



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of BUSINESS
at Vilniaus Kolegija

Expert panel:

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academic;
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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	International Business	Tourism Management	Hotel and Restaurant Business Management	Creativity and Business Innovations*
State code	6531LX045	6531LX046	6531LX047	6581LX002
Type of studies	Professional bachelor studies	Professional bachelor studies	Professional bachelor studies	Professional bachelor studies
Cycle of studies	First	First	First	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time 3 years; part-time 4 years	Full-time 3 years; part-time 4 years	Full-time 3 years; part-time 4 years	Full-time 3 years
Credit volume	180	180	180	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Business Administration	Professional Bachelor of Business Administration	Professional Bachelor of Business Administration	Professional Bachelor of Business Administration
Language of instruction	English / Lithuanian	English / Lithuanian	English / Lithuanian	English
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education	Secondary education	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	30/06/2011	30/06/2011	01/06/2011	09/04/2014

** Joint study program in the business study field;*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of study fields is based on the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) 31 December 2019 Order [No.V-149](#).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study process and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by Higher Education Institution (HEI)*; 2) *site visit of the expert panel to the HEI*; 3) *production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of this external evaluation report of the study field SKVC takes a decision to accredit study field either for 7 years or for 3 years. If the field evaluation is negative then the study field is not accredited.

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 3 years** if one of the evaluation areas is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

The study field and cycle are **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas is evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No.V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on *4th of May, 2022*.

Ass. Prof. dr. Natalie Aleksandra Gurviš-Suits, *Department of Business Administration, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia.*

Prof. dr. Iveta Ludviga, *Department of Business, RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, Latvia.*

Ass. Prof. dr. Zarina Reinhard-Charlesworth, *Haute Ecole de Gestion Arc, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Western Switzerland.*

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Ms Indre Baltakytė, *Faculty of Economics & Management, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	Information on Learning Facilities and Resources
2.	Final theses
3.	Course syllables

1.4. BACKGROUND OF BUSINESS FIELD STUDIES AT VILNIAUS KOLEGIJA

Vilniaus kolegija (hereinafter referred to as VIKO) was established in 2000 because of merging standalone specialised higher education institutions. Today VIKO is currently the largest professional higher education institution in Lithuania. VIKO has 7 faculties: Electronics and Informatics, Economics, Business Management, Health Care, Pedagogy, Arts and Creative Technologies, Agrotechnology. VIKO has 44 study programmes, 6382 students, 460 teachers, including 89 PhDs and 23 recognised artists, students and ca 6000 graduates (data from the end of 2020). Since its establishment two institutional evaluations have been carried out in 2005 and 2014, the last one evaluation was carried out by an international group of experts. In both cases the institution received accreditation for the maximum available period.

The four evaluated study programs Joint Creativity and Business Innovations Study Programme, launched in 2014, International Business study programme, launched in 2011, Tourism Management study programme, launched in 2011, Hotel and Restaurant Business Management study programme, launched in 2011 are conducted at the Faculty in the Business study field and after the completion of the studied students are awarded with Bachelor degree.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Business study field and first cycle at Vilniaus kolegija is given **positive** evaluation.*

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	27

*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies.

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

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

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

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

Study aims, outcomes and content shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)

According to SER, aims of the Study programmes evaluated by the experts' panel are states as follows: “

- **The aim of the International Business study programme** is to train international business specialists who are familiar with the peculiarities of international business, who are able to set up and manage a company, research the market, manage change, organise the purchase and sale of goods, ensure the quality of their activities, compete in the Lithuanian and international markets, manage information, analyse and solve contemporary business problems and respond to changes in the international market. The programme specialisations (international marketing and sales, e-commerce and logistics) aim to train marketing and sales, e-commerce and logistics professionals who are able to work effectively in international markets.

- **The aim of the Creativity and Business Innovations study programme** is to train specialists in the business environment who are able to organise and implement complex solutions in modern society, based on innovative thinking, new theories and methods, to develop out-of-the-box ideas and provide creative solutions in order to boost enterprises, to contribute to the continuous development of strategic business processes; to communicate with stakeholders in order to develop creative solutions.

- **The aim of the Tourism Management study programme** is to train tourism specialists who meet the needs of the modern labour market and work in the tourism industry, who are familiar with the specifics of the tourism business, who are able to independently solve problems and adapt to the constantly changing business environment, and to provide professional higher education that will enable graduates to compete successfully in the tourism market.

- **The aim of the Hotel and Restaurant Business Management study programme** is to train a business specialist capable of adapting to the changing environment

of the hospitality business and the requirements of the modern labour market, able to analyse the business situation, plan, organise and control the activities of hotels, restaurants and their departments, select accommodation according to the guests' needs, organise the service of the guests in restaurants and bars, ensure the quality of the activities, manage the available material and financial resources, communicate with guests and partners in Lithuanian and foreign languages, manage change, establish and manage a hospitality company.

Learning outcomes identified for each programme are coherent with the aim of the programme, and the VI Qualification Level Description of National Lithuanian Qualifications Framework addressing all the main descriptions, however, some of the learning outcomes are too general and are difficult to measure, for example, for the International Business Study Programme: "To organise e-commerce", "Assess business environment", "Take international business decisions". This expert panel would recommend making them more detailed and pointing out either obtained knowledge or its application of research skills, social skills and special abilities.

The evaluated programmes are developed and regularly updated in line with Strategy of the VIKO and the strategy until the year 2025 is being focused on research: impact on society and internal culture priorities (sustainable development, internationalisation, and digitalization). Also, the programmes are tied to the latest needs of the labour market. The main focus of the programmes is its practical relevance and adherence to the needs of a constantly changing business environment. All programmes include the Social business study module and have a strong international aspect. Creativity and Business innovation study programme is a joint programme carried out with Porto Polytechnic Institute and Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, enabling students to get three diplomas in case of successful graduation. This programme is tightly linked to market demand and the need of companies and aims to develop not only creativity but also cultural competences, enabling students to work in international companies. The International Business studies programme has also reached inter-institutional agreements for double-degree studies. During the visit expert panel noted that all the stakeholders are committed to the strong internationalisation of the study programmes and their practical implementation *via* constant collaboration with the business community. There is a close collaboration with Social Innovation Cluster, social partners also provide students with special software. Social partners expressed that they have a high level of cooperation with VIKO and take an active part in updating the programme. On the other hand, the expert panel would recommend

providing systematic updates to stakeholders regarding latest changes in the study programmes.

The expert group considers it would be very useful to find truly unique things about the programmes in order to attract potential students and actively promote them on the market. It is necessary to pay more attention to marketing the Vilniaus kolegija study programmes. We suggest making sure the administration takes an active part in this process by spreading a good word of *mouth*, inviting marketing related social partners, alumni, current students and external advisers who would guide the discussions, look for ideas outside the category.

3.1.2. Evaluation of the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI

The aims of the study programmes are to train highly educated specialists in the relevant study field equipped with all necessary knowledge and skills to enter the labour market. In addition, successfully work in terms and conditions of the rapidly changing business world. These study field programmes are in line with the mission of VIKO. According to SER the mission is “to provide professional higher education studies of the highest quality (Field studies provide a Professional Bachelor’s Degree, which is valued on the labour market for its high employment rates) and to develop VIKO’s activities at the international level. Having a closer look at the VIKO has national and international level communication and cooperation with businesses and other types of organisations. In addition, ERASMUS+ exchange opportunities are offered to outgoing and incoming students and teachers (all study field programmes are offered in English). This exchange improves the competences of academic staff as business representatives share their knowledge with students and staff. Teachers are invited to update their knowledge during internships in companies, and they are actively involved in the development of their disciplinary, didactic and general qualifications. The exchanges improve the quality of professional higher education and the infrastructure for applied research. This includes special knowledge and personal skills that are acquired and developed through business case studies in study modules and graduation theses, cooperation, involvement of students in projects and student conferences. Infrastructure and research development is in accordance with the description of the procedure for the allocation of state budget funds for research, development and artistic activities to science and higher education institutions. The description is approved by Resolution No 149 of the

Government (Republic of Lithuania) of 1 March 2017 “On the Implementation of the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania”.

The aims of the study programmes also correspond to the latest strategy of the Vilniaus Kolegija aiming “to develop and improve competitive, social responsibility-oriented professional higher education study programmes. The business study field programmes are constantly developed and their content is updated in accordance with the latest business trends and scientific achievements. Especially the Sustainable Development module is focused on the development of social responsibility in business, and the graduation theses are prepared by examining social responsibility topics.

During the visit, it became obvious that field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes are in line with the mission and strategic priorities of the HEI. The structure of the evaluated study programmes enables achievement of stipulated learning outcomes that help to prepare highly educated specialists equipped with all required knowledge, research and personal skills as well as social abilities to start their career in the selected field. These learning outcomes are developed in tight cooperation with social partners and are regularly reviewed in line with the latest changes. During the visit, the expert panel got a confirmation that the recently introduced joint Study Programme of Creativity and Business Innovations, which is conducted in cooperation with the Porto Polytechnic Institute and the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences gives a strong emphasize on the internalisation aspect and is highly valued by all stakeholders. After graduation, students get three diplomas.

3.1.3. Evaluation of the compliance of the field and cycle study programme with legal requirements

The structure of each study programme is based on the legal documents on higher education in the Republic of Lithuania, ECTS User’s Guide 2015 and the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Programmes correspond to legal requirements: each programme consists of 180 ECTS (both full-time and part-time) and each module consists of 10 ECTS. Full-time programme duration is 3 years (six semesters) while part-time studies lasts 4 years (eight semesters). Under the full-time study programme semester consists of 30 ECTS, while under the part time the volume is generally 20 ECTS with the exceptions to the semesters that include professional internship. The ratio between the volume of contact hours and self-study hours is 50/50. There are also 24 hours of student consultations per module, ensuring students well understanding of the studied material. During the course students have two

internships – professional and final of 20 ECTS. The structure and the duration enable to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes of the all evaluated study programmes.

3.1.4. Evaluation of compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes

The compatibility is achieved by meeting the requirements of the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, Order No V-535 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 9 May 2010 “On the Approval of the Description of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework”, Order No V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016 “On the Approval of the Description of the General Requirements for Studies”, Order No 1026 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 May 2009 “On the Approval of the Description of the Full-Time and Part-Time Forms of Studies”, Order No V-1012 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 16 November 2016 “On the Approval of the Description of Study Cycle” and the ECTS User guide, 2015. While formulating learning outcomes Vilniaus kolegija uses the principle of Bloom Taxonomy, making them well balanced, clearly stipulated and achieved *via* study process implementing modern teaching methods (flipped classroom methods, case studies, discussions, practical projects worked out in teams, visits to business companies).

During the visit, it became clear that the curriculum of the study courses and the stipulated teaching and assessment methods enable distinctive evaluation of knowledge and skills that were obtained during the study process. These methods are compatible with each other as well as with the aims, and learning outcomes of the Business study field and the evaluated programmes.

3.1.5. Evaluation of the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures consistent development of competences of students

All Programmes are developed and structured in accordance with the general requirements for professional higher education studies leading to the Professional Bachelor’s Degree, the modular structure of the studies and the ECTS credit system. Each Programme consists of 180 credits and each module consists of 10 credits. The methods of study organisation used by VIKO in the implementation of the Programmes are student class (contact) work and independent work. Each module has 100-144 contact hours (60-70 percent theory and 40-30 percent practice) and 150-106 hours of independent work. Student

counselling hours are also planned, with 24 hours per module, distributed in proportion to the number of credits according to the structural parts of the module.

The curriculum of the study programmes is developed in order to provide students with general knowledge, research and social skills as well as special skills and abilities. Strong practical aspect is achieved by two internships enabling students to get a good understanding of the modern business environment. The students can also choose their specialization and the topic of the final thesis. The modules are allocated in a reasonable sequence and represent a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and evaluation criteria following the “general to specific” rule. Each module has well-defined learning objectives, followed by the clear learning objectives of each course included in a particular module. All programmes include modules related to general business knowledge, followed by the ones developing specific skills and research abilities.

However, during the visit and meeting with students and alumni it was mentioned that there is a need to introduce more options to improve English language for students during the courses as they all may have different levels of knowledge. There was also a recommendation that due to the latest developments in the world economy, like Covid-19, it would be useful to introduce more courses developing social abilities and personal skills like leadership, consumer psychology etc. During the visit, it became evident that programme modules and courses ensure consistent development of competences of students enabling them to reach the learning outcomes and the aim of the programmes.

3.1.6. Evaluation of opportunities for students to personalise the structure of field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes

Students have a possibility to choose full-time, part-time studies or sessional way of studies. All studies have a component of distant learning, enabling students to create personalised study plans. During the visit, students mentioned that these options are highly valued by them and they get feedback and clarifications from the teaching staff in a very fast and efficient way.

Students can choose elective modules of 10 ETC in order to achieve learning outcomes of the study programmes and have better knowledge in a particular selected area of specialisation. For example, they can choose to study different foreign languages. As stated before, students mentioned that more language courses of different levels should be available to meet students’ needs. The expert group would recommend introducing an advanced English language course.

Study programmes are updated on a regular basis; changes can be initiated by any stakeholder and are discussed during the meetings of a Study Committee. The committee meets at least every semester. Meetings involve social partners in order to keep up to date with latest developments in the business and labour market. For instance, in the International Business study programme the new specialisation – e-commerce was introduced. This year the study committee of the business study field received a request to discuss issues related to the workload of full-time students, who need to have a well-balanced combination of contact and distance learning. The committee decided to have more than 50% of contact hours and the rest time was dedicated to online learning: each module has 100-144 contact hours (60-70 percent theory and 40-30 percent practice) and 150-106 hours of independent work. During the meeting with social partners, it was confirmed that they actively participate in these meetings and discuss all relevant matters. Last year the situation in the tourism sector, which was hardly hit by the pandemic, was under the scope. In order to attract students to this sector, it was recommended to focus more on digital skills. During the visit, it was determined that there is a need for more courses developing social abilities and personal skills like leadership, consumer psychology etc.

3.1.7. Evaluation of compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements

Final thesis preparation and defence procedure is regulated by the “Graduation Thesis (Project) Preparation and Defence Procedures of the VIKO” as well as the Methodological Guidelines for the Preparation, Registration and Defence of Graduation Theses of the Faculty of Business Management. The Defence Committee always includes representatives of experts from companies from the related study field. Topics are closely related to real-life business situations within companies aimed to analyse and solve real problems. Students are asked to avoid general recommendations but to give recommendations for the particular selected company with detailed explanations if there is possible implementation.

Graduation theses are of a good quality with the topics focusing on contemporary real business life problems and those problems are examined on the examples of particular companies. Most students select the topics during the internship process: cooperating with both the supervisor from VIKO and a practitioner from the company a student does the internship. During the study, process students get all the necessary skills and knowledge to prepare for a successful defence of their final thesis, which was confirmed during the visit by reviewing the selected theses by the expert panel. During the visit, the expert panel got

confirmation from students that they highly appreciate cooperation with teaching staff and companies during the thesis preparation process.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Strong vision on the development of the study programmes in line with latest developments in the digital area and the labour market.
2. Implementations of Creativity and Business Innovations joint programme, which corresponds to the needs of the international business market and meets student expectations.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The number of options to improve language knowledge during the courses in line with students' needs is rather limited.
2. Lack of systematic updates provided to stakeholders regarding latest changes in the study programmes.
3. There should be more courses developing social abilities and personal skills like leadership, consumer psychology etc.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

Links between science (art) and study activities shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.2.1. Evaluation of the sufficiency of the science (applied science, art) activities implemented by the HEI for the field of research (art) related to the field of study

VIKO takes an active part in various research projects, during the years 2018-2021 more than 20 research projects with dedicated funding were carried out. Various research seminars and forums are organised by Vilniaus Kolegija on a regular basis, attracting academic staff from Lithuania and abroad. However, an expert panel noted that the publication activity of the teaching remains low with quite a low number of articles published in international scientific journals with high impact factor. Research incentives are supported by the VIKO by funding publication related expenses, attending seminars and conferences, which are a part of annual workload of the academic staff. During the meeting with the representatives of teaching staff, lecturers confirmed that they actively used various opportunities: they are regularly offered to attend conferences and seminars as well as participate in the Erasmus programme and is funded by VIKO. Practitioners are also attracted

to participate in seminars and conferences. Research activities are carried out in numerous research groups and numerous funds were allocated to these projects during the analysed period.

The expert panel acknowledges the efforts of the VIKO dedicated to practical implementation of research results and various research projects. However, the group would recommend engaging experts-practitioners in publication activities in the form of joint cooperation. It would also make sense to encourage teaching staff by providing financial grants and scholarships for publications of books and study materials as well as articles in journals indexed in highly rated databases with high impact factor like WOS, Scopus etc.

3.2.2. Evaluation of the link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology

During the visit, the expert panel got full evidence that the teaching staff actively implements their own cases and real-life problems and tasks into the study process, which was also confirmed by students. Lecturers actively use contemporary innovative study methods: flipped classroom methods, case studies, discussions, practical projects worked out in teams, visits to companies. Creativity platform was mentioned to be a very good method implemented by the teachers. The expert group agrees that this method is very useful as it gives the opportunity to solve real problems from business companies. Most of the teaching staff integrate creative platform fully or partially into their teaching methods, which is highly valued by students. Foreign lecturers also share their valuable experience during guest lectures and Erasmus visits. The teaching staff of VIKO also actively participates in the Erasmus programme, bringing new knowledge, skills and teaching techniques back home to disseminate among colleagues and students. However, in the opinion of the expert panel it would be beneficial to conduct joint research in close cooperation with foreign institutions.

3.2.3. Evaluation of conditions for students to get involved in scientific (applied science, art) activities consistent with their study cycle

During the visit, it became evident that VIKO has all the facilities and resources to enable students to get involved in scientific research. Each year an International Annual Student Conference "Youth in a Changing Society" is organised where students are encouraged to take an active part and present their research findings. Conference proceedings

are also published and made publicly available. During the meeting several students confirmed their participation in the conference together with the representatives of the teaching staff. More than ten scientific databases are accessible by all students not only in Vilniaus Kolegija but also from home via an easy proxy programme and VPN.

Students also take an active part in Creativity Laboratory as well Open-air Creativity Laboratory projects and activities. Strong link between research and studies is also secured by a high number of lecturers who are experts in the particular practical field sharing their own practical experiences and asking students to analyse real-life cases as well as to solve practical problems. Thesis topics are also closely related to the practical field and usually consist of analysis of the real-life problem in a certain company, followed by offering solutions and giving practical recommendations.

Foreign professors and teaching staff involved in Erasmus programmes also contribute to deep interrelation of scientific research and study process. VIKO annually received state funding for research, which is used to renew laboratories, support staff and students in scientific publications and carry out various research projects.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Strong interlinkage between study process and real-life situation at the market.
2. Creativity platform actively used by teaching staff as a valuable tool of integrating practical aspects into the study process.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Rather low cooperation of academic staff with other universities in terms of research and scientific projects.
2. Publication activity of the teaching staff in international scientific journals with a high impact factor is quite low.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

Student admission and support shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process

Admission rules are provided on the website of the VIKO. Admission to the study programmes takes place in accordance with the procedure prescribed by law, which is administered by LAMA BPO (Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions to organize general admission). There are no special requirements for admission to the study programmes, but the competitive score of the candidates is the most important criterion. The competitive score is based on the minimum admission requirements for VIKO. The minimum

requirements are established in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania. VIKO advises remotely from the contacts listed on the website. During the expert panel visit, all of the students stated that they were satisfied with this criterion and found no problems. Although the number of applicants and admitted students remains stable, it is quite low for programmes taught in English. During the visit, it became obvious that certain actions need to be taken in regard to identifying the target market of the programmes. It seems that VIKO is aware of channels and methods on how to attract students from Lithuania. However, more attention should be paid to social media where all current school children spend most of their time. Students can be attracted to assist to communicate via the social media channels or at least – ask to audit VIKO's plans or actions. It would also be useful to choose certain 1-2 countries or more to have a real breakthrough for targeting foreign students. It would be helpful to participate in more local study fairs, exhibitions, etc. This cooperation will be successful for both sides as foreign students will be looking for truly international experience and at the same time come to VIKO for studies.

3.3.2. Evaluation of the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application

VIKO conducts a procedure during which competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning are accredited and assessed. Candidates must complete the registration form, which is available on the website of VIKO. After completion, candidates are informed of their participation in the procedure and are consulted on-site, by telephone or e-mail. During the consultations, with the responsible staff of the faculty, the candidates prepare a portfolio of competencies, which is evaluated by a competent group of lecturers-experts. If successful, the candidate is given academic credits. The candidate is given the opportunity to become a listener, later a student and study according to the VIKO stage programme and to obtain a bachelor's degree or a bachelor's degree with a qualification. The procedure of assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements of study subjects is paid by the candidate. If a candidate continues to study under a professional undergraduate programme, he or she is not required to pay for those study credits that have been credited.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

Students can take advantage of the opportunity for Erasmus+ studies and Erasmus+ internships. There are two selections for Erasmus+ studies and Erasmus+ internships per academic year. One selection takes place in the fall semester and another selection in the spring semester. All students can participate in the selection. A list of institutions that students can visit is available on the VIKO website. Scholarships are given to exchange students. Students with special needs can apply for additional support. During the online visit these aspects were all confirmed by students. The Creativity and Business Innovations program collaborates with Estonian and Portuguese universities. Students say this is a great opportunity to gain more intercultural experience. Students take advantage of this opportunity; they are satisfied and evaluate the process positively.

3.3.4. Assessment of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students of the field

Socially disadvantaged students are eligible for additional support. During the period of 2018-2021, 8 students with special needs received financial support. VIKO students can receive free psychological help. Students are also provided with career support. They are informed of issues such as the study programme's aims, foreseen learning outcomes, studied course units, and timetables. Also, they get help in preparing resumes. During the meeting with the group of experts, the students stated that they were informed about the ways of support. It was also stated that support is provided quickly, and counselling is helpful. Consultations are held by contact or online using MS Teams or even email if needed.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Before the beginning of the studies, the faculty organises an introductory study week for students, during which they are provided with the most important information about the chosen study programme, study procedure, academic integrity, and other relevant topics. Students can always consult with the heads of departments on issues related to studies, and the Department of Studies advises students on technical issues related to the study procedure. For the convenience of students, the study information manager in the Faculty of Business Management consults the students. The student representative office at the faculty advises students on student activities. The contacts of the administration staff are

freely available to the students on the website of the faculty, and students are provided with both physical and remote consultation opportunities.

Students receive a wide range of support such as implementation of the study process, assessments, mobility and more. The effectiveness of the support provided to students is assessed by periodically conducting a survey of students' satisfaction with studies at VIKO. 61.3 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the counselling related to the studies (10.5% were dissatisfied) according to a survey conducted in 2020. No surveys have been conducted since 2020. The summary of student feedback should take place on a regular basis and be publicly available on the VIKO website.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. VIKO provides complete, clear, and accessible information to the public.
2. Half of the study programmes are taught in English, which attracts Erasmus students.

(1) Weaknesses:

1. Low number of foreign students.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Studying, student performance and graduate employment shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.4.1. Evaluation of the teaching and learning process that enables to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes

The teaching process is diverse drawing on many methods and supported by the inclusion of many practitioner-teachers. The institution also places an emphasis on creativity and innovation, and this is confirmed by the use of the “Creative Platform” methodology throughout the study field. A methodology developed at Aalborg University in Denmark and for which VIKO has the status of exclusive Lithuanian partner. Further reinforcing the use of this methodology is the close relationship with one of the originators Prof. Dr. Ch Byrge who has been on the VIKO Faculty since 2018.

Both afore-mentioned measures ensure that the students will engage in their learning in a very hands-on manner and for the encouragement of creativity. Learning accordingly takes place both in and out of the classroom with dedicated spaces such as the Open-air Creativity Laboratory and other informal learning spaces supporting the search for innovation. The

hands-on aspect of the programme is consolidated through inclusion of professional internships.

VIKO refers to both Bloom's Taxonomy and the Entrepreneurial Competence Framework (EntreComp) in the construction of the programme content which is to be commended.

Finally, the needs of the students are taken into account through the provision of flexible programmes and scheduling with both part-time and full-time study options available. The focus on blended learning also includes the use of distance-learning which is attractive to a number of students. Internships are offered both locally and abroad and there is also the possibility for students to join the Erasmus+ programme and spend one semester abroad. Overall, the Expert Committee feels this particular area deserves a very, very good mention.

3.4.2. Evaluation of conditions ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs

In terms of admissions, there are various scholarships and financial aid options available for both socially vulnerable students and students with special needs. Once enrolled, students with special needs are signalled to the Faculty Study Department. The department then makes the necessary arrangements and informs the teachers concerned. Technically everything is in place to cater to students with special needs whether visual, hearing, mobility-related or other. Student mentors are assigned to students with special needs to ensure that any difficulties they encounter are addressed.

3.4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

Student study progress is extremely well monitored. VIKO has a four-level monitoring process starting with teacher input and feedback based on students' results which in turn is coordinated at the level of the module. As the student progresses through the programme their results are monitored at the Programme level which calls for examining placement results as well as the graduate thesis. It is at this level that the monitoring of the study process includes new graduates to get feedback on the programme for subsequent planning and change. The final Faculty level allows for an open discussion of problem areas in the study process and how these can be improved. The use of these four levels benefits the students as well as providing a good overall view of how the study programme is working and how it can be further improved.

Students receive feedback from their teachers in person, electronically or on the Institution's Learning Management System. Assessments are both formative and cumulative allowing the student to self-assess their progress during the semester. Individual consultations are also possible. Students are called on to engage in a number of independent projects throughout the study programme, which further supports the development of self-assessment skills.

3.4.4. Evaluation of employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field

Official career monitoring is carried out through government and regional bodies 11 months after the completion of studies. Graduate employability is particularly good with employment rates being well over 90% with the exception of a small dip, most likely COVID-19 related, in 2020. This reflects a high labour market demand and confirms the need for study programmes such as offered by Vilniaus kolegija.

The institution has a good relationship with its social partners who value the students that come to them for placements or jobs after graduation. In their words students are "exceptional, integrate very well, are passionate, motivated, and open-minded". This relationship allows for continued contact with students post-graduation despite the lack of a proper Alumni Association.

3.4.5. Evaluation of the implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination

The importance placed by the VIKO on academic integrity is clear not only through the inclusion of the usual anti-plagiarism software, in the case of VIKO the ESAS system, but also through the involvement of the teachers. Not only are assignments and course material regularly updated but also teachers remind students, at critical times during their studies, of the importance of academic integrity. Student services are in place to support students, encourage tolerance and prevent any form of discrimination.

3.4.6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies

There is a multi-step process in place starting with the study department where the appeal is first lodged before being passed on to the Dean. Follow-up may be through individual or committee meetings. The appeals process is well detailed and easily accessible on the institution's website and there is no doubt that the students are well informed. According to the SER one appeal was lodged and successfully resolved during the period analysed. This is within expected norms given the size of the student body.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. 4-level system for monitoring student progress;
2. Focus on creativity and its integration throughout the programme.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Despite the open-day event there seems to be room for additional reaching out to potential students at the high school level to inform about the study programmes and possibilities open to them;
2. The use of Facebook to promote networking amongst alumni.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching staff shall be evaluated in accordance with the following indicators:

3.5.1. Evaluation of the adequacy of the number, qualification and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff within a field study programme(s) at the HEI in order to achieve the learning outcomes

The Vilniaus kolegija teachers' team consists of 50 teachers and 22% of teachers teaching the modules in the study field have PhD degrees. All teachers have at least a master's degree, Majority of the Field teachers have at least 3 years of practical experience in the subject they teach. The pedagogical work experience of the teachers ranges from 1 to 44 years. The Field teachers are strong in terms of practical work experience, work time in VIKO ranges from 1 to 44 years. The student/teacher ratio is favourable throughout the years – 19-20 students per teacher.

All teachers are active in the science field and have presented 2-3 scientific outputs (according to the data of VIKO). The research outputs and applied science activities are well integrated into the study process. During the visit, teachers confirmed that the research workload is a part of their job descriptions; they mentioned examples of joint research with students. This allows concluding that the number of the lectures in Vilniaus kolegija business study field, their experience of pedagogical and practical work, and qualifications are sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes and comply with the requirements, established in

Lithuanian legislation.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility

The mobility of teachers in the Business field of studies at Vilniaus kolegija programmes takes place mainly as part of ERASMUS+ and is particularly encouraged. During the visit, teachers confirmed that they regularly receive information about mobility opportunities and that all teachers have equal opportunities for academic mobility. Before Covid the number of teachers engaged in mobility programmes was good. In 2018-2019, 27 Field teachers travelled to partner higher education institutions abroad for lecturing or enhancing their professional competences. This represented more than 50% of the total number of teachers of the Field modules. During Covid-19 the numbers dropped, but teachers confirmed that they are satisfied with the conditions and will go for mobility in the future.

In addition to mobility, each year VIKO organises an International Teaching Week, during which lectures are given by teachers from partner foreign higher education institutions to VIKO community members. Both students and teachers actively participate in the lectures taught by foreign guests and the number of participants is growing.

3.5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff

A professional development plan for all teachers is prepared every year in line with the Description of the Qualification Requirements for VK Teachers, approved by VK Rector Order No. V – 96 on 1 March 2019. During the visit, the teachers confirmed that they plan their professional development activities (courses, internships, conferences, project activities, etc.) and the Faculty administration provides full academic support and assistance to the teachers for their professional development. They are encouraged to undertake teaching visits/internships and conferences and are encouraged to participate in projects funded by the EU Structural Funds. Teachers confirmed that they have a very wide choice of topics for qualification development. The need for specific courses/seminars for the next academic year is determined by the questionnaire sent to teachers by e-mail, as well as by the order of the Dean of the Faculty, considering the strategic objectives of VIKO and the Faculty, the action plan, and the approved priority areas of professional development. The Training and Cooperation Development Division creates a list of seminars and other professional development activities. During the meeting, teachers named several examples of recent

seminars and courses they have attended.

Generally, teachers of Vilniaus kolegija are very enthusiastic, they mentioned many examples of teaching innovation they have implemented in their courses, and they implement student-centred learning principles in their courses. However, according to data presented in Annex 18, teachers spend around 1400-1900 hours annually for professional development including improvement of professional, didactic, and general competences. There still are several teachers who have 0 hours in all three areas, for example in the 2019–2020 academic year period – 6 teachers have 0 hours of professional development. Taking into consideration that this is Covid-19 year when teachers had to change the way they delivered the classes, this seems inappropriate.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Enthusiastic teachers focusing on teaching innovations.
2. The Programmes are staffed by foreign teachers and the number of academic staff is adequate.
3. Good balance between academics and practitioners in the study field.
4. Field teachers have good possibilities for the development of competences including subject, didactic or general competences.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Professional development of all teachers of the study field should be ensured annually.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Study field learning facilities and resources should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

3.6.1. Evaluation of the suitability and adequacy of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process

In addition to the traditional library, computer room type spaces, the learning facilities are very good with many different types of spaces to encourage learning. Specific study programme related laboratories allow for experimentation and provide practical experience for the students. The Creative Laboratory and the DXC Lounges offer formal and informal spaces that encourage creativity. These resources are completed with video cameras, virtual reality goggles and team-building kits for the use of the students.

During the Expert Panel discussions with the students, it came out that some of the teaching methods are not very innovative and that there is a dislike of large open-space lectures. One possibility would be to develop hybrid-teaching resources in order to take

advantage of the strengths of both in-person and virtual space course delivery. This can, of course, be carried out either synchronously or asynchronously.

Informational resources are on par with national and international institutes and comprise hard copy publication, printed journals as well as a good selection of electronic resources and academic databases including open access databases. In the Expert Panel discussions with the students it was mentioned more than once that more opportunities for language learning should be provided. Specifically a request for more than one semester of German and the possibility to go onto advanced English. It was also commented that the language skills of some lecturers could be improved. The resources could possibly be expanded to answer these issues.

Financial resources are budgeted and allow for the continual updating of study programme resources.

3.6.2. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies

The institution has an ongoing programme of resource updating which includes virtual and digital resources, all which enhance the teaching and learning on the study programmes. A budget is available for the updating of resources and there are mechanisms, which allow all stakeholders to make suggestions for new acquisitions, renovations, and other changes.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Very good formal and informal learning spaces available;
2. Constant renovation of student, faculty and special needs facilities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Hybrid teaching spaces could be further developed;
2. Access to online language learning or the development of a language lab would increase the attractiveness of the resources currently available to students.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Study quality management and publicity shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies

The Expert panel admits that the internal quality assurance system of VIKO has a clear structure and allows maintaining internal quality as presented in table No 1.

Table No 1. Study Quality system has main structure.

Stakeholder			Study quality system		Study quality management	Publicity
			Self-evaluation	Data collection		
Administrative staff	Institution level	Directorate	+	Initiates and analyses	Decisions	Decisions
		Asset Management Group				
		Governance Commission			Decisions and proposals	
		Academic Affairs Commission			Faculty's decisions	
	Faculty level	Dean			Faculty's decisions and proposals	
		Faculty Council			Proposals	
		Dean's Office				
Vice-Dean						
Academic staff	Teaching staff	+	Initiates and analyses	Surveyed, analyse individual results	Teaching content and processes, student academic counselling	Public lectures
	Teams of teachers			Module internal consistency and execution	External training	
	Research groups			Researches, areas for improvement	Publications, presentations	
	Heads of Departments			Study programme internal consistency and execution	Communication and decisions	
Students	Students	Representatives	Surveyed	Surveyed, initiates and analyses	Student representatives are involved in most quality-management processes	Best practice
	Group leaders					
	Student Council	+				
Graduates			Representatives	Surveyed	Representatives	Success stories
Employers; representatives of professional associations and unions, public bodies, etc.			Representatives	Surveyed	Representatives involved in Study Programme and Study Field Committees, Graduation Thesis Defence Committees, other relevant activities	Positive public opinion

Source SER, information received during the visit.

The Study Committee consists of teachers, at least two social partners and students, who are responsible for studies, content improvement and quality assurance. During the visit, the expert panel found it useful to involve Alumni in procedures of study quality management to improve the quality of study programmes. Social partners actively participate in study committee activities also improving the preparation and content of final theses. Experts noted that social partners could constantly be updated with the changes of study quality improvement and reports could be publicly available and introduced to all social partners that would help VIKO to respond to market changes more efficiently.

3.7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance

VIKO involves main stakeholders (students, teachers) in quality management processes. The frequency of quality surveys allows the institution to get proper results that are publicly available. According to SER „study programme of Creativity and Business Innovations, trilateral consortium meetings are organised at least once a year, in a different country each year at one of the partner institutions (these meetings discuss study procedures, academic exchanges, quality assurance, graduation thesis completion, improvement of the study process and other important issues of the joint programme, and adopt joint resolutions), and all current issues of study procedures and cooperation are discussed in the course of the monthly teleconference with the coordinators of the programme”. Actually, the conclusions that had been made after these meetings are not publicly available, only the main results of surveys from students were added to the VIKO website for information. These surveys were provided: Survey on the module teaching quality, Survey on supervision of the professional practice, Survey on supervision of the final practice, Survey of professional practice place tutors on students’ practical skills, Survey of final practice place tutors on students’ practical skills.

During the visit, the expert panel noted that the activity of Alumni as being VIKO internal stakeholder in a quality assurance process is limited. The feedback and Alumni involvement in internal quality processes is not a good indicator and should be improved. Experts suggest initiating a Alumni association establishment in VIKO and constantly receive comments about possible improvement of study programmes.

3.7.3. Evaluation of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes

The data collection annually on study programme content, study quality and study satisfaction helps to improve outcomes. The general information about student survey results are available on the website of the VIKO. Due to SER “All information related to studies: module descriptions, student achievement assessments, etc., is available in the Academic Information System (AIS) on VIKO website (<http://www.viko.lt/studijos/studiju-dokumentai/> and <https://en.viko.lt/facilities-services/organisation-of-studies/>) „ both are in Lithuanian and English languages, which is useful for foreign students to get truthful and faithful understanding about VIKO.

3.7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the SKVC or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI

According to SER “The internal quality assurance system for studies is student-oriented, and students are involved in most quality management processes. They participate in regular surveys, meet with the study programme coordinator at least twice a semester and with the Faculty administration at least once to discuss study quality issues and receive feedback”. During the online-visit, an expert group found that the students lack systemized feedback about the changes made after summarising the results. According to SER “The Head of Department meets with students after each module to share the results of surveys, provide feedback and discuss issues of common concern“. Additional meetings with students to not only observe survey results but also get information about study programme / programmes’ changes or improvements would be fruitful.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. VIKO properly initiates students’ surveys that are publicly available.
2. Quality assurance system of VIKO has a clear structure.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Lack of alumni involvement in study committees.
2. Lack of alumni involvement in study processes.
3. The information about study programmes improvement is not publicly available.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Recently introduced a joint Study Programme of Creativity and Business Innovations, which is conducted in cooperation with the Porto Polytechnic Institute and the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences gives a strong emphasis on the internalisation aspect and is highly valued by all stakeholders. Exceptionally valuable is that student graduates get three diplomas.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Various options to improve language knowledge during the courses in line with students' needs should be offered. 2. Provide systematic updates to stakeholders regarding latest changes in the study programmes. 3. More courses developing social abilities and personal skills like leadership, consumer psychology etc. should be introduced. 4. Identify truly unique things about programmes and pay more attention to how you market your business study field programmes.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage cooperation of academic staff with other universities in terms of research and scientific projects. 2. Expand and encourage publication activity of the teaching staff in international scientific journals with a high impact factor.
Student admission and support	Be clear about your target groups and develop a clear strategy in targeting foreign students.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The inclusion of a digital competence framework for the structuring of both: course contents and programmes in the future. 2. Development together with the students, alumni, and social partners of an active Alumni Association
Teaching staff	Professional development of all teachers of the study field should be ensured annually.
Learning facilities and resources	Very modern resources. Look at the inclusion of access to online language learning or the development of a language lab.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include Alumni to study programme committee activity to ensure improvement of study programmes. 2. Make the dynamics of changes in the study subject publicly available by publishing it on the VIKO website.

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field of *Business at Vilniaus kolegija*:

The evaluated study programmes are developed and regularly updated in accordance with the latest needs of the labour market, society and legal requirements. All programmes have a well-balanced module structure and all modules are compatible with each other. The aims, objectives and programme Learning Outcomes reflect the labour market needs as they were identified via market research study and involvement of social partners. However, it would be useful to identify unique features of the programme and to develop a clear market strategy in targeting potential students. All stakeholders hold the programme in high esteem, however, although stakeholders contributed to programme development, there was observed a low level of alumni involvement and it makes sense to include Alumni to study programme committee activity to ensure improvement of study programme.

There exists a strong link between arts and science with final theses aiming to provide solutions to real life problems. Teaching staff is actively implementing real practical cases in the teaching process using contemporary teaching methods and skills obtained by attending various conferences, trainings, workshops and also achieved by participating in the Erasmus programme. Both teaching staff and students are involved in research and share their results by making presentations on conferences and publishing them in academic journals. However, the level of cooperation of academic staff with other universities in terms of research and scientific projects is quite low as well as the publication activity of the teaching staff in international scientific journals with high impact factor.

Student support and admission process is well organised and transparent. After the admission, students are provided with consultations from teaching staff and administration. Introductory week is also very useful to get smoothly involved in the study process and student life. There is also offered financial support in the form of scholarships. Additional support is also available for students with special needs. However, more actions should be taken in regard to attracting students and choosing a clear marketing strategy.

The evaluated study programmes operate in a teaching and learning environment that is responsive and supportive to student needs. Students are offered enough flexibility to choose elective subjects depending on their interest, while guidance and support provided by the teaching staff and administration. Various contemporary teaching methods used by

teaching staff ensure the achievement of Learning Outcomes. Compulsory internships implemented into the study process gives students a valuable experience to get a good understanding of the real business environment. Strong practical aspect adds value to the study programmes. Creativity platform is a very good method implemented by teaching staff as it gives the opportunity to solve real problems coming from a real business environment and enable students to create solutions to these problems. Teaching staff members actively integrate creative platforms totally or partially into teaching methods.

The programme is delivered by an experienced and enthusiastic group of teachers who contributed to the development of the programme by implementing student-centred learning principles in their courses. Teachers are actively taking part in mobility projects like Erasmus+ and share their experience with colleagues. They also attend conferences, workshops, seminars and seminars to keep up to date with their subject. However, professional development of all teachers of the study field should be ensured annually.

Learning resources and facilities are at a high level, all auditoriums and laboratories have the necessary equipment, Creative Laboratory and the DXC Lounges offer formal and informal spaces that encourage creativity. Students of the evaluated study programmes have access to 12 databases, nearly 440 000 e-books, different libraries and scientific journals. There is a close collaboration with Social Innovation Cluster, social partners also provide students with special software. All student papers are checked for plagiarism.. Although, the use of Open Access materials by faculty in their teaching as well as in the library is quite limited. It will be useful to organise a workshop on Open Science to allow for a better understanding of this relatively new development in the academic world.

Management and Quality Assurance functions are in place and well-managed, existing academic regulations are comprehensive and transparent. VIKO implements various measures to ensure internal quality by involving all stakeholders in the form of discussions, roundtables etc. There is a systematic approach to analyse and implement the results of students' feedback. It would be useful to include Alumni to study programme committee activity to ensure that the content of the study programmes is up to date with the real business environment.

Expert panel chairperson signature: