STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

INFORMATICS ENGINEERING FIELD OF STUDY

Vilniaus kolegija

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:

1. Panel chair: Prof. (FH) Dr. Johannes Lüthi …….. (signature)
2. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Bojan Dolšak
3. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Mimoza Ibrani
4. Social partner representative: Tomas Urbonas
5. Student representative: Matas Zaloga

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. REVIEW PANEL

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

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: Prof. (FH) Dr. Johannes Lüthi
2. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Bojan Dolšak
3. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Mimoza Ibrani
4. Social partner representative: Tomas Urbonas
5. Student representative: Matas Zaloga

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 31 November 2025 onsite.

Meetings with the following members of the staff and stakeholders took place during the site visit:

- Senior management and administrative staff of the faculty(ies);
- Team responsible for preparation of the SER;
- Teaching staff;
- Students;
- Alumni and social stakeholders including employers.

Some of the above meetings have been supported using a translational service.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

Vilniaus Kolegija / Higher Education Institution (Vilnius College), also referred to as the Higher Education Institution (HEI), is a public, accredited state college. Established in 2000 through the merger of specialised higher schools, it was further expanded on 1 July 2024 by merging with Vilnius College of Technology and Design.
Management comprises the following collegial bodies: the College Council (strategic governance) and the Academic Council (highest academic self-governance), and a single-person governing body, the Director; students are represented by an independent Student Representation (one student on the College Council and ten on the Academic Council).
Studies are organized in ten faculties (Agrotechnologies; Economics; Electronics and Informatics; Arts and Creative Technologies; Pedagogy; Health Care; Business Management; Civil Engineering; Design; Technical) and, as of 1 October 2024, the College offers 58 study programmes spanning 34 study fields organized in 12 groups. It enrolls 6,656 students (including 553 international degree students) and employs 560 teaching staff. The College maintains 280+ cooperation agreements across 42 countries and works with 290+ partner HEIs, with core partnerships in the EU and growing ties in China, Japan, and India; it is active in Erasmus, Nordplus, COST, and INTERREG and networks such as EURASHE, UAS4EUROPE, CDIO, ENPHE, EFAD, and EFRS.

Overview of the study field

The study field of Informatics Engineering is focused on developing practice-oriented IT specialists who support the College's strategic aim of meeting regional and national needs for digital transformation and innovation. The field is represented by the first cycle study programme Information Systems Engineering and the short-cycle study programme Systems Administration (launched in 2023 it is excluded from this evaluation), which together provide a coherent pathway from short-cycle to full professional bachelor studies.

Previous external evaluations

Originating from the Transport Information Systems programme (accredited in 2013) and fundamentally updated and re-registered as Information Systems Engineering in 2018, the field has been reshaped in response to rapid technological change and labour market research in the IT sector.

Documents and information used in the review

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

- Self-evaluation report and its annexes
- Final theses
- Action plan for increasing the attractiveness of the *Information Systems Engineering* study programme in the field of computer engineering
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Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

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

- Lithuanian Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030";

- Study "From Graduate's Desk to a Career in ICT Professions", conducted by Invest Lithuania and InfoBalt Lithuania (Invest Lithuania https://investlithuania.com/)
- HEI's web pages at https://en.viko.lt/

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	**Information systems engineering**
State code	6531BX011
Type of study (college/university)	Higher education college
Study cycle	First cycle
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time, 3 years Part-time, 4 years
Workload in ECTS	180
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Professional bachelor's degree in computer science
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Secondary education
First registration date	23/05/2005
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	

III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **first cycle** of the informatics engineering field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points[1*]
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	3
3.	Student admission and support	2
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	2
	Total:	20

1*

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

IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The Informatics Engineering study field at the HEI, implemented through the Information Systems Engineering study programme and the newly introduced short-cycle Systems Administration programme (which is not part of this evaluation), is clearly designed in response to strong national and European policy drivers for digital transformation. The learning outcomes are explicitly grounded in EU and Lithuanian strategic documents, including the vision set out in Shaping Europe's Digital Future, and are further supported by solid labour-market evidence from INFOBALT, Unicorns Lithuania and the Employment Service. These sources consistently highlight a significant and growing shortage of ICT specialists in Lithuania, particularly in areas such as cyber security, software development, telecommunications and high value-added digital products. Against this backdrop, the programme's emphasis on practically oriented engineering competences, responsible use of information systems, and awareness of ethical, cyber security, environmental and economic aspects can be regarded as highly relevant and well aligned with society's and employers' needs.

The recent updating of the programme in line with the 2022 Description of the Group of Study Fields of Computing, together with the introduction of course units such as Information Systems Testing and Support, Cloud Computing, and optional modules in Drone Technology, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Systems, demonstrates a commendable responsiveness to technological trends. The expansion of college-wide optional units from September 2024 further strengthens interdisciplinary opportunities for students.

However, while the relevance of the learning outcomes is convincingly justified, their uniqueness within the HEI's enlarged portfolio is less evident. The merger with Vilnius College of Technology and Design has created a broader ecosystem in which related study fields, e.g. Software Engineering, now coexist. At present, there is little indication of deep consolidation or a clearly articulated division of roles between these programmes.

Regarding professional activity areas, the programme prepares graduates for a wide range of ICT roles: system administrator, IT technician, network and database administrator, cyber security specialist, IT service manager and IT consultant. These areas correspond closely to the skills described in the learning outcomes and match the documented shortages in the national labour market, particularly in the ICT services and infrastructure segments. The breadth of potential roles provides flexibility for graduates and reflects the multidisciplinary nature of modern information systems work. At the same time, the programme should ensure that this breadth does not dilute depth in key specialisations; explicit pathways or elective tracks (e.g. "networking and security", "cloud and systems administration", "data and databases") could help students to build a recognisable profile that is attractive to employers and differentiates graduates from those of overlapping study fields.

A critical concern raised by the review panel is the very low number of students and the high dropout rate in this field. This is worrying given the strong external demand for ICT professionals and the considerable effort invested in updating the curriculum. Sustained under-enrolment and

high attrition may threaten the long-term viability of the programme and weaken its contribution to regional and national digitalisation goals.

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

The aims and intended learning outcomes of the Informatics Engineering study field, implemented through the Information Systems Engineering study programme, are in principle well aligned with the mission and strategic objectives of the HEI. The HEI emphasises modern higher education studies that meet European standards, strong collaboration with the world of work, and the development of applied research and professional art for the benefit of the Vilnius region and Lithuania. The programme aim - to develop graduates able to compete in a rapidly changing digital environment and to design, implement, maintain, test and evaluate secure computer systems and networks - clearly reflects these institutional priorities. It focuses on labour-market relevance, applied engineering competencies and responsible use of digital technologies, which correspond directly to the College's strategic goal of providing professional higher education and lifelong learning that meets Lithuanian and international labor market needs.
The learning outcomes, which emphasise the application of computer science methods and engineering principles, the design and management of secure systems and networks, and the ability to address practical professional challenges, also support the HEIS´s objectives related to applied research and impact. They are oriented towards solving real-world problems in the ICT sector and require students to understand ethical, cyber security, environmental, economic and commercial aspects of IT solutions, thereby contributing to the HEI´s aspiration to strengthen its impact on the region and to cultivate a socially responsible academic community. In this sense, the programme's profile as practice-oriented and responsive to technological change is coherent with the HEI´s mission of building nationally and internationally recognisable applied research and professional practice in close cooperation with employers.
However, when the programme is viewed in the broader institutional context, particularly the recent merger between Vilniaus Kolegija and Vilnius College of Technology and Design, the picture is more mixed. During the assessment period until 1 July 2024, the programme was aligned with VTDK's mission and strategic objectives, and after the reorganisation it was formally aligned with those of Vilniaus Kolegija. While this dual alignment suggests continuity of purpose, it also indicates that the programme has had to navigate a transitional phase between two institutional strategies. The review panel's observation that "no deep consolidation seems to have happened so far" and that related study fields within the merged college, such as e.g. the Software Engineering study field, now coexist without clear consolidation, suggests that coherence at the level of the enlarged HEI's study portfolio is not yet fully realised. On paper, the aims of Informatics Engineering align with the HEI's mission; in practice, the strategic positioning of the field within a now broader ICT offering remains an opportunity of development.
This is particularly relevant to the issue of distinctiveness and complementarity. The HEI's strategy calls for effective impact on the country and region and for an organisational culture based on engagement and social responsibility. To fully support these goals, the Informatics Engineering programme should not only be coherent with the mission in general terms, but also clearly differentiated from other study fields and programmes (especially within the same HEI) in a way that strengthens the overall institutional offer rather than leading to potential internal competition. A deliberate consolidation process, including shared planning and identification of specific strengths (for example, positioning Information Systems Engineering more strongly towards systems integration, infrastructure and cyber security, would enhance strategic coherence and make the respective aims and outcomes more transparent to prospective students and employers.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

In principle, the aims and intended learning outcomes of the Informatics Engineering study field, are aligned with the mission and strategy of the HEI. The programme focuses on providing modern, practice-oriented higher education that meets European standards, responds to labour market needs in ICT, and equips graduates to design, implement, maintain and secure computer systems and networks. Its emphasis on applied engineering competences, ethical and cyber security awareness, and solving real-world professional problems supports the HEI´s strategic objectives of delivering labour-market-relevant studies, strengthening applied research and impact, and fostering a socially responsible academic community.
However, when viewed within the wider institutional context after the merger with Vilnius College of Technology and Design, the coherence is less convincing at portfolio level. There is little evidence of deep consolidation or a clearly articulated division of roles between Informatics Engineering and e.g. the related Software Engineering study field. This risks internal competition, may blur the distinctiveness of related programmes and potentially weakens strategic positioning. Moreover, the very low number of students and the high dropout rate indicate that, despite formal alignment with the HEI´s mission and goals, the programme is not yet sufficiently attractive, visible or supportive in practice to fulfil its intended contribution to regional and national digital development.
In conclusion, the formal coherence between programme aims, learning outcomes and institutional strategy is strong, but it must be reinforced by concrete action: deeper cooperation and consolidation with related study fields, clearer differentiation and specialisation, and targeted measures to improve recruitment, retention and student support. Only then will the programme's alignment with the HEI's mission translate into sustainable impact.

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The first-cycle programme Information Systems Engineering complies with the legal requirements: it provides 180 ECTS of which 153ECTS are dedicated to content of the study field (minimum 120 ECTS). As required, the programme includes 12 (minimum requirement 9) ECTS for the final thesis. As required, an internship of 30 ECTS is included in the programme. 32 ECTS can be chosen by the student (maximum 90 ECTS). Practical training accounts for more than 33%, the number of contact hours is far above the required 20%, and as required, the student´s level of self-study is above 30%.
The programme's aims, learning outcomes and curriculum structure are well aligned with the first-cycle Informatics Engineering requirements in national and EU frameworks, and the 180-credit scope with 3-year full-time / 4-year part-time modes appears sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Equivalence between full-time and part-time delivery is well substantiated through identical learning outcomes, credit volumes and assessment structure. The composition of study credits is systematically described and demonstrably compliant with legal requirements regarding field-specific credits, practical training, final thesis and independent work, with student workload evenly distributed across semesters.

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

The first cycle program in the Informatics Engineering study field shows a generally good level of internal coherence between the programme aims, intended learning outcomes and course-unit level design. Programme outcomes are clearly structured into knowledge, research skills, special abilities, as well as social and personal abilities. Each course unit has outcomes mapped to these, with defined content, workload, study methods and assessment criteria. This constructive alignment, documented in the course descriptions, indicates a conscious effort to ensure that individual subjects cumulatively support the achievement of programme-level aims.
The outcomes cover a broad and appropriate range of competences: strong technical and engineering skills, research skills, as well as communication, teamwork, independent learning, responsibility and creativity. In principle, this provides a sound basis for selecting suitable study methods (labs, projects, problem-solving, group work) and corresponding assessment methods.

1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

The totality of subjects and modules in the Information Systems Engineering study programme is generally well structured to support the progressive development of student competences. The curriculum is clearly sequenced: from the first year, students are introduced to core disciplinary foundations (e.g. Programming, Computer Architecture) and already undertake Technological Practice 1, which helps to connect theory with practice early on. In the second year, they deepen their professional knowledge through more specialized units such as Information Systems Design, Database Management and Design Fundamentals, and Computer Networks, while the third year focuses on modern technologies, including Internet Technologies, Cyber Security, Information Systems Testing and Maintenance, and Cloud Computing. Alongside these, fundamental and supporting subjects (Mathematics, Discrete Mathematics, Data Structures and Algorithms, Computer Graphics, Applied Programmes) provide the necessary theoretical basis for later technical competences.
General higher education college subjects (e.g. Professional Communication, Foreign Language, Sustainable Development, Human and Civil Safety, Law) appropriately target broader worldview, societal and legal understanding, as well as basic communication skills and social responsibility.
The substantial volume of practice (30 credits) is a strong feature. It offers multiple opportunities for students to apply accumulated knowledge and skills in authentic environments, culminating in a final thesis often based on a real company problem, which supports integration of technical, analytical and project management competences.
At the same time, site visit feedback indicates that the consistent development of competences could be strengthened in two respects. While technical skills are adequately addressed, soft skills (e.g. rhetoric, presentation) are not sufficiently fostered, despite being reflected in the formal outcomes. In addition, some content (such as e.g. business models which are taught) appear slightly outdated, which weakens alignment with outcomes related to current ICT and its economic and social context.

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

Opportunities for students to personalise the Information Systems Engineering study programme are present and, in some respects, quite promising. The programme structure already allows for individualisation through alternative and optional course units: in the first year, students can choose between Sociology, Psychology and Sustainable Development, while in the second and third years they may select from a set of nine optional subjects to tailor their profile. In addition, the formal procedure for individualising the study plan (as defined in the institutional regulation) provides a clear framework for adapting studies to specific needs or circumstances. From 2025,

personalisation is further strengthened by allowing students to choose optional course units from the full range offered across Vilniaus kolegija, thereby opening up wider interdisciplinary possibilities beyond the Informatics Engineering field.
International mobility also contributes to individual learning paths: advanced students in all years may participate in Erasmus+ exchanges and extend their competences with course units offered by foreign partner institutions. However, during the evaluation period, no credits were recognised for informally acquired competences, which suggests that one potentially important avenue for personalisation and flexibility (especially for working students or those with prior experience) remains underused.
Overall, while the existing mechanisms for electives, alternative subjects and mobility form a solid basis for individualisation, they could be made more visible and more strongly linked to clearly defined specialisation directions within the field.

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

The principles for final thesis preparation, committee formation and defence in the Informatics Engineering study field are described clearly and in sufficient detail. During the evaluation period, final projects were prepared and defended according to a formal written procedure of the HEI, complemented by methodological recommendations of the Study Programme Committee. The regulations define the composition of the qualification commission and the use of external reviewers with pedagogical and/or industrial experience. The assessment process is structured: each commission member evaluates the thesis individually, and the final grade is agreed at a closed meeting, taking into account the marks of commission members, supervisor and reviewer.
The link between final theses and the labor market is visible and reasonably strong. A substantial share of topics is commissioned by companies. This demonstrates active cooperation with social partners and practical relevance. In terms of academic content, the topics and methods of the final projects clearly correspond to the Informatics Engineering field: information systems design and improvement, database creation, computer network administration, website development, cloud computing solutions and cyber security system deployment all fit well with the defined learning outcomes and field requirements.
Overall, the framework for final theses is appropriate and well aligned with both field-specific and institutional expectations.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The first-cycle programme Information Systems Engineering in the Informatics Engineering study field fully complies with national legal requirements regarding scope, structure and workload. Programme aims, intended learning outcomes, course-unit outcomes, teaching and assessment methods are generally well aligned. Learning outcomes are clearly structured across knowledge, research skills, special abilities, and social/personal competences, and are systematically mapped to course units with defined content, methods and assessment criteria. The curriculum is logically sequenced over the three years, starting from foundational technical subjects and early practice, and gradually progressing to more specialised and modern technologies. General education subjects and a substantial volume of practical training in real companies support the development of broader competences, professional readiness and integration of theoretical and practical skills, culminating in a final thesis that often addresses real-life problems.
Students have meaningful opportunities to personalize their studies through alternative and optional subjects, as well as international mobility via Erasmus+. The move to open the entire college-wide pool of optional subjects further strengthens individualization and interdisciplinary exposure. Final theses are governed by clear institutional procedures, assessed by mixed

academic–industry committees, and often commissioned by companies; their topics and methods are well aligned with the Informatics Engineering field and labor market needs.
At the same time, some aspects require further attention. Interviews at the site visit indicate that soft skills are not yet sufficiently and consistently developed, despite being reflected in the formal learning outcomes. In addition, parts of the curriculum content appear slightly outdated, which weakens alignment with current ICT practice and its economic context.

AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. A deeper cooperation and consolidation process within the merged colleges could create a clearer and more compelling portfolio of ICT studies. If the programmes are positioned as complementary rather than competing, with well-defined specialisations and shared resources where appropriate, this would enhance the visibility, relevance and sustainability of the Informatics Engineering study field and help address both low intake and dropout in a strategic, long-term manner.
2. To avoid internal competition and fragmentation, and to make the Informatics Engineering field more recognisably distinctive, the HEI is encouraged to engage in systematic curriculum mapping and joint planning across the merged institution, identifying and reinforcing the specific strengths of Information Systems Engineering (for example, systems integration, infrastructure, cloud and IT service management, or applied cyber security).
3. The HEI is strongly encouraged to undertake a thorough analysis of the causes for the low student admission and high drop-out rates. E.g., entry requirements, applicants' prior preparation, study workload, timetabling, student support and perception of the programme's distinctiveness compared to other ICT offerings should be analyzed.
4. Targeted measures (bridge courses, mentoring and tutoring schemes, early warning systems, flexible study paths and more active marketing of the programme's unique strengths) need to be taken.
5. To strengthen coherence, the HEI should more systematically update course content and ensure that teaching and assessment methods explicitly and consistently promote soft skills and up-to-date, practice-oriented knowledge, involving social partners regularly in curriculum review.

For further improvement

1. A suggestion for further improvement would be to structure optional and alternative subjects into transparent "profiles" or thematic pathways (for example, networking and security, cloud and systems administration, data and databases), so that students can

personalise their studies in a more strategic way that supports their individual career goals and intended learning outcomes.

2. In the context of thesis topics, a possible further step would be to make the procedures and examples of commissioned theses more visible and accessible to students and external stakeholders (e.g. via English summaries or an online repository), further strengthening transparency and showcasing good practice.

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

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The College's Informatics Engineering field engages in growing applied research and development (R&D) activities. According to the data presented in SER the Faculty provided R&D funds from €114,800 (2021) to €319,452 (2023), with Informatics Engineering projects receiving €15,000 (2021) up to €31,000 (2023). A dedicated Science Fund was established (≈€150,000 total in the period, ~€22,000 to this field) to support teachers' and students' experimental research. Students carry out applied projects as part of their studies (e.g. an AI-based facial recognition system, an automated mobile app testing tool). Instructors integrate their own research (in areas like AI in education, cybersecurity, personalized learning, information security) into course content and thesis supervision. The number and quality of publications by Informatics teachers have increased. Several articles (incl. Web of Science-indexed) and conference proceedings were produced in the review period.

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

The curriculum is continuously updated to reflect the latest scientific and technological advances. The SER reports that new research findings – including faculty projects on cyber threats, microcontrollers, information security, artificial intelligence, etc. – are embedded into course units. Faculty attend external training (e.g. seminars on AI organized by LieDM) and industry courses (e.g. Accenture database workshops) to bring current practice into teaching. This ensures that course content stays aligned with cutting-edge developments in the informatics field

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

Students actively participate in applied science projects throughout their studies. As noted in the SER, Informatics Engineering students undertake research projects and final theses tied to current topics, and present results at faculty conferences. For example, in 2022 students presented on issues like PC-generated pollution and CAD/CAM systems and in 2023 on "5G Myths, Fears, Reality" and mathematical modelling for virtual learning environments. These activities demonstrate that students are regularly involved in field-related scientific work during the programme. Yet, it remains unclear how they are informed about their possibilities to do so.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

The evidence indicates strong alignment between faculty research and teaching. The college's R&D funding is modest but growing, and the dedicated Science Fund underlines institutional support for research. The wide range of student projects indicates active encouragement of inquiry, although this could not be confirmed after the interview with the students at the site visit, which indicates that the situation could be even better if the opportunities were better promoted among students. Integrating research into multiple core courses (AI, databases, security, etc.) suggests the curriculum is dynamic. Faculty engagement in professional development (seminars, industry courses) also supports currency of content.
Student involvement (32%) is significant but leaves most students unengaged in research projects, which confirms our finding that students need to be better informed about opportunities to participate in the projects.. No data on co-authored publications or patents beyond conference papers is given. It would be important to ensure that research projects are broadly accessible and that outcomes

(e.g. new methods or tools) are tracked. There is no explicit mention of securing external (e.g. industry or EU) research grants for the programme.
To conclude, Informatics Engineering studies are well connected to applied research. Faculty research efforts are systematically incorporated into courses, and many students participate in R&D activities. The college has made concerted efforts (Science Fund, curricular updates, external seminars) to keep content current. These practices meet SKVC standards with some remaining gaps, where participation limited to about one-third of students is certainly the biggest one. Overall, the links between science and studies are good (grade 3).

AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. Strong integration of faculty research into the curriculum, enriching core courses with current findings.
2. Active student involvement in applied projects and conferences, including international collaborations.
3. Creation of a dedicated Science Fund and institutional support for applied research, signalling commitment to R&D.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Increase opportunities for all students to engage in research (e.g. embed smaller R&D modules in more courses, offer research assistant roles) to raise participation above the current 32%.

For further improvement

1. Seek external R&D funding or industry partnerships to enhance and diversify research projects. Introduce monitoring of research outputs (e.g. tracking publications, prototypes) and formally align them with course learning outcomes.
2. Encourage publications or patent filings by student-faculty teams.

AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

Student admission to the Information Systems Engineering programme is conducted through a centralised process managed by the Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for Joint Admissions. The minimum competition score for state-funded places was 4.3 from 2021 to 2023 and was lowered to 3.2 in 2024.
The number of applicants (first priority/all choices) fluctuated during the evaluation period, from a high of 32/135 (PT) and 30/164 (FT) in 2021-2022 to a low of 6/39 (PT) and 13/101 (FT) in 2023-2024. The number of signed contracts for state-funded places also varied, with 24 places for part-time (PT) and 34 for full-time (FT) students across the period, compared to 23 (PT) and 46 (FT) for non-state-funded places. A notable trend is the shift in admissions toward state-funded places. While a substantial number of students were admitted to non-state-funded places in 2022-2023 (34 FT, 11 PT), this number dropped sharply in the following years, with no non-state-funded full-time (FT) students admitted in Autumn 2024.
The competition scores of admitted students changed correspondingly. After a significant decrease in the average score in 2022-2023 (to 3.35 for FT and 3.09 for PT studies), the scores recovered in subsequent years, reaching an average of 5.30 (FT) and 4.85 (PT) in Autumn 2024. This recovery in candidate preparedness occurred alongside the overall decrease in student numbers and the increasing proportion of state-funded admissions. The declining interest in part-time (PT) studies has led to a decision to discontinue this study mode from autumn 2025.

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

The recognition of qualifications, partial studies, and prior non-formal learning is governed by formal institutional procedures. For formal education, the process was actively used during the evaluation period. Learning outcome recognition cards were prepared for 20 students in the field, with credits transferred from institutions such as VILNIUS TECH, Mykolas Romeris University, Alytus College, and Vilniaus kolegija. A total of 246 credits were recognized for these students. In contrast, there were no candidates during the analysed period who sought recognition for qualifications acquired abroad or for competences gained through non-formal and informal learning, despite an established procedure that requires a minimum of secondary education and at least three years of relevant work experience.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

The student selection and admission criteria and procedures are transparent and fundamentally adequate, while the system for recognition of prior learning is established but has areas of limited application.
The admission process is centralized and regulated, ensuring transparency. The adjustment of minimum scores reflects responsiveness to applicant pools. However, the significant volatility in admitted student numbers, the sharp decline in non-state-funded admissions, and the eventual discontinuation of part-time studies raise concerns about the programme's stability and long-term recruitment strategy. The recovery of average competition scores in 2024 amidst declining intake is a positive sign of candidate quality, but the underlying demographic and market challenges noted in the SER require strategic attention.
Regarding the recognition of prior learning, the procedures are formally established and were functionally applied for the recognition of formal studies, as evidenced by 20 students and 246 credits successfully transferred. This demonstrates the system's operational adequacy for this purpose. However, the complete absence of applications for the recognition of qualifications from abroad or competences from non-formal and informal learning suggests that this pathway may be under-

promoted, or the eligibility criteria (e.g., three years of work experience) may be a barrier for potential candidates.
In conclusion, the core procedures for admission and recognition are transparent and adequate. The primary challenge lies not in the design of the procedures themselves, but in managing enrollment volatility and actively promoting the full spectrum of recognition opportunities to ensure the system is fully utilized.

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

Student participation in international mobility, supported primarily by the Erasmus+ programme, is actively promoted. During the analysed period, 14 students from the Information Systems Engineering programme undertook mobility activities, with participation rates increasing from 1.83% in 2021-2022 to 8.16% in 2023-2024. The primary activity was practical training, with 10 students completing placements at Junior–Talents in Germany and 1 at ATEC Training Academy in Portugal. Furthermore, students participated in Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP), such as a "Machine Learning for Data Science" programme in Portugal and a collaborative project to create a website for science shops, which involved 30 students and 3 teachers from the college working with partners from Portugal and Estonia. The outcomes of this BIP were integrated into the curriculum. The faculty fosters motivation through sharing seminars and also provides international experience domestically via international study weeks and hosting incoming students for practical training.

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

According to SER, Academic support begins with an introductory week for first-year students, who are assigned group curators (both teachers and senior students) for guidance. Ongoing consultations are provided by faculty administration and teachers according to a published schedule, both in person and remotely. Library staff offer continuous support on using electronic resources and citation.
Financial support is extensive. During the evaluation period, 28 students received increased incentive scholarships and 8 received basic incentive scholarships, totaling €38,416.50. Six students received one-time bonuses for active participation. State-supported loans for study costs were allocated to 9 students and for living expenses to 2 students. Social scholarships were awarded to all eligible applicants, and students facing financial difficulties could pay tuition in instalments. However, no support scholarships were awarded for severe financial difficulties, and there were no students with disabilities in the field during this period.
Psychosocial and developmental support includes free psychological assistance available via email, phone, or in person. Career support is provided through a dedicated centre, offering individual consultations and annual career days featuring meetings with company representatives. Students have access to sports facilities and cultural activities, including dance ensembles and a choir. Accommodation needs are fully met for all students requesting a dormitory place. Student interests are represented by student representation bodies at both college and faculty levels.

3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

Students are introduced to the Informatics Engineering study programme and its regulations through multiple channels. Key information is published on the institutional website and communicated via group emails and meetings with faculty staff. First-year students attend introductory lectures that cover the programme structure, study process, optional courses, and internship organization, including meetings with social partners to discuss career prospects. Additionally, library staff familiarize students with available resources and databases, while lecturers outline the aims, outcomes, and assessment criteria for each course. The effectiveness of this support is confirmed

through regular student surveys, which indicate that consultations are sufficient and information is provided in a timely and appropriate manner.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

International academic mobility is not only available but is actively and successfully promoted. The clear upward trend in participation rates, the significant involvement in Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) which are thoughtfully integrated back into the curriculum and the focus on practical training demonstrate a qualitative and impactful approach to mobility that extends beyond mere participation numbers.
The framework for student support is a notable strength, characterized by its holistic and multi-faceted nature. The combination of proactive academic guidance from the outset, substantial and diversified financial aid schemes, accessible psychological and career services, and rich extracurricular opportunities creates a robust support network that effectively addresses the wide spectrum of student needs. The fact that accommodation requests are fully met further solidifies this supportive environment.
Furthermore, the provision of information and counselling is systematic and confirmed to be sufficient by student feedback. The multi-channel communication strategy, comprehensive orientation, and integration of social partners ensure that students are well-informed about their studies and future careers from the very beginning.
In conclusion, the institution provides relevant, adequate, and effective support across all domains. The mobility opportunities, academic guidance, financial aid, and psychosocial services are coherently integrated, creating a strongly supportive environment that effectively promotes student success and development.

AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. Efforts to advertise the study program for potential students are actively made. There are plans to make promotional content about specific study programs.
2. Student leader meetings are organised regularly and to sufficient frequency to address the emerging problems throughout the semester.
3. Student leaders receive one-time scholarships for active participation.
4. The merging of the HEI appears to be smooth for students as they have not noticed any significant changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. To enhance the recognition of prior learning, it is recommended to actively promote the established procedures for recognizing non-formal and informal learning as well as qualifications obtained abroad and to consider streamlining the eligibility criteria to make this pathway more accessible to potential candidates.

2. To ensure programme sustainability, it is recommended to develop and implement a strategic student recruitment and retention plan that addresses the underlying causes of enrollment volatility and the decline in part-time studies.

For further improvement

1. To further strengthen the connection between studies and the labour market, the HEI should make systematic efforts to attract and engage a more diverse range of social partners, particularly from the IT industry, to participate in curriculum development, offer internships, guest lectures and final thesis projects as well as contribute to other teaching activities.

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

4.1.	Students are prepared for independent professional activity

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The programme is designed to ensure coherence between study field outcomes, course unit learning outcomes, and teaching and assessment methods, with active involvement from social partners and employers in formulating these outcomes. A motivating study environment is fostered to encourage active learning.
A transparent and reliable assessment system is implemented, governed by institutional procedures. Teaching utilizes a variety of methods, including lectures, practicals, laboratory work, projects, and hybrid learning, all aligned with the learning outcomes. Assessment is cumulative, combining interim assignments and a final examination or project, with weighted coefficients determining the final grade. Knowledge and skills are assessed on a 10-point scale, with levels defined as excellent (9-10), typical (7-8), and threshold (5-6). Students receive feedback on interim assessments, and results are published in the study administration systems within a defined timeframe. Furthermore, graduates have access to continued studies at universities such as KTU and VILNIUS TECH, with an average of 4-5% of graduates annually pursuing additional or bridge study programmes.

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

The institution is committed to ensuring inclusive and high-quality studies for students with special needs. This is achieved through flexible study arrangements, including the use of the Moodle virtual environment and individual teacher consultations. Assessment methods are adapted to individual capabilities, for example, by extending time limits, enlarging text, and ensuring physical accessibility. The process is formally regulated by a procedure for individualising the study process. Furthermore, a dedicated digital course (EESI-Digi) is available to equip students with disabilities with knowledge of assistive IT tools. The physical environment is designed to be accessible with lifts, ramps, and wide doors, fostering a non-discriminatory and supportive study environment.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

The teaching and learning process is systematically constructed to meet student needs and achieve the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum design demonstrates a strong internal coherence, with clear alignment between programme outcomes, course-level outcomes, and corresponding teaching and assessment methods. The involvement of social partners in formulating outcomes ensures labour market relevance. The use of a cumulative assessment system, defined achievement levels, and timely feedback creates a transparent and reliable framework that effectively supports student progression and self-assessment. The combination of diverse teaching methods, including hybrid learning, caters to different learning styles and promotes engagement. The pathways for graduates to continue their studies further demonstrate the programme's quality and recognition.
Regarding access, the institution has established a robust and proactive system for inclusion. The commitment is evidenced not only by policy but by practical measures, including flexible study arrangements, formally regulated procedures for individualisation, and adapted assessment methods. The development of a dedicated digital course (EESI-Digi) to empower students with disabilities is a particularly strong example of going beyond basic accommodations to foster independence. The ongoing adaptation of the physical environment further underscores a tangible commitment to creating a non-discriminatory and supportive study environment for all.
In conclusion, the methods of teaching and learning are well-aligned and effective in enabling students to achieve the intended outcomes. Simultaneously, the policies and actions to ensure

access for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs are thorough and effectively implemented, successfully creating an inclusive educational environment.

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

Student progress is systematically monitored through a multi-level process. The system relies on a cumulative assessment approach where knowledge is evaluated via interim assessments throughout the semester, which are mandatory before the final course assessment. Feedback is provided to students within 5 working days. Monitoring occurs at several levels: lecturers provide criteria and feedback, students track their achievements in an academic information system, departments collect feedback via biannual "round table" discussions, programmes analyse professional practices and final projects, and the faculty leadership reviews overall progress results each semester to identify and address problem areas. This is supported by continuous student feedback gathered through various surveys, and an annual graduate survey assesses employment outcomes and the applicability of acquired competences.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

Based on the data provided in the SER, graduate employability is actively tracked and generally strong. According to the EMIS data presented in Table 5, the employment rate of graduates within 12 months of graduation fluctuated during the evaluation period: 33.33% in 2022, 80.95% in 2023, and 58.82% in 2024. Data from the Employment Service further indicates a high employment rate of 96.30%. A dedicated study of graduates and employers confirmed that the vast majority of graduates (59% to 84%) found their acquired skills sufficient for starting a professional career, with 67% stating it helped them get employed. Employers value graduates for their professional knowledge, teamwork, and innovativeness (71%), though they noted a need for improved management, communication, and adaptability skills. No graduates from this period became self-employed.

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

Based on the information provided, the institution's activities are firmly grounded in fundamental principles of academic ethics, including integrity, trust, and responsibility. These principles are defined in the Academic Ethics Code and operational regulations. To ensure academic integrity, students in the study field sign a Declaration of Integrity upon commencing their studies, committing to honest academic work. The relationship between teachers and students is built on collaboration and transparency. A key preventive measure is the use of the Turnitin similarity checking tool to assess the originality of written assignments. Furthermore, teachers prepare individual tasks for students and apply clear assessment criteria while adhering to data protection rules. This comprehensive set of preventive measures, reinforced through training sessions for the academic community, has proven effective, as no cases of Academic Ethics Code violations were recorded in the Informatics Engineering study field during the evaluation period.

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

Based on the information provided, a formal procedure for submitting and examining student appeals is present. Students have the right to appeal both assessment scores and procedural violations, including those related to the defense of a final project. The process, now governed by the Vilniaus kolegija Appeals Regulations, also allows for appeals concerning the recognition of prior learning outcomes. During the analysed period, no appeals regarding the study process, knowledge assessment, or procedural violations were submitted in the field.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

The monitoring of student learning progress is comprehensive and multi-layered, effectively integrating continuous assessment with timely feedback. The structured approach spans from individual lecturer-student interactions to departmental and faculty-level reviews ensures that student progression is carefully tracked and supported. This is reinforced by the systematic collection of student feedback, creating a closed loop for quality enhancement.
Graduate employability is tracked through a reliable methodology that utilizes both objective data and valuable subjective feedback. While the employment rate shows fluctuation, the overall evidence particularly the very high rate from the Employment Service (96.30%) and the strong vote of confidence from employers and graduates regarding the relevance of acquired skills indicates that graduates are well-prepared for the labour market. The feedback from employers is especially crucial for continuous curriculum improvement.
The policies for upholding academic integrity are exemplary and prevention-oriented. The combination of a formal code, mandatory student declarations, proactive training, and the use of text-matching software creates a strong culture of honesty. The absence of recorded violations is a positive indicator of the effectiveness of these measures and the prevailing ethical academic environment.
The appeals procedures are clearly defined, accessible, and cover an appropriate range of issues. The fact that no appeals were submitted during the period can be interpreted as a sign of general student satisfaction with the fairness of processes and the effectiveness of prior feedback and consultation mechanisms, rather than a flaw in the appeals system itself.
In conclusion, the processes for monitoring learning and employability, ensuring academic integrity, and handling grievances are not only well-established but are operating effectively to maintain high standards and a positive, trustworthy academic culture.

AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. The institution is commended for establishing a comprehensive, multi-level system for monitoring student learning progress that effectively integrates continuous assessment with timely feedback, creating a robust framework for quality enhancement.
2. The exemplary, prevention-oriented approach to upholding academic integrity is commended, particularly the effective combination of regulatory frameworks, mandatory student declarations, and proactive training that has fostered a strong culture of academic honesty.
3. The facilities are commended for being fully capable and equipped to support the required course tasks and to effectively accommodate students with individual needs.
4. The successful implementation and practice of asynchronous learning methods within courses is commended, enhancing flexibility and accessibility in the learning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. To align the curriculum with current industry demands and enhance graduate skillsets, manual quality assurance (QA) testing should be implemented into the Information Systems Testing and Support course, or a dedicated Manual QA Testing course should be included in the programme structure.

For further improvement

1. To gain deeper insights into the fluctuating graduate employment rates reported by EMIS, it is recommended to conduct a detailed longitudinal study tracking graduate career pathways, which would help to better understand the factors influencing these trends.
2. To further strengthen the proactive culture of academic integrity, it is recommended to systematically integrate advanced education on the ethical use of artificial intelligence tools into the existing training programmes for both students and staff.

AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

5.1.	Teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

The composition of the teaching staff in the field is well-documented and aligned with institutional and legal requirements. Course unit teaching staff possess pedagogical and/or scientific degrees, with varying levels of teaching experience, research interests relevant to the field, and practical work experience. Their current workload and the specific course units they deliver are detailed in the annex of self evaluation report.

The HEI ensures the quality and transparency of academic staffing through clearly defined procedures for competitions for teaching positions, as outlined in the institutional document *"Description of the Procedures for Competitions for Teaching Positions and Evaluation and Certification of Teachers"* This framework includes qualification requirements, certification processes, and regular evaluation of teaching activities.

The self evaluation report presents data confirming: Compliance of the teaching staff composition with national legislation, dynamics of lecturers-practitioners involved in field-specific teaching, and trends in teaching staff turnover within the field.

Between 2021 and 2024, the number of students in the field fluctuated from 109 in 2021–2022 to a peak of 130 in 2022–2023, before decreasing to 98 in 2023–2024. During the same period, the number of teachers ranged from 18 to 21, resulting in student-to-teacher ratios of 5.74 in 2021–2022, 6.19 in 2022–2023, and 5.44 in 2023–2024. This indicates that while student enrollment varied, staffing levels remained relatively stable, ensuring ratios stayed within a narrow range. In 2024, the Informatics Engineering study field curricula was delivered by a team of 17 teaching staff members, comprising 5 associate professors and 12 lecturers. Of these, 13 lecturers have been continuously employed in the field for at least three years at a minimum of half-time workload.

In the study field of Informatics Engineering, the composition of teaching staff largely complies with legislative requirements, with the majority employed at least half-time and for no less than three years. Specifically, 79% of teachers met this criterion in 2021–2022, 81% in 2022–2023, and 78% in 2023–2024, while the current share stands at 77%. These fluctuations reflect natural staff turnover, influenced by the retirement of senior faculty and the recruitment of younger teachers.

Over the three years, the number of teachers in the field changed only slightly. In 2021–2022, three new teachers joined and two left. In 2022–2023, four started and two finished, which increased the total number of staff. In 2023–2024, three joined and one left, but overall the number of teachers went down to 18. This shows that staff turnover was small and mostly balanced, with new teachers replacing those who retired or left.

The number of lecturers-practitioners involved in teaching field course units has shown a steady increase over the past three academic years, rising from 7 in 2021–2022 to 8 in 2022–2023, and reaching 11 in 2023–2024. This reflects a growing engagement of practitioners in the study process.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The institution demonstrates a structured approach to the recruitment of teaching staff. The process is documented and aligned with institutional regulations and bylaws.

Based on the composition, qualifications, and presented turnover of the teaching staff, it can be concluded that the academic staff in the Informatics Engineering study field are adequate to ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes. The teaching team demonstrates a well-balanced alignment with study field objectives, combining pedagogical and applied scientific expertise with relevant practical experience. Over the past three academic years, the teaching staff to student ratio has remained relatively stable at approximately 1:6, indicating consistent staffing levels that support effective student engagement and learning. The institution monitors and reports on the presence of lecturers-practitioners and tracks teaching staff turnover, including succession and renewal measures. In reference to student enrollment trends, it is recommended that teaching staff be further encouraged to actively promote the study field by highlighting the strengths of the curriculum, showcasing laboratory-based learning, and communicating potential career opportunities to prospective students. This would support both recruitment efforts and the visibility of the study field.

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

The documentation provided by the institution includes a description of the structures and conditions established to support the academic mobility of teaching staff. It presents and analyses quantitative data on the number and proportion of outgoing and incoming academic staff over the past three years, specifying the countries of origin and destination and duration of mobilities. Vilnius College of Technologies and Design has established 38 cooperation agreements with foreign higher education institutions across 16 countries. In total, Vilniaus kolegija has signed 65 such agreements with institutions in 22 countries, providing opportunities for programme teaching staff to participate in teaching assignments abroad through the ERASMUS+ mobility programme. Between 2021 and 2024, a total of 40 lecturers from the Informatics Engineering field participated in exchange visits to higher education institutions across 14 countries. During the same period, Vilnius College hosted 42 international lecturers for mobility visits lasting between 2 and 14 days.

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

Between 2021 and 2024, HEI provided opportunities for teaching staff to improve their qualifications and professional competencies. Supported by state and institutional funding, lecturers engaged in planned activities such as internships, didactic training, international programmes, and targeted seminars. Over half of the Informatics Engineering teaching staff participated in specialised training, including Erasmus+ mobility and technical courses abroad.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

The institution has created favorable conditions for academic mobility, with a steady flow of incoming and outgoing teaching staff over the past three years. Mobility is distributed across international partner countries, and the data is clearly presented and analyzed. The goals of these exchanges are articulated and aligned with broader institutional objectives.
Didactic training opportunities are available and few examples are mentioned in the self evaluation report. While staff have access to workshops and pedagogical resources, participation appears to be optional rather than embedded in a continuous development framework. Although some initiatives exist, such as conference participation and limited funding, the institution is encouraged to invest more strategically in building applied research capacity in the field of Informatic Engineering.

AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

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

First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The composition and qualification of teaching staff

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Strengthen the visibility of the Informatics Engineering study field by actively promoting it to prospective students, the labour market, and stakeholders at regional, national and international levels.
2. Continue advancing internationalization by organizing joint study programmes, double degrees, summer/winter schools, seminars, and conferences through diverse international partnerships (not limited to Erasmus+)to broaden academic collaboration and global engagement.
3. Further enhance the competences of teaching staff in the study field by strengthening development across four key domains: professional expertise, didactic skills, applied research capacity, and general competencies.

AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The College provides an appropriate physical learning environment through a wide range of specialised laboratories and general-purpose teaching rooms that support the Informatics Engineering field. Computer rooms are equipped with modern workstations, projection systems and industry-standard licensed software. Students reported that they can access facilities both during scheduled classes and at additional allocated times. Specialised IT laboratories cover key areas such as programming, networking, electronics, cybersecurity and cloud-related topics, with dedicated spaces for hardware-oriented activities (microcontrollers, embedded systems) and software-focused work (databases, testing, etc.). The College ensures access to a broad set of licensed and open-source tools, including development environments, databases, platforms, graphics software and cloud-based systems, with academic licences used where available. Moodle is consistently employed as the primary LMS, ensuring stable access to learning materials and assessment tasks. Facilities meet general physical accessibility requirements for students with mobility needs, and established procedures support individual study accommodations. Financial resources are sufficient to maintain operations, renew essential equipment and support necessary software licences, supplemented by additional project-based funding to enhance resources.

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

The College maintains a structured and continuous approach to upgrading study resources. Annual renewal cycles include updates to digital infrastructure, replacement of laboratory hardware, modernisation of networking equipment and implementation of new or updated teaching software. Procurement decisions are aligned with programme needs and broader institutional planning. Overall, the College demonstrates ongoing investment and forward planning to support the effective delivery of the study programme.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

Overall, Vilniaus kolegija demonstrates a good level of adequacy in learning facilities and resources. Facilities are modern, functional, and align with the needs of Informatics Engineering students. The diversity of specialised labs supports achievement of intended learning outcomes across software, systems, networking, and electronics.
Students expressed general satisfaction with access to equipment, software, and the virtual learning environment. Teaching staff confirmed the reliability of infrastructure and availability of digital tools for contemporary teaching methods and adequate funding..
In conclusion, the area meets the requirements and supports the delivery of programme learning outcomes, but some areas for enhancement are available, primarily related to scaling of capacity for future needs and continuous alignment with emerging technologies (AI engineering tools, cloud-native stacks, cyber-physical systems infrastructure).

AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 6	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The College provides a good range of specialised laboratories and maintains them at an adequate technological level.
2. Strong availability of licensed and open-source software supports practical learning and final-year projects.
3. Teaching and learning spaces are modern, clean, and accessible, contributing positively to the learning experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Accelerate updates related to emerging technologies. Systematically integrate tools and environments for AI, cybersecurity, DevOps, containerisation, and cyber-physical systems into laboratories and teaching workflows.
2. Increase opportunities for students to use laboratory environments outside scheduled hours through extended access or virtual lab platforms.
3. Strengthen collaboration with industry to co-develop lab scenarios aligned with real-world systems and architectures.

AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

FACTUAL SITUATION

7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

The programme has a comprehensive internal quality assurance (QA) system. Quality policy and processes are defined (formerly via the VTDK Quality Guide, now under VIKO QA documents) in line with ESG standards. QA responsibility is distributed at four levels: College (Academic Council, Study and Career Centre), Faculty (Dean and administration), Department, and the Informatics Programme Committee. For example, the Academic Council sets policy and oversees QA; the Dean ensures programme implementation and resources; department staff handle curricula and partnerships; and the Study Programme Committee reviews course content, learning outcomes and survey data. According to SER, annual action plans are used to monitor and improve study quality. However, the action plan that was obtained on our request after the site visit covers only one specific topic of increasing the attractiveness of the study program to enrol more students, while at the same time the improvement of the study quality as such is not addressed at all or only indirectly.

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

All key stakeholders are involved in quality assurance. Students, teachers, alumni and employers contribute via surveys, interviews and workshops (e.g. end-of-semester student surveys, graduate/employer questionnaires). Employers engage by hosting internships, giving guest lectures and participating in final thesis defences. Feedback is routinely communicated back: survey results are discussed in meetings and published internally within. The SER notes that stakeholder input directly informs improvements and that students and social partners actively sit on management bodies (programme committees, etc.) to share proposals.
However, the formal strength of the Student Union in quality assurance processes seems not to be sufficient and needs to be enhanced. This should include establishing structured and regular dialogue between the Student Union, faculty management, and programme committees, and providing the necessary support for the Student Union to effectively gather student feedback and represent student interests in decision-making committees that impact study quality.

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

Information on the study field is systematically collected, used and made public. The College website and other channels publish all program details: admission requirements, learning outcomes, degree qualifications, assessment rules and employment statistics. Information system engineering programme developments and evaluation outcomes are shared with stakeholders (via committee meetings, faculty events, open days and external fairs). Annual data (admissions, graduate numbers, thesis scores, employment rates) are compiled in the College's public report. According to SER, collected data are analysed and acted on: for example, the Faculty Office reviews feedback and proposal data to plan improvements. However, in many instances, the recommendations presented in the SER appear to be those formulated during the previous external evaluation. In fact, for three out of the seven evaluation areas (Area 1 - Study aims, outcomes and content, Area 3 - Student admission and support, and Area 4 - Teaching, student performance and graduate employment) no specific strengths or areas for improvement have been identified through the current self-evaluation analysis. Consequently, it is difficult to develop a comprehensive action plan that effectively addresses all key areas.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

Student opinions on study quality are regularly surveyed and addressed. The Faculty conducts annual student surveys (covering teaching, facilities, development, etc.) and analyses results in committees. Survey findings indicate students rate teaching quality, course content and assessment methods positively, noting alignment with labor market needs. Students report satisfaction with support services and resources (labs, counselling, etc.) and confirm ample opportunities for personal development (project activities, sports, culture). These feedback analyses show that programme quality is continuously monitored, while on the other hand there is not enough evidence how the opinions gathered are considered to close the quality loop.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

The QA system appears thorough but is rather not well-implemented, although the existence of a documented multi-tiered process shows that the College takes internal quality seriously. The SER details many instruments (surveys, committees, employment tracking) that align with good practice. Stakeholder involvement is notably strong: employers and students are formally integrated into QA bodies, and their input is explicitly used to refine the programme (e.g. in internships, final project scopes). The active publication of information and programme promotion suggests good transparency and external visibility.
The main concern is that many of the quality assurance descriptions are purely procedural. The SER could better demonstrate how feedback cycles have led to concrete changes in the curriculum. The reference to the implementation of previous external recommendations does indicate continuous improvement. However, quality assurance is an ongoing process. External evaluations should serve as periodic external benchmarks of performance, while internal self-evaluation must continuously monitor current developments and formulate improvement recommendations to be incorporated into a comprehensive action plan, the implementation of which should be regularly monitored.
In summary, the quality management structure of the Information system engineering programme is clearly defined and well documented. However, its implementation requires further strengthening. The internal quality assurance cycles involve all key stakeholders, where students' voice should be enhanced. Public information disclosure through websites and reports is comprehensive. Overall, this area meets the minimum requirements at a satisfactory level (grade 2), but there are notable shortcomings that should be addressed to ensure full effectiveness of the QA system.

AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

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

COMMENDATIONS

1. Comprehensive QA structure with clear roles: four-tier responsibility (college, faculty, department, program) ensures quality oversight at each level.
2. Active stakeholder engagement: surveys and committees involve students, alumni, employers and teachers, fostering transparency (e.g. employers guide internships and join thesis panels).
3. Excellent public information: admission rules, learning outcomes, and outcomes data are widely published (college websites, national registries), and program exhibitions/events raise visibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Strengthen the self-evaluation process by linking feedback results to specific curricular changes and by developing a comprehensive, regularly monitored action plan that clearly demonstrates continuous improvement based on internal (and external) findings.
2. The Student Union needs to be formally strengthened in the role and capacity of the quality assurance processes.
3. Develop metrics to evaluate the impact of QA measures (e.g. track curricular changes resulting from feedback). Ensure all survey results (not just summaries) are accessible to stakeholders.

For further improvement

1. Regularly benchmark the programme against similar national and international curricula to identify best practices. Consider publishing selected student satisfaction data to attract applicants.
2. Organize summer schools to attract prospective students and give them the opportunity to experience the excellent study facilities your institution offers.

V. SUMMARY

The members of the evaluation panel would like to express gratitude to the staff, students, alumni, and social partner representatives who prepared the SER as a basis for this evaluation, and all persons who spent their time with us in several very constructive and self-reflective interview and discussion sessions.

The evaluation confirms that the Informatics Engineering study field at Vilniaus Kolegija provides a very good learning environment with highly motivated teachers, modern laboratories and lecture rooms, and a supportive institutional culture. Students benefit from a friendly atmosphere, strong practical orientation and good links with employers.

Programme aims and learning outcomes are well aligned with the HEI's mission and with labour-market needs in the ICT sector. The programme is clearly practice-oriented and geared towards preparing graduates to design, implement, maintain and secure information systems and networks, emphasising applied engineering competences, cyber security, ethics and real-world problem solving. Learning outcomes are structured across knowledge, research skills, special abilities and social/personal competences, and are mapped systematically to course units, teaching methods and assessment criteria. The curriculum is logically sequenced from fundamentals and early practice to specialised and modern technologies, with extensive practical training in companies and final theses frequently based on real organisational problems.

Students have meaningful opportunities for personalisation through alternative and optional subjects, with further flexibility introduced by access to college-wide electives and well-functioning Erasmus+ mobility, including Blended Intensive Programmes. Student support is holistic and robust, combining academic guidance, financial aid, psychological and career services, flexible arrangements for students with individual needs, and a strong inclusive ethos (e.g. the EESI-Digi course and ongoing physical adaptations).

The teaching staff are adequate in number and well qualified, with a good staff-student ratio and a reasonable balance between academic and practitioner experience. There is a visible, though still developing, integration of applied research into teaching, supported by a science fund and a range of student projects. The quality assurance system is formally well structured, with clear responsibilities, active stakeholder involvement and good transparency of public information.

At the same time, the programme faces serious challenges that threaten its long-term sustainability. The very low number of students and high dropout rates are particularly worrying, especially given strong external demand for ICT specialists. Although demographic trends and the general difficulty of marketing engineering subjects are recognised, the programme is not yet sufficiently attractive, visible or student-centred in practice. The recent merger with Vilnius College of Technology and Design has so far been realised mainly at an administrative level; Informatics Engineering and related study fields such as e.g. Software Engineering remain largely separate, with limited consolidation or strategic differentiation, creating a risk of internal competition and a blurred profile.

Curriculum content, while generally appropriate, is not consistently up to date in all areas. Soft skills (e.g. presentation, rhetoric, advanced communication) are not yet fostered as systematically as technical skills, despite being included in learning outcomes. Research opportunities, though present, reach only about one third of students and are not always clearly visible. The quality assurance system, although comprehensive on paper, tends to be procedural; the link between feedback, self-evaluation and demonstrable improvements is not always sufficiently evidenced through a concrete, monitored action plan.

Strengths

The study field and the HEI a good learning environment with enthusiastic staff, modern and accessible facilities, and a positive climate for study and work. The study programme exhibits a

strong practical and labour-market orientation, including extensive internships, frequent company-commissioned final theses and positive employer feedback on graduate skills. There exist **meaningful opportunities for personalisation and mobility** through alternative/optional subjects, college-wide electives and well-used Erasmus+ opportunities (including BIPs).
Comprehensive, multi-layered student support (academic, financial, psychological, and social) and strong inclusion measures for students with disabilities and individual needs were found. The students are taught by **well-qualified and internationally mobile teaching staff**, with a favourable staff–student ratio and growing integration of applied research into teaching, supported by a Science Fund.

Areas for Development

Student recruitment and retention: Develop and implement a strategic recruitment and retention plan that analyses causes of low intake and high dropout (entry profiles, workload, timetable, support, programme distinctiveness). Use the excellent facilities and graduate success more actively in marketing; involve alumni as ambassadors; consider summer/winter schools and other outreach activities. Strengthen student-centred approaches, particularly in the first year, and explore ways to make studying more engaging and motivating.
Academic consolidation after the merger: Move beyond administrative integration toward deeper academic cooperation and consolidation between Informatics Engineering and related ICT programmes. Conduct curriculum mapping and define complementary specialization profiles so that programmes clearly complement rather than compete with each other.
Curriculum modernisation and soft skills: Regularly update course content, especially in business-related and contextual areas, to reflect current ICT practice and economic realities. Systematically strengthen soft-skill development (presentation, rhetoric, teamwork, stakeholder communication) across modules and assessment tasks. Introduce or reinforce manual QA testing in the curriculum (within the existing course or as a dedicated module) to reflect industry practice.
Research engagement and external funding: Increase opportunities and incentives for all students to participate in R&D (e.g. small research components in more courses, research assistant roles, better promotion of projects). Seek external research and innovation funding and industry partnerships; monitor research outputs and link them more explicitly to teaching and learning outcomes.
Quality assurance implementation and action planning: Strengthen the internal self-evaluation cycle by clearly linking feedback and survey results to specific curricular and organisational changes. Develop a comprehensive, regularly monitored action plan (including follow-up to this evaluation) with measurable indicators, and make results visible to stakeholders. Benchmark the programme against similar national and international curricula and consider publishing key student satisfaction data to support improvement and promotion.
Recognition of prior learning and student representation: Actively promote recognition of non-formal and informal learning and qualifications obtained abroad, and review eligibility criteria to make these pathways more accessible. Formally strengthen the role and capacity of the Student Union in QA and decision-making, ensuring structured dialogue with management and programme committees.
Staff development and programme visibility: Invest more strategically in staff development across professional expertise, didactics, applied research and general competences. Encourage staff to actively promote the study field and its strengths to prospective students and labour-market stakeholders at regional, national and international levels.
Overall, the study field and its programme has a solid academic and organisational foundation and offers a high-quality study environment, but needs focused strategic action, in particular on portfolio consolidation, recruitment and retention, curriculum modernisation and QA implementation, to fully realise its potential and ensure long-term viability.