



CENTER FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

OVERVIEW REPORT FOR FOOD STUDIES STUDY FIELD

2022

Prepared by the chairperson of the expert panel

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Report language – English

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the external quality evaluation of the **Food Studies** study field in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions: at *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences*; at *Vytautas Magnus University*.

The external evaluations were organised by the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC).

Comprehensive external evaluation reports including strengths and weaknesses and concluding with some recommendations were prepared for the Food Studies study field in each evaluated Higher education institution (separately for first and second cycle) and included evaluation marks. This overview focuses on the main findings of the external evaluation of the Food Studies study field from a general point of view.

Based on the findings of Food Studies evaluation, the expert panel has come to a decision to give **positive** evaluation to HEIs: at *Lithuanian University of Health Sciences*; at *Vytautas Magnus University*.

On the basis of an external evaluation report of the study field SKVC takes a decision to accredit the study field and cycle for 7 years.

II. STUDY FIELD OVERVIEW BY EVALUATION AREAS

Overall observations by the expert panel regarding the most positive aspects of the study field in Lithuanian HEIs as well as areas in need of improvement. The analysis should cover all 7 evaluation areas.

1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

- a) LSMU: The first and second cycle studies have relevant and unique learning outcomes that fulfil the needs of the potential employers of candidates. To improve the study field, Social partners should be more involved in students' final theses of both the first and second cycle studies.
- b) VMU: The first and second cycle studies of the Food Studies field comply with the requirements of the government and the university, and fulfil the needs of the potential employers of candidates from the first and second cycle study programmes. To improve the study field, Social partners should be more involved in students' final theses of both the first and second cycle studies.

2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

- a) LSMU: The lecturers/researchers are carrying out the research in this field and integrate science and the latest research results into studies, and the students can prepare high-level final theses and publish their research results in scientific journals. To improve the study field, first and second cycle students should be encouraged to participate in various scientific exchange programs, including *Erasmus+* exchange programme.
- b) VMU: There are sufficient science activities implemented in the field of research related to the Food Studies field of study, and teachers and leaders of VMU, have plans for scientific activities related to the study field. To improve the study field, students should be more involved in scientific research activities, including collaboration and cooperation with social partners.

3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

- a) LSMU: All students have equal opportunities to participate in international mobility programmes and projects. To improve the study field, the number of foreign exchange students that will follow the second cycle of the *Food Sciences* study programme (or parts of it) should be increased.
- b) VMU: There is sufficient social, psychological, and financial support to the students of the Food Studies field, and appropriate academic support is provided to them. To improve the study field, focus should be directed towards attracting a higher number of national students, as well as encouraging/enabling more students to travel abroad.

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

- a) LSMU: Various teaching and learning as well as assessment methods are applied in the first and second cycle study programmes. Subjects are designed according to the scientifically and practically based pedagogical principle of Constructive alignment linking learning outcomes, teaching activities and assessment. The employability of the graduates is evidenced to be sufficiently high. To improve the study field, it is recommended to improve the definition of internship goals (narrowing goals and adapting them to particular industry or particular internship topics).
- b) VMU: Various teaching and learning as well as assessment methods are applied in the first and second cycle study programmes of the Food Studies field, and the employability of the graduates is evidenced to be sufficiently high. To improve the study field, one should include the social partners in discussion on how to develop various soft skills that are also desirable for the labour market, as well as implementing a monitoring programme for graduates' long-term success in the labour market.

5. TEACHING STAFF

- a) LSMU: The academic staff of the field studies is suitable to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programmes within a given study field. Teaching staff of the study field are provided with conditions for the professional development of competences, which are evaluated periodically. To improve the study field, lecturers and teachers should increase the number of applications for internationalisation and international exchange programs.
- b) VMU: Academic staff of the Food Studies field are suitable to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the first and second cycle study programmes within a given study field, and there are an adequate number of qualified and competent (scientific, didactic, professional) teaching staff within the study field to achieve the learning outcomes. To improve the study field, more members of the teaching staff and researchers should reach at least a B2 level of English language, to facilitate the ambition of offering a second cycle study programme in English

6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

- a) LSMU: Facilities are adequate for learning purposes, the library gives access to students for learning, assignments etc., and the university supports LSMU in equipment budget. To improve the study field, it is advisable to increase the external research funding of lab facilities, as this will decrease the dependency of the overall university budget (because the university may have other priorities).
- b) VMU: The library and IT equipment is adequate for first and second cycle students in Food Studies field, and an expected future update of lab facilities suggest that this will also be adequate. To improve the study field, it is advisable to increase the direct research funding of lab facilities, as this will decrease the dependency of the overall university budget (because the university may have other priorities). Additionally, there could be a stronger collaboration with social partners to use their existing facilities, and perhaps use this collaboration to attract more funding.

7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

- a) LSMU: An appropriate structure is in place for ensuring and improving the quality of studies with clearly defined responsibilities between particular parties. To improve the study field, the Students' awareness of their contribution to Study programme quality assessment and Study programme improvement should be improved, and the frequency of feedback collection from social partners should be increased.
- b) VMU: An appropriate structure is in place for ensuring and improving the quality of studies with clearly defined responsibilities between particular parties. To improve the study field, the Students' awareness of their contribution to Study programme quality assessment and Study programme improvement should be improved, as well as the efficiency of the feedback collection from social partners (e.g. participation rate).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

MAIN STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT IN FOOD STUDIES FIELD

- **Strategic recommendations at institutional level (for Higher Education Institutions):**
- a) LSMU: Increase academic mobility of both students and staff. The HEI should actively support and encourage this mobility. Furthermore, the HEI should strengthen the collaboration with social partners.
- b) VMU: Increase academic internationalisation of both students and staff. The HEI should actively support and encourage this mobility. Furthermore, the HEI should strengthen the collaboration with social partners. Additionally, the current research within sustainability is somewhat narrowly focused on crop production (e.g. organic products), but it could be beneficial to broaden the perspective, and also focus on e.g. energy consumption, innovative food packaging etc.

- **Strategic recommendations at national level (for the Ministry of Education and Science):**
- The Ministry of Education and Science should support/encourage the HEI's in their attempts to increase academic mobility. It is possible that financial incentives could accelerate this process.
- The Ministry of Education and Science should support/encourage the HEI's to get accreditation or join international organisations like [ISEKI-Food Association](#).
- The Ministry of Education and Science should support/encourage the HEI's in their attempts to collaborate closer with social partners.