



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

OVERVIEW REPORT FOR MANAGEMENT STUDY FIELD

2023 year of the evaluation

Prepared by the chairperson(s) of the expert panel(s):

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I. INTRODUCTION

The overview is based on the external quality evaluation of the management study field in the following Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): *ISM University of Management and Economics, Vilnius University, General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VILNIUS TECH), Vilniaus kolegija, Alytaus kolegija, Kazimieras Simonavičius University, Mykolas Romeris University, Klaipėda University, Klaipėdos valstybinė kolegija, LCC International University, Lietuvos aukštoji jūreivystės mokykla, Lietuvos verslo kolegija.*

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

Comprehensive external evaluation reports including strengths and weaknesses and concluding with recommendations were prepared separately for first and second cycle field studies and included evaluation marks. This overview focuses on the main findings of the external evaluation of the management field from a general point of view.

Based on the findings of the evaluation, both expert panels have come to a decision to give all studies at all HEIs positive evaluation.

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

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 covers all 7 evaluation areas.

3.1. Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum

Overall, the evaluated study programmes meet the requirements set in all areas. The learning outcomes and curriculum are carefully designed in collaboration with relevant organisations. The programme courses employ a diverse range of assessment methods, with a significant emphasis on ongoing assessments rather than relying solely on final exams. Additionally, the study programmes provide a well-balanced blend of core and elective courses, although in some situations more options could be offered on the courses students can elect should be improved to reach more flexible courses and degrees. However, it is necessary to establish more explicit connections between individual modules to ensure the accumulation of knowledge and avoid any potential repetition between them.

The relationship between societal and labour market needs and the teachings provided in the programmes is typically well-defined, incorporating both theoretical and practical components. However, one area that requires improvement is the availability of courses taught in English, beyond foreign language subjects, as this is crucial for students to further enhance their professional skills. Furthermore, considering the availability of new media forms and technologies, it is important to address the corresponding skill sets required for student development. This means also developing a balanced offering of virtual learning content and learning formats that promote the process of self-directed learning. The extent to which these new developments are integrated into the offered courses is not always apparent and could benefit from clearer incorporation.

3.2. Links between science (art) and studies

The SKVC inspection team noted that the institutions under evaluation have been demonstrating commendable efforts to incorporate research activities into their teaching methodologies. The intertwining of science or art with teaching creates a holistic educational experience for the students and enhances their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios. The projection for maintaining and further developing these links is optimistic, as the evaluated institutions have revealed well-thought-out and effective plans for this endeavour. The respective strategies include increasing the number of research projects, enhancing collaboration between faculty and students, and integrating more experiential learning activities related to arts in their curriculum. In this context, it is significant that students are provided with the necessary tools for academic work. This includes both quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as essential digital literacy and basic data science skills. This approach shows a forward-thinking mindset and promises to cultivate a vibrant intellectual environment for students.

3.3. Student admission and support

Detailed student entry requirements are set out on the institutions' websites and are accessible for applicants and other stakeholders. Admissions to the study programmes are governed by several regulations and adhered to strictly. Eligibility is based on the national matriculation exam and students must also have at least a secondary education for the undergraduate programs or a bachelor's degree for the postgraduate programmes. For the latter, students who do not possess the necessary number of credits may be required to complete a bridging course. National requirements are in place for those applicants seeking to have tuition covered by the Government. Procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning are published on the institutions' websites.

The students are offered a range of mobility opportunities in the study programmes, including through bilateral university agreements, international traineeships and participation in study and summer schools. In addition, students can on a more ad hoc basis engage with projects run by faculty. On mobility, for incoming students there were instances of students having

difficulties securing visas to study. For most study programmes outbound students had increased in the last few years, although there is a sense of caution in students who would prefer shorter mobility to the ones that imply a semester. The strength in the use of English in studies here also could help students' confidence in engaging in such mobilities. As well as information detailed on the College website, the institutions typically engage in a range of outreach and promotional activity, including through open days, fairs, printed publications and visits to schools and other vocational education centres. This serves an important function for capturing students of a broader social and geographical background. Interviewed teaching faculty even stated that they appreciated being involved in this work and considered they were contributing to their programme's long-term sustainability as a consequence. The institutions have a wide range of student support services in place to assist students. These include careers support provided by careers specialists who offer consultations and assistance in job search, CV writing and career planning. There is also psychological support available for students through formal partnerships the institutions have with specialised providers. Students interviewed by the panel reported that they have access to staff when needed, and that any consultations take place in a timely manner and that the sessions help students with their studies. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the extent to which a network of learning facilitators or supervisors, along with appropriate regular (self-directed) assessment opportunities, could further enhance students' academic success.

3.4. Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment

There are different study methods in individual programmes according to curriculum requirements, including traditional and interactive lectures, workshops, individual and group work. Diverse and innovative teaching and learning methods are commonly used, including educational technologies (e.g., whiteboards, flipped classroom), and virtual technologies, even though there is a permanent need to update learning methods and practices to enrich the syllabus contents and to create an interactive dynamic of learning. Class groups are typically comparatively small and teachers can often consider student learning styles and needs. It is worth noting that the expert panel found several teachers to have notable practical expertise in their field, and this was also mentioned by the interviewed students as a key factor underpinning student learning, and the relevance and usefulness of their courses.

Student study performance is almost universally evaluated by cumulative evaluation, where the final grade is obtained by adding the grades of the components of the cumulative evaluation. Evaluation methods include examinations, problem-solving analysis, independent work, project work, internship report, and evaluation of individual and group work reports. Evaluation methods allow teachers to evaluate the students' theoretical and practical knowledge. Typically, the teaching and learning process is able to take into account the needs of the students and lets them achieve the learning outcomes. In all programmes there were processes ready to ensure that students with special needs, physical or societal, were given the support they may need in terms of facility access, examination and learning form adjustment. In some instances, interviewed students raised a desire for more elaborated feedback on their

assignments, but in all instances assessment format and extent was viewed as appropriate by the students. Overall, social partners reported they are satisfied with student competences. For employability, there is job placement support available through dedicated career advisors. Importantly, the social partners all expressed an active role in student placement. However, it was noted by the panel that this was often conducted on ad hoc basis, and that a more systematic approach may have greater effect, such as through a formal alumni association. Furthermore, it should be discussed that, especially in bachelor's degree programs, students have the opportunity to combine their professional development or employment with their studies.

3.5. Teaching staff

The experts were impressed with the teaching staff they encountered during their visit, noting their high motivation, engagement, professionalism, and fluent English-speaking abilities, with only a few exceptions. When evaluating lecturers for positions, various criteria are considered, including teaching ability, performance, research experience, organisational skills, and administrative duties. The visited institutions offered opportunities for improving the competences of their teaching staff. These included short-term and long-term courses, research and applied research activities, participation in international and local projects related to their respective study fields, involvement in international mobility programs, participation in seminars and conferences, and the chance to learn foreign languages intensively.

During the visits, the teaching staff showcased several instances of teaching innovations, such as the incorporation of creative spaces and participative teaching methods into the study programs. Additionally, the teaching staff demonstrated active involvement in research, as it was a recognized component of their job descriptions. However, the impact of pay and promotion on their performance was not always evident. The quality of output was a topic of discussion among the staff, with a general awareness of the need to enhance it and integrate ongoing research into classes to enrich student learning. Furthermore, the teaching staff typically possessed valuable practical experience and actively sought collaboration while maintaining close relationships with social partners. This positive aspect was corroborated by the social partners met during the expert panel visits. Teaching staff mobility was supported, and mechanisms and processes were in place to facilitate it. However, proper coordination was necessary to avoid leaving classes unstaffed. Nevertheless, there was a notable reliance on external staff for some study programs, which posed a potential risk due to the need for access to suitable teachers. It also limited the long-term development efforts of the departments themselves. To promote the ongoing development and renewal of study programs, it should be considered, among other things, to allow teachers and researchers to move between different universities and colleges in Lithuania in order to share their latest research findings.

3.6. Learning facilities and resources

All teaching premises examined during the inspection were found to be well-equipped and conducive for effective learning. The classrooms, laboratories, and other teaching facilities met the required standards and were considered appropriate for supporting the academic activities. While the premises were satisfactory, there was an observation about the underutilisation of these facilities by the students, particularly the master's students who typically juggle work and studies. The SKVC team encourages the institutions to find creative ways of attracting more students to the premises. For instance, fostering a vibrant student community can be an effective way to engage bachelor students, making them experience student life and academic culture more intensively. This might entail organising academic events, social activities, study groups, and other initiatives that could attract students to spend more time on campus. It should also be considered whether seminars, laboratory experiments, and similar activities can be conducted in facilities provided by companies and research institutions.

3.7. Study quality management and public information

Overall the panel experts had an impression that the quality assurance system of the management study field is well-defined and fits its purpose. Key quality assurance activities are carried out by the programme committees in interaction with teachers, administrative staff, students, and other stakeholders. Internal monitoring and ongoing assessment was observed to be in place at the visited institutions. Tools and mechanisms are functioning well and good teaching and learning results are achieved. For accessibility, information about the quality of studies is collected and used on a regular basis, it is commonly published on programme or institution websites and is publicly accessible to students and other stakeholders. Social stakeholders are involved in the processes of assessment, improvement and quality assurance of the study programme, however this involvement was generally of a more informal nature. Furthermore, it should be encouraged for students to post about their learning processes and student projects on the social media platforms they use and prefer.

Students fill in a questionnaire after each semester about each subject taken, describing various aspects of the subjects taught and the work of the lecturers. However, the return rate is sometimes low and more effort may be needed to ensure that a higher percentage of students submit their responses so as to better represent the student perspective and study experience. This would also strengthen the usefulness of the quality management system for improvement of teaching and other learning activities. The expert panel found that the quality assurance system for the studies is student-oriented, and students are involved in most quality management processes. They participate in regular surveys, meet with study programme coordinators and with the Faculty administration to discuss study quality issues and receive feedback. All quantitative and qualitative data are analysed by the Faculty administration, and the results are presented to the teaching staff.

III. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

The faculty members in the study field programs, particularly in specialised areas like the Aviation Programme, were found to possess significant levels of experience and expertise. Both students and social partners emphasised the relevance and value provided by the teaching staff in these programs.

During the visits, it was observed that all the institutions had appropriate space for studying. Moreover, several institutions had dedicated spaces for creative teaching, which were aligned with their teaching approach and pedagogic philosophy. These spaces were made available to all courses when required.

In terms of assessment, all the investigated study field programs incorporated ongoing assessment and blended learning approaches instead of relying solely on final exams. This approach enhances learning and ensures that students from diverse backgrounds have equal accessibility to their studies. Additionally, mandatory final thesis projects were noted to provide students with opportunities for real-world experiences, practical applications, and skills development.

Social partners played an active and supportive role in the study programs and the training of students. Programs that struck a balance between practical and theoretical elements were specifically highlighted as being effective in equipping students with the necessary skills for the workplace.

In all the visited Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), there was readily available support and provision for students in need. This included access to facilities, accommodation of various course and examination formats, and assistance tailored to individual student requirements.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

MAIN STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT IN MANAGEMENT STUDY FIELD

● Strategic recommendations for the Higher Education Institutions (at institutional level):

1. Typically there are modern and inclusive learning spaces available to the students. The challenge will be to ensure that students use them. The HIEs need to create a sufficiently attractive environment and align course formats so that students attend, and thereby derive the social and educational benefits of such interaction.
2. Areas such as sustainability and digitalisation are becoming a societal requirement, so care must be taken to ensure that they are incorporated formally and systematically into the programmes.
3. Develop formal alumni associations to strengthen program relevance and student opportunities.
4. For program development, individual modules must be aligned content-wise to ensure accumulation of knowledge and to avoid possible repetition between modules. This may require a more formal interaction between faculty when designing course content, and managed formally rather than ad hoc by the program management.
5. Ensure developments in technology are incorporated in the courses offered to ensure students develop the skills needed for the labour market.
6. Ensure that the teaching staff remains motivated and keeps updating their skills by providing incentives, such as extra pay or set sabbatical time with smaller teaching load.

● Strategic recommendations for the Ministry of Education and Science and Sport (at national level):

1. It is essential to allocate resources that enable all faculty members to engage in research activities. This not only helps in the development of their expertise but also ensures that the teachings provided remain relevant and up to date. Adequate funding and support should be provided.
2. Ensure faculty is sufficiently numerated so as to retain faculty with significant expertise, since the relevance of the program courses rely on it.
3. Research is to some extent reliant on external or visiting faculty, there should be a strategy and guidelines incentivising the development of HIEs' inhouse research capability.
4. Outbound mobility programs play a crucial role in enriching the student experience and developing their skills. It is important to increase and ensure adequate financing for such mobility initiatives.

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