine, Latvia and Bulgaria. About at least 44% of the teachers in the field of Study participated in Erasmus+ or other international cooperation activities (teaching/learning visits, BIP activities, project partner meetings) abroad in the last three years. Outgoing mobilities are organised within a structured framework, the International Relations and Project Management Office announces an Erasmus+ selection once a year, and applications are assessed in line with Erasmus+ rules and the internationalisation priorities and strategic objectives of ŠVK, while the actual number of mobilities still depends to some extent on teachers' personal initiative and availability.

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

The ŠVK teachers are able to improve their didactic competencies by participating in various training for innovative teaching methods organised by ŠVK and external partners, including internal workshops such as "Cybersecurity", "Learn to Work More Efficiently with Artificial Intelligence: Tools for Writing Using Artificial Intelligence" and "Critical Analysis and Perspectives on Applying Artificial Intelligence".

As well as activities under the project "Digital Transformation of Education (EdTech)", during which teachers developed more than ten courses (e.g., Basics of Algorithmization, Basics of Programming, Computer Graphics).

In the assessed period, the majority of field teachers improved their competences through training, courses and internal seminars organised by ŠVK, supported by institutional funding and, since 2022, additional financial contributions from patrons such as JSC Cherry Servers.

Moreover, ŠVK teachers constantly improve their scientific and practical competence by participating in national and international conferences, internships, project activities and exchange programmes in Lithuania and abroad.

Teachers' professional and competence development are discussed and evaluated annually at departmental meetings and within the attestation process, where individual workload plans and student feedback from surveys are taken into account.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

The evaluation criterion is fully met. The established Erasmus+ scheme, BIP activities and other international cooperation instruments provide real and regularly used opportunities for

academic mobility. At the same time, the relatively high teaching load and substantial share of contact hours can limit wider participation in mobility activities and mean that actual use of available opportunities still depends strongly on individual initiative. ŠVK has developed several systematic measures to support competence development, a formal HR and competence development system (Quality Manual – Human Resources Management procedure), the International Relations and Project Management Office coordinating mobility, structured procedures for staff training and business trips, and additional financial support from patrons such as JSC Cherry Servers. Together with internal and external trainings (including EdTech, AI- and cybersecurity-related courses) and regular attestation and annual reviews, these arrangements ensure that teachers have accessible opportunities to develop didactic, scientific and practical competences, even though further reduction of teaching load or more flexible planning could help broaden participation in international mobility.

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
Short cycle				X	
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Highly qualified and stable teaching staff with an excellent student–staff ratio and systematic support for competence development and international mobility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. None

For further improvement

1. Establish a structured scheme for regularly inviting leading experts, including international specialists, as guest lecturers in the field study programmes, in order to broaden students' exposure to current developments in the field and to strengthen the link between studies, research and professional practice.

AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

Facilities of ŠVK are on an appropriate level: the classrooms are well equipped for face-to-face and online education, and each year, the College invests in the creation of spaces adapted to active learning methods. Also, there is sufficient space available for the students for recreational activities and for socializing. Students have access to specialised computer rooms and laboratories, and the department hosts a state-of-the-art Multimedia Lab opened in 2018 which is used by participants of the MT study programme.

Computer rooms and labs are equipped with sufficiently powerful machines to enable students to gain practical programming experience. Various software packages including virtualization engines have been licenced to be used by the faculty and the students. Licencing of software is supported by the Lithuanian Association of Distance and e-Learning LieDM Consortium and LieDM Association, where ŠVK is a member. In addition to the computers of the institution, some space is available to allow students to bring their own laptop. This approach is regularly used because it allows work on tasks to continue at home.

Students and faculty use Moodle learning management system. Teachers upload their digital content of study subjects, choose different forms of organization of study subjects, organize practical activities in various ways, share study tools, evaluate students' achievements and monitor their progress, receive and provide feedback. All functions necessary for teamwork in Moodle have been implemented. Students use Moodle to submit their accomplishments and learning results for evaluation and assessment. Strong emphasis is put on plagiarism detection. Up to 2024 the eLABa system has been used. The Turnitin detection program has been in use since 2024.

ŠVK premises are equipped with special equipment to accommodate and support students with certain disabilities which require special support, e.g. for vision impairment or motor disorders. Examples include elevators, image magnification devices and screen readers.

Students have access to the on-site library of the institution. In addition they have access to a sufficiently large number of eBooks and periodicals.

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

The Department has established formal processes to allocate funds for planning and upgrading resources required to execute the study programmes. Computer hardware and software are regularly upgraded, and library resources supplemented. Both the Department head and the dean of the faculty are involved in prioritizing the financial short-term and long-term strategic needs of updating the study resources.

To obtain the funds necessary for academic activities, the ŠVK actively submits applications to various support measures, including EU Structural Funds. These funds have been allocated to upgrade various computer labs with new machines and new software licences.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

The facilities and resources available appear to be at an appropriate level to efficiently support the students. Classrooms are in general well equipped for face-to-face and online learning. Students also have access to specialised computer rooms and laboratories. Specific facilities for people with special needs are well organised.

Both the Department and the institution understand the need of continuous and dedicated investments in infrastructure and equipment to create engaging spaces adapted to active learning methods. The planning also includes resources for maintenance and improvement of the library and the student infrastructure.

However, both during conversations with students and during visits to the laboratories, some aspects emerged that could be improved in the laboratories, keeping in mind the needs of both teaching and research.

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
Short cycle				X	
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The department has established working and efficient processes supervised by the head of the department and including the dean of the faculty to allocate sufficient funds into the computer infrastructure and equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. None

For further improvement

1. Expand the multimedia laboratories by adding a motion capture module using haptic sensors for research purposes, including staff research and students' final projects.
2. Upgrade laboratory infrastructure by acquiring equipment that enables more realistic project development, including long-range LiDAR devices and skeletal motion-tracking controllers.

AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

The College has a thorough Quality Manual (42 pages plus annexes). The main instrument for ensuring the quality of curricula is the Study Field Committee (SFC). Its tasks are set out in the Regulations of the *Study Field Committee*. The tasks of the SFC chairperson are set out in commendable detail. The SFC is responsible for the continuous monitoring and improvement of the quality of the program content, the preparation of self-assessments, the review of content, updating, evaluating updated or newly created course descriptions, etc. The SFC also takes into account the quality of the methodological tools developed by the lecturers, maintains contact with social partners and graduates, and monitors changes and innovations in professional fields, study areas and science, and promotes their application in the study subjects. Two SFC meetings held in 2025 discussed the self-analysis report of the Informatics Engineering curricula, the recognition of subjects completed at another educational institution, the semester plans of the Information Systems Technologies and Multimedia Technologies curricula, and the independent work load of students, as well as the results of student surveys.

Social partners are involved in various collegial and decision-making bodies. For example, they make up at least 50% of the composition of the committees for defending students' final theses

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

Šiauliai Kolegija involves various stakeholder groups – students, employers, and social partners – in its internal quality assurance processes. Stakeholders participate in programme development, evaluation of professional practice, qualification commissions, programme self-assessment, and departmental or faculty events. External experts, such as the evaluators from Invest in Lithuania, have also provided recommendations, which were followed by an action plan approved and monitored by the Faculty Council.

Students are formally represented through the Students' Representative Body, which delegates members to key governance and academic committees. Students participate in programme committees, self-assessment processes, and discussions on programme implementation.

Overall, the College has established formal structures for stakeholder involvement; however, the effectiveness of participation in practice could not be fully verified during the visit based solely on the self-evaluation description.

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

The planning and presentation of data as well as the monitoring of performance implementation are listed in the Annex 2 of the Quality Manual. However, it is sometimes very general, leaving actual activities essentially undefined. For example, with regard to obtaining feedback, only a general "Feedback from the interested parties" is stated. On the other hand, in reality, the feedback solicitation is sometimes very thorough. For example, there are two questionnaires addressed to alumni - one about the content and organization of the studies at the College, and the other about the extent to which the studies were in line with the needs of the alumni's professional activities.

Extracts from previous evaluation reports can be found on the College's website.

In general, the College's English website is poor. Not only that, when switching from a Lithuanian site to the English site, you are always redirected to the main page of the English website (even if there is a corresponding English page). The academic calendar on the English website referred to the previous academic year (2024/2025)! Moreover, the members of the Review Panel were unable to find a single regulation in English on the ŠVK's public website, not even the College' statutes.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

Providing feedback on the quality of the courses is not mandatory for students. Approximately half - sometimes even less than half - of the students provide feedback. As mentioned in section 7.1.1, the results of student feedback surveys will be discussed by the study programme committee (called Committee for Informatics Engineering Studies). However, since answering the questionnaire is not mandatory for students, the question arises as to how generalizable the results are to the entire study group.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

The College's overall quality system is systematic and covers all important areas of academic activity. The tasks of the SFC, the organization of its activities and responsibilities are described in particular detail.

However, the coverage of the quality system on the College's English website is limited. It contains only three documents - the Quality Manual, the institutional accreditation assessment report, and the ISO 9001:2015 certificate.

AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. None

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. To significantly improve the College's English website, while ensuring its consistency and compatibility with the Lithuanian website.

For further improvement

1. Develop and implement motivators for students to participate as much as possible in responding to feedback surveys.

V. SUMMARY

The current report addresses three study programmes Šiauliai Valstybinė Kolegija (ŠVK): 1) a short cycle study programme Systems Administration (SA), 2) a first cycle study programme Information Systems Technology (IST) and 3) a first cycle study programme Multimedia Technologies (MT). All study programmes are given a positive evaluation (total evaluation points 23 for the short cycle and 27 for the first cycle study programmes).

The digital learning environment of the College should be particularly highlighted, as it has implemented functions that support students' independent learning, including allowing them to check the correctness of independently solved tasks and containing test questions to check the acquisition of what has been learned.

Secondly, the extensive research and development activities of academic staff should be noted: publishing scientific articles, organizing and participating in conferences, and completing research and development projects, as well as involving students in development activities. At this point, the direction taken in the last year of publishing scientific articles primarily in top journals (contained in the Web of Science databases) should be noted as particularly positive. This direction should definitely be continued. The increased visibility of the ŠVK in the professional community would thus contribute to the expansion of the international cooperation network and to the even stronger involvement of the ŠVK in the implementation of international cooperation projects. However, research activities are largely based on the individual activities of the lecturers, significant research groups have not been formed. In order to achieve synergy through collaboration between lecturers and thereby international recognition, it would certainly be necessary to develop research groups that exceed a critical mass.

It should also be noted the comprehensive academic advising system offered to students by academic and non-academic staff, as well as the extensive opportunities for extracurricular activities.

Review panel considers the lack of informative content on the ŠVK English website to be the biggest problem that needs to be solved. RP failed to even find the College's charter, let alone other acts regulating the College's operations. At the same time, the website of any institution has become the primary means of obtaining information about that institution. Therefore, the quality of an English-language website is a primary prerequisite for expanding international activities.

The review panel received excellent support in preparing and carrying out the visit, for which we express our sincere thanks to SKVC and the staff of ŠVK. We note the good readability of the ŠVK self-evaluation report (SER) - it was informative, structured according to a system of standards and sufficiently focused. The only difficulty was the fact that the SER contained references mostly to Lithuanian-language documents (the academic experts did not speak Lithuanian).

VI. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

The College features an innovative learning environment that supports independent student learning. This includes the opportunity to check the accuracy of independently completed tasks, as well as the provision of test questions to assess learning.