CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of BUSINESS

at Kazimieras Simonavičius University

Expert panel:

1. **Brenda Eade (panel chairperson),** academic*;*
2. **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bohumil Stádník,** *academic;*
3. **Prof. Dr. Pedro Pablo Cardoso Castro,** *academic;*
4. **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Malcolm Brady,** *academic;*
5. **Dr. Natalija Norvilė,** *representative of social partners;*
6. **Mg. Carla Harold,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator – *Ms Natalija Bogdanova*

Vilnius
2021

Study Field Data*

I.

Title of the study programme	Entrepreneurship and Management
State code	6121LX032
Type of studies	University
Cycle of studies	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time, 3,5 years
Credit volume	210 ECTS
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	English, Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary
Registration date of the study programme	18 September 2012

II.

Title of the study programme	Business Management
State code	6121LX070
Type of studies	University
Cycle of studies	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time, 3,5 years
Credit volume	210 ECTS
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	English, Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary
Registration date of the study programme	27 February 2013

* if there are **joint / two-fields / interdisciplinary** study programmes in the study field, please designate it in the foot-note

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 Order No. V-149. The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on 5 May 2022*.*

> **Dr. Brenda Eade (panel chairperson)** *an independent consultant in the field of education, a reviewer for the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), U.K.*;
> **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bohumil Stádník,** *lecturer at Faculty of Finance and Accounting, University of Economics, Prague, Czech Republic;*
> **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Malcolm Brady,** *associate professor at Business School, Dublin City University, Ireland;*
> **Prof. Dr. Pedro Pablo Cardoso Castro,** *senior lecturer at Business School, Leeds Becket University, U.K.;*
> **Dr. Natalija Norvilė**, *expert consultant at ADDELSE consultancy agency, Lithuania;*
> **Mg. Carla Harold,** *a recent student-graduate in English, Philosophy and Psychology, University of Vienna (2021), a student-expert of ESU, Austria.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	List of Social Partners and Internships
2.	Research Strategy, Budget and Annual Reports
3.	Quality handbook
4.	Summary of analysis of course evaluation surveys
5	Committee and organisational structures
6	Annual quality reports and quality improvement report
7.	Minutes of Study Programme Committee

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD POSITION/STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HEI

Kazimieras Simonavičius University (KSU) is a private university founded in 2003. Between 2003-2011, KSU operated as a public institution named Vilnius Academy of Business Law. During this time-period, the university only offered an integrated programme of the study of Law, for which graduates received a master's degree in law.

With a change of stakeholders in January 2012, the institution was reorganised, which included a change of its name and its legal form, as well as new management and a restructuring of the administrative structure. In August 2012, the private University Graduate School Public Institution Public Business and Management Academy (BMA) was integrated into KSU. In 2021, the shareholders of KSU changed, and the university became part of a larger educational group and KSU and two colleges/applied sciences universities became one organisational unit. The basic structural units are faculties, which develop and implement programmes and carry out research activities. KSU currently has three faculties: Law and Technology Institute (main division in Vilnius and methodological student counselling centre in Klaipėda), Creative Economy Institute (in Vilnius) and Business Innovations School (in Vilnius). A Big Data Excellence Centre was established in 2018 and a Next Society Institute in 2021.

The Business School was established in its current form in 2013 and was renamed as Business Innovation School in 2021. The Business Innovations School holds the two analysed programmes: Entrepreneurship and Management, which was accredited in 2012 and Business Management, which was accredited in 2013.

KSU currently has its headquarters in Vilnius, but some courses are also held in Klaipėda. In October 2021, KSU had 455 students, 27 of whom study in the business field. Out of those students, five study in the Entrepreneurship and Management programme, and eleven in the Business Management programme.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Business study field and **first cycle** at Kazimieras Simonavičius University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	22

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

(1) Factual situation

KSU delivers two first cycle programmes in the Business Field. These are Entrepreneurship and Management (EM) and Business Management (BM).

The SER gives an extensive overview of the needs of Lithuanian society and the labour market with respect to business studies graduates. The SER states that 'The European Commission has mentioned the importance of entrepreneurship education…and established the "sense of initiative and business" as one of the eight general skills that are necessary for all members of the knowledge-based society' and 'that business skills, knowledge, and mindset can be learnt…and that this is useful for the general social development'.

The social partners strongly endorsed the high quality of business graduates from KSU emphasising their motivation, determination, dedication to their work and hunger for learning as well as their skills and knowledge in the domain of business. The social partners also confirmed that KSU students are able to use English language skills effectively and that these skills are of critical importance in industry.

The students with whom the Expert Panel met, confirmed that courses are delivered in English and that this is important to them and to their prospective employers.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As a result of reading the SER document and its associated annexes, interviewing the stakeholders of the programmes including faculty, students, graduates and social partners, and given the particularly strong endorsement of the programmes by the social partners, the opinion of the Expert Panel is that the Entrepreneurship and Management and Business Management programmes conform to the needs of society and the labour market.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER states that 'the University seeks to increase the competitiveness of Lithuanian society, to develop new knowledge and innovations, to prepare specialists ready for future

challenges and capable to compete with their knowledge and skills in the international market' (p. 17).

The SER Panel pointed out that the Entrepreneurship and Management programme is aimed at the setting up of new business and emphasises start-up, business-creation and lean-agile skills, whereas the Business Management programme is aimed at the continuance of existing business and emphasises skills in business processes and in the functional areas of business such as finance and human resources.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Entrepreneurship and Management and Business Management programmes fit well with the University aims of increasing industry competitiveness and preparing students with transferable skills with which to face future challenges, and with English language skills that are attractive to the international market. Many of the faculty take up international opportunities and international faculty visit under the Erasmus programme. Incoming Erasmus students increase the international exposure of students on both programmes.

Increasing the number of students taking up Erasmus opportunities abroad would enhance the international exposure of the student body.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER document, and in particular figure 10, provides information on the correspondence of programmes to legal requirements. Each of the two first cycle programmes comprises a total of 210 ects which matches the total legal requirement of one of 180, 210 or 240 ects credits. The SER document states that final theses comprise 6+15 i.e. 21 credits and the internship comprises 15 credits. Annex 1 provides details of all courses of study within the two first cycle programmes. Annex 1 also states that final thesis II comprises 15 credits for both programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Each of the two first cycle programmes comprises a total of 210 ects which matches the total legal requirement of 210 ects i.e. one of the following three numbers for total credits: 180, 210 or 240 ects. Courses relating to the business field comprise the majority of these credits and are in excess of the minimum legal requirement of 120 ects. Final thesis II comprises 15 credits and the internship comprises 15 credits, both of which meet the minimum of 15 ects for first cycle programmes.

Note that it was difficult to confirm from the information provided in the SER that both programmes conformed to legal requirements. The Expert Panel suggests that any future SER document should make it clear that programmes conform to all legal requirements.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER and Annex 6 of the documents submitted to the Expert Panel contain Tables 1 and 2 which provide a correspondence between programme aims, learning outcomes and courses of study for the EM and BM programmes respectively.

These documents show a strong overlap in the courses of study provided on the two programmes. They also show considerable differences in learning outcomes for the two programmes. Different learning outcomes are met by the same course of study on each of the two programmes (e.g. Business History and Theory meets L1.2 'To know tangible and intangible resources…' on the BM programme and meets L1.1 'To know various concepts and theories of management…' on the EM programme). While this is a feasible approach for the moment it may lead to inconsistencies as time goes on.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Several inconsistencies exist regarding the compatibility of aims and learning outcomes across the EM and BM programmes. The definition of learning outcomes could be more consistent across the two programmes, and the learning outcomes achieved by a course of study could be more consistent across the two programmes. A clearer link between a learning outcome and a specific piece of work would aid in providing an audit trail to demonstrate that each learning outcome has been achieved by each student.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER states that '[s]tudy programmes are based on three main activities - "pillars" of competencies: 1. Into Action: Taking the initiative; Planning & Management; Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty & risk; Working with others; Learning through experience. 2. Resources: Financial & Economic literacy; Mobilizing others; Mobilizing resources; Motivation & Perseverance; Self-Awareness & Self-efficacy. 3. Ideas & Opportunities: Spotting Opportunities; Creativity; Vision; Valuing ideas; Ethical & Sustainable thinking'.

Tables 3 and 4 in the SER provide a correspondence between the three competence pillars and courses of study for the BM and EM programmes respectively.

The SER states that 'the content of study semesters is also arranged considering the competencies "pillars" by covering all three main "pillars" in the study subjects'. The SER document states that 'research and academic writing skills in the programmes are developed gradually and systematically from the very first semester'.

The SER Panel pointed out that the three pillars act as an integrating mechanism for the learning outcomes. They confirmed that student grades are monitored and that students are contacted by staff if they are not progressing or are regressing with a view to mitigating student learning difficulties.

The students with whom the Expert Panel met stated that the material that they are provided with is useful and they can use it on a day to day basis in their employment. The students also indicated that the lectures are for small groups of students and therefore they get a good deal of attention from lecturers in class and receive an explanation for the grades they receive for their work, not just a number.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Competences of students appear to be consistently developed by the set of experiences that they undergo during the EM and BM programmes. Student performance is actively monitored and remedies put in place where progress is not satisfactory. Robust measures are in place to ensure that consistent development of student competences is assured.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER states that '[s]tudents can choose to attend elective study subjects. This option is provided twice during the study period: in the 4th and 5th semesters of the Business Management programme; in the 3rd and 5th semesters of the Entrepreneurship and Management programme'.

The SER indicates that 'study programmes have a relatively small variety of elective study subjects offered to students'.

The students stated that the programmes do not have options but that an optional additional language is expected to be available to future students. They also confirmed that the possibility of taking courses abroad under the Erasmus programme was available to them. They did not express any concerns about the lack of choice of courses available to them.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

While the opportunity for students to personalise their studies is quite limited and restricted to one course of study in each of semesters 3 and 5 for the Entrepreneurship and Management Programme, and to one course of study in each of semesters 4 and 5 in the Business Management Programme, it does not appear to overly constrain students in their learning or future employability.

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

(1)   Factual situation

Only a small number of students have reached the stage of completing the final theses. Five theses were available on the KSU moodle site for the Expert Panel to view. All five theses were written in the Lithuanian language.

The social partners pointed out that they have involvement with the final thesis process including attending the thesis defence. They did not express any concerns regarding final theses.

The students with whom the Expert Panel met, had little comment to make regarding the final theses as none of them were yet near that stage in their studies.

No comments from graduates were heard as no graduates attended the social partner panel meeting.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The small number of available theses, that theses were not written in English, and dearth of graduate and student comment on these, made it difficult to analyse this criterion. However no obvious issues arose with respect to the theses moderated.

Given the emphasis on the wide-spread use of the English language within KSU it was a surprise to the Expert Panel to find that final theses were not written in English. This appears to be at odds with the ethos of KSU.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The programmes in the business study field at KSU receive strong endorsement from social partners and from students.
2. Robust measures are in place to ensure that students progress well in their learning.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Inconsistency in learning outcomes across programmes and courses of study.
2. Dissertations are written in English and this seems at odds with the ethos of the programmes wherein courses are generally given in English.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

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

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

(1)   Factual situation

The SER provides detailed quantification of the R&D outputs during the time analysed (this is contained in tables 15 and 16 of the SER). This information has been reported and used to apply for state funding for research. This was confirmed during interviews with the SER Team, and the Administrative Staff and Senior Management.

The SER also provides a detailed description of the publications and R&D projects executed during the period under review (e.g. conferences, commercialization, advice), and evidence of how such research activity is integrated in the studies (e.g. Cybersecurity; EUCA-INVEST). The exploration of this issue with the students suggested that students are aware of research being made by their tutors, but they are not aware of how such research is incorporated in and informs the content of the different programmes/courses/modules. Following the same line of enquiry, the meeting with Teaching Staff did not provide conclusive evidence, as observations were made regarding the use of applied research projects to deliver the content for some modules – but this applied research was not necessarily connected to academic research projects (e.g. research methods; research in accountancy, finance and statistics to facilitate the development of skills in those areas).

The SER also describes the participation in activities of research and development with external partners in areas relevant to the academic programmes. These R&D activities are grouped in research outputs commercialised, and research projects with other HEI with no commercial purpose. In this context, the meeting with the Administrative Staff and Senior Management confirmed that part of the development of R&D partnerships is managed via the newly created Science and Competence Centre.

With regards to the economic viability of the R&D activities, the additional documentation submitted by the University includes the budget with evidence of funding from the state, grants, and from KSU's own resources. The additional documentation also includes the R&D strategic plan 2022-2025. The information regarding funding and planning was confirmed in the meetings with the SER Team, and the Administrative Staff and Senior Management, who described in detail the different sources of funding R&D Activities (e.g. State funds, Grants, Entrepreneurship, Own funds), and the existing mechanisms available to academics to access funding for their R&D endeavours (e.g. applications through the Science and competence Centre).

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

R&D activities are well documented and relevant to the areas of study. However more awareness and explicit evidence needs to be made available to academics, social partners and students regarding the impact of such research activity in the actualization of the content of the courses/modules.

The R&D activity is applied in nature and related to the courses as well as responsive to commercial needs/opportunities as evidenced by projects like SkillTake, Accept the challenge – gamification of education, or Platforms of Big Data Foresight; all them with evident impact on social partners, customers and in some cases, direct influence in teaching practice.. The R&d outputs have increased since 2018.

The additional documents provided confirm the existence of an R&D plan and annual budgets. However such documents would benefit from better and more detailed development. For instance, the budget could better describe the allocation of resources in the different programmes and research projects, allowing the monitoring of such resources in more detail. With regards to the strategic plan for R&D (additional documents), when looking at the annual report of R&D, there are no links to the Strategic plan, suggesting that this master document is not used to monitor, control and evaluate the performance of the R&D activities.

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

(1)   Factual situation

The SER provides evidence of the links between the content of studies and the latest developments of science. The meeting with students confirmed that efforts are made by academics to include updated references in the content of the modules they deliver.

A good example of development in science and its adoption with impact in the studies is the project on gamification and virtual reality with application on how entrepreneurship teaching, on the cybersecurity R&D program with direct influence in the teaching programme in business law and Risk Management. Similar impact is evident in the case of the R&D program in Big Data Foresight influencing module on Business Analytics, and Entrepreneurship and Start-up creation.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The SER and the meetings with students and teaching staff confirm the inclusion of updated knowledge in the content of programmes/modules

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

(1)   Factual situation

The SER indicates that students conduct R&D activities through the development of their Thesis, and by participating in applied research as a practical component of some of their modules. This was confirmed in the meeting with students. Teaching staff indicated that this was seen as part of the development of seminars or practical activities to facilitate the appropriation of knowledge and skills relevant to the discipline under study (e.g. research methods, finance, accountancy, statistics).

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Research Report, however accurate, is limited to providing metrics that can effectively inform the management of R&D activities and their impact in the different programmes. For instance, the use of absolute indicators (number of students participating in research activities) does not provide a clear picture of intensity of students involvement in research, as it could be observed with the use of a relative indicators (e.g. % of students involved in R&D activities, research projects, consultancy, etc).

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The university has a commitment to conduct R&D activities
2. The programmes have close links with external/social partners to develop R&D alliances, generating a positive balance in knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The delivery mode of some programmes seems to be a limitation in respect of the involvement of students in research projects
2. The documentation of research activities and results is not consistent in its alignment with official reporting standards

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

(1)   Factual situation

KSU's admission criteria and procedures adhere to regulations by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in the Republic of Lithuania. There are no specific requirements for students enrolling in the BA programmes of Entrepreneurship and Management and Business

Management. Students can apply for admission through the LAMA BPO general admission, as well as directly through KSU.

In addition to assessing the grades on applicant's high school graduation certificates (40% mathematics, 20% each for Lithuanian Language and Literature, History or Information Technology or Geography or Foreign Language and another subject not coinciding with the other subjects), KSU requires applicants to complete an interview which assesses the applicant's academic preparedness and motivation, reasons for the selection of the particular programme, career plans and other factors. For the interview, at least three members of the Admission Committee need to be present, in order to ensure objectivity of the assessment process.

Representatives of KSU present their programmes at high schools, provide information in annual information publications, through the Open Information Consultation Guidance System of the Ministry of Education and Science and through Social Networks like Facebook and Instagram.

During the site visit, several students reported that they selected KSU because it was one of the only universities that offered online courses and was feasible for students who were already employed.

The number of accepted students in the past three academic years is notably low. The number of accepted students for Entrepreneurship and Management was 10 in 2019/20, 5 in 2020/21 and 0 in 2021/22. In Business management, no students were accepted for the year of 2019/20, 13 for 2020/21 and 10 in 2021/22. The Competitive scores were noted as an area for improvement by KSU. The lowest competitive score for Entrepreneurship and Management in 2019 was 4.2 and the average score 4.2, in 2020 the lowest score was 3.76 and the average score 5.04. For Business Management, in 2020, the lowest score was 3.51 and the average score 4.44, in 2021, the lowest score was 3.65 and the average score 4.78. In the SER, KSU notes that, based on the competitive scores of students on these programmes, the efforts of KSU to better attract academically prepared students should be increased.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The admission criteria of KSU appear to be clear and transparent. As outlined in the SER, KSU has taken on several initiatives to advertise the study programmes in question. However, the number of accepted students into the programmes suggest that there is still room for improvement for KSU to advertise its study programmes to potential applicants and to attract students who are better academically prepared for the study programmes.

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

(1)   Factual situation

According to the Self-Evaluation Report, the procedures for recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning adhere to national regulations in Lithuania, set by the Ministry of Education. Information on these procedures is also provided on KSU's website. In the business field of studies, KSU reports to have no prior experience with crediting prior learning and partial study results. For students studying abroad, prior learning agreements are formalised before the beginning of their studies, which ensures their recognition. KSU reported that there was no need for individual study plans in the field of business studies due to prior learning so far. The head of the Business Innovation School is responsible for developing individual study plans for students, and is coordinated by the Studies Department.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In the field of business studies, KSU appears to have little experience with procedures for recognition of prior learning, which can be attributed to the small number of students on the programmes. However, KSU provided a clear outline for these procedures, which can be implemented once they are needed.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students.

(1)   Factual situation

KSU is part of the Erasmus network and provides opportunities for outgoing as well as incoming students. Students are informed about academic mobility at events organised by the International Relations Department, which take place in their first semester, as well as in semi-annual meetings for senior students. Information on opportunities and requirements are further provided on KSU's website. As noted by KSU, during the analysed period, student's opportunities to go abroad were limited, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Between autumn 2018 and spring 2022, only 3 students in the business field programmes studied abroad or were planning on studying abroad. During the same period, KSU had between 8-34 incoming students in the business field. Of incoming students, 78% reported to be satisfied with the programme and that they would recommend it to others.

To address the current challenges of the pandemic, KSU plans to offer virtual mobility to its students, and intends to cooperate with Algebra University in Zagreb and the Rotterdam Business School for virtual courses in the business field. During the site visit, students reported that they were sufficiently informed about possibilities to study abroad by KSU, but that the majority of students are already employed, which makes mobility more difficult.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Being part of the Erasmus programme, KSU provides students in the business field with the opportunity to study abroad. Yet the number of outgoing students compared to incoming students is significantly low. Although students reported that this was partly due to many students already being employed during their studies, the panel still encourages KSU to

explore further possibilities for students to internationalise their studies and to engage in academic mobility.

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

(1)   Factual situation

According to the Self-Evaluation report, students can discuss issues related to academics and methodology with the administration and lecturers.

KSU provides financial support for its top students in the Entrepreneurship and Management and the Business Management programmes, which applied to four students in the period between 2018-2021. Students are evaluated after each examination period and receive tuition fee compensation for the following term.

Psychological support for students is provided through KSU's participation in a project implemented by the Lithuanian Students' Union and administered by the Ministry of Health in Lithuania, through which students can seek psychological counselling for personal, as well as study related issues.

Students receive organisational support through the Study Coordinators and the Head of the Studies Department, who communicate with students individually to resolve issues.

At the virtual-site visit, KSU was able to assure the panel of sufficient possibilities and resources for students with disabilities and confirmed that the University had an understanding of different forms of disabilities, as well as the complexities of providing support for these students.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

KSU appears to cover all relevant fields of academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support. At the site visit, students and faculty members have confirmed sufficient academic support. The psychological support outlined also appears to be adequate. According to the information received at the site visit, KSU appears to pay special attention to and provide adequate support for students with different types of disability.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1)   Factual situation

Students are consulted on the process of studies by the Head of the Studies Department, by the Study Coordinators and by the administrative staff from the International Relations Department.

Students were asked about the effectiveness of the study information and student counselling by the Head of the Business Innovations School during regular meetings with the students of

the programme. Feedback obtained on the effectiveness of the student counselling system through surveys indicated that students found the service adequate, with the majority of students rating it as good or very good. Students have evaluated counselling during live and virtual meetings as most effective. According to the SER, there is more intensive counselling for students at the beginning of their studies, and when they are preparing for their final thesis. At the virtual site visit, students assured the Expert Panel of the availability of teaching staff through various communication channels.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The sufficiency of student support has been evaluated by KSU itself and the majority of students have evaluated the support provided as good or very good. The more intensive periods of support at the beginning of the first year, as well as during the time of completing their final thesis appears to work well.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Close and detailed monitoring of students with action taken to follow-up on failing students.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The numbers of applicants and admitted students in the relevant programmes are very low and have not increased in the period being evaluated by the panel.
2. The number of outgoing students for mobility programmes in the evaluated period is low.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

(1)   Factual situation

As stated in the SER, Entrepreneurship and Management studies at KSU are conducted in a full-time mode of study. Lectures are held in classrooms (during the quarantine period – in a distance learning environment) on working days according to a pre-agreed lecture schedule which is approved by the Head of the Business Innovation School. Business Management studies are carried out in full-time – online mode. However, the Business Management studies

schedule consists of two types of contact work: 1) 15 weeks of online meetings where lecturers communicate with students in real time through the Zoom platform. 2) 2-3 weeks of subject consultations, seminars, task reports and exam sessions. These are intensively organised in the auditorium. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic study organisation was moved to fully online form.

Teaching and learning methods include problem-based teaching, case studies, project work, team and individual work, reflections. During their studies, students develop real products, undertake real projects and process improvements in the field of business, digital marketing. They work with real business companies, develop projects for real clients, solve emerging challenges and problematic issues in the field of business and management.

KSU applies cumulative score assessment – up to 45 percent of the final student's subject grade usually consists of assessment of their independent work or assignments presented during lectures and seminars, and the remaining part of at least 55 percent of the final student's subject grade is obtained during the final assessment examination.

The examination usually consists of a written test with one or more optional answers and open-ended questions/tasks or a project task presentation. The work of students throughout the semester and the evaluation of their results creates conditions for better control and monitoring of students' progress in achieving the intended study results. Teachers are able to identify changes and diagnose deviations on time, maintain feedback and create preconditions for correction.

Social partners (labour market representatives) confirmed during the visit that they are involved in the study process, share their knowledge with students during lectures, and assist in assessing students' project work.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The information in the SER and the meetings with students, stakeholders, teachers and administrators during site visit confirmed that the learning process takes into account the students' needs and enables students to achieve the learning outcomes. Learning process is effective and comprehensive, which is ensured through application of innovative, diverse, student-centred methods of study implementation and assessment as well as a cumulative grade system and active involvement of social partners in the study process.

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

(1)   Factual situation

KSU is located in a modern new building, which takes into account the needs of people with disabilities. It is equipped with a lift, has wide doors without steps and toilets adapted for the disabled. Chairs in all classrooms and study rooms are not attached, making it easy to make room for wheelchairs. University staff provide administrative-information support at the

study time and can advise students from socially vulnerable groups or with special needs about the possibilities to receive additional financial support from the State Studies Foundation, the Disabled Affairs Department, and other sources.

As presented in SER, KSU can ensure favourable conditions and measures fully covering the financial, environmental adaptation, consulting, and administrative support elements that effectively allow increasing access to education for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. These measures will be sufficient for students if the need arises in the future for them to draw on the resources available. As a means of increasing financial accessibility, 50% discounts on the tuition fee is applied for persons who do not have both parents or guardians, for students from orphanages, and for persons who have a certain level of the working capacity of 45 percent or less, or a severe or moderate level of disability. Also, persons who meet these criteria are exempted from paying the entrance fee for processing documents when entering the University.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on the information provided in the SER and the evidence obtained during discussion with the faculty management, the Experts confirm that the conditions ensuring access to study for students with special needs and socially vulnerable groups are sufficient.

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

(1)   Factual situation

The study progress of students in the field is monitored by programme lecturers, the management of the Business Innovations School, and the Studies Department.

Academic staff provide feedback to students on their success in completing the assignments. The mistakes made by the students are discussed and the criteria for the correct performance of the task, the areas that students should pay more attention to in order to successfully achieve the intended learning outcomes of a study subject or a programme are identified. Students can contact their teacher directly during classes, or by email, phone, Zoom platform, etc. As the number of current students is quite small, individualised feedback is provided to students, allowing them to assess the progress made during their studies and, on that basis, to model their studies to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Progress monitoring by the Studies Department is based on the results of examinations passed by students, and it helps to identify students who have problems in the study process. In cooperation with the Head of the Business Innovations School, consultations are organised for them, the problems encountered by each student are individually discussed, their causes determined, and an individual solution plan is drawn up.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert Panel confirms that the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress is adequate. Students receive individualised feedback that allows them to assess the progress made during the studies and, on that basis, to model studies to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

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

(1)   Factual situation

During the analysed period the number of graduates in the business field was quite small – 3 persons have completed the Entrepreneurship and Management programme and 2 persons the Business Management programme.

The employment and career monitoring processes of the graduates of the programme is carried out systematically and complies with the general procedure of the career-monitoring process of KSU students. According to the SER, all graduates are interviewed four times: 1) immediately after graduation – this survey provides primary data on graduates' involvement in the labour market and feedback on how they assess graduation and related career opportunities; 2) after 1 year – the data of this survey is intended to monitor how graduates manage to adapt to the labour market, to see whether they have been employed according to their specialty, and to find out how whether the knowledge acquired during their studies and complies with the labour market needs; 3) after 3 years – this survey aims to assess the ability of the graduates of the programme to establish themselves and remain in the labour market; 4) after 5 years – the aim is to find out how graduates succeed in pursuing a career.

As stated in SER, graduates rated the knowledge acquired during their studies and its compliance with the needs of the labour market as good or very good in both surveys - one year after graduation and three years after graduation. This statement could not be confirmed during the visit, as alumni did not participate in the meeting, however, social partners expressed their satisfaction with the competencies acquired by graduates of both programmes.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During the site visit, social partners confirmed that they are satisfied with the knowledge and practical skills students obtain during their studies. Good preparation of programmes graduates allows for successful integration into the labour market (100 percent of graduates work in the field related to the acquired education, some of graduates successfully established their own businesses). The Expert Panel also confirms that the necessary systems are in place to assess the employability of graduates and for graduate career tracking in the study field.

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

(1)   Factual situation

A range of measures is applied at KSU to ensure the integrity of studies. KSU lecturers, students and administrative staff must follow the Code of Academic Ethics of KSU, which defines the general norms of ethics for the academic community, teaching, study and research activities, as well as the value principles of activities at KSU. The Code makes provision for business conduct and regulates the most important norms of avoidable behaviour.

As stated in SER, special attention is paid to adherence to principles of academic integrity - knowledge transferred in special academic writing and how to prepare dissertations and project papers that meet academic integrity requirements; methods selected for the teaching of all study subjects to ensure monitoring and verification of the student's independent and honest performance of tasks, use of information technologies and databases (eLABa system) to identify cases of plagiarism.

During the process of preparation of final theses special attention is paid to ensuring the observance of the principles of academic integrity. Students present the prepared parts of the final theses for intermediate examinations according to the approved assessment schedules and plans. This creates conditions for continuous monitoring of the progress and consistency of the students' final thesis preparation process, ascertaining the authorship of the final theses, and assessing whether the principles of academic integrity and ethics are observed.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In the Expert Panel's opinion, there are adequate policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination in KSU. The submitted Final Theses as well as other assignments are checked in the plagiarism verification system.

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

(1)   Factual situation

Procedures and conditions for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process and the conditions for their effective implementation in the study process are provided. This process is regulated by the approved regulations of the KSU Appeal Commission (set out in Annex 3 of the SER), which describe the procedure for the formation of the Appeal Commission, its work, and the submission and examination of appeals. Students who do not agree with the final assessment of a subject have the right to apply to the Appeal Commission.

As mentioned in SER, during the period under review, no appeals or complaints regarding the study process were received from students on the programme.

(2)   Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process are appropriate and well documented. However the procedures are described only in Lithuanian language, thus it is recommended that KSU translates all the documents to English.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Individualised feedback is provided to students, allowing them to assess the progress made during their studies and, on that basis, to model studies to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
2. Involvement of social partners in the delivery and development of courses.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low graduation rates.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

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

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

(1) Factual situation

Based on the documentation supplied for the review, "List of Teaching Staff of Business Field Subjects Working at the University...", which gives details of the number of full-time and part-time working teachers: it can be stated that there are 5 (full-time equivalent) lecturers and 9 with half time equivalent lecturers out of a total of 14 lecturers participate in the delivery of programmes in the business field Of these, 5 are professors and 4 are associate professors, 11 have the scientific title of doctor.

Teachers are selected on the basis of specific requirements set for the study programmes (in both bachelor's and master'). For first cycle programmes, offered by the University, scientists make up at least 50% of all teaching staff and in the second cycle programmes they account for at least 80%. Teacher qualifications are one of the key priorities of the University.

 The criteria for the selection and evaluation of teaching staff are based on:

- education and degree
- teaching/research experience
- publications that demonstrate academic qualifications
- personal initiative and guidance

The University has established requirements for the quality of teaching. Before the start of each semester, the Academic Divisions hold meetings with the teaching teams for each study year of that semester to discuss the quality requirements for teaching, with a focus on teaching planning, the quality of preparation of individual assignments, and the application of teaching and learning methods and assessment. At these meetings, teachers also coordinate the content of the subjects among themselves in order to avoid duplication of information and to ensure consistency, harmony and synergy of content and tasks. Teachers are provided with individual consultations on teaching approaches, their attention is drawn to qualitative inconsistencies identified during the previous semester and proposals are made to correct these inconsistencies.

Most teachers are not only actively involved in research activities, but are also very valuable experts in their fields, gaining experience by applying the areas of their research interests in practice. A large number of teachers of the Faculty of Law have their own law firms or work in the best law firms, courts, prosecutorial offices and ministries in Lithuania. Among the lecturers of the Institute of Creative Society and Economics are recognized artists, art critics and owners of private creative enterprises. The teaching staff of the Business School also consists of specialists, experts in certain areas of management, business owners and consultants. The university community is an active supporter of environmental campaigns.

In 2013, the procedure for awarding teaching degrees of Kazimieras Simonavičius University was approved. The employment and dismissal of employees of all types is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania. Great attention is paid to increasing the qualification of the teaching staff of the university

Discussions with the teachers demonstrated a high-quality approach to the use of scientific methodology and also highlighted their success in publishing in databases such as Scopus and WOS. The above-average positive relationship to the scientific activities of the university is only mentioned in a simple example in the SER, namely the publication of a link to important publications on the University's website. Based on conversations with teachers, it is possible to infer their independent and critical thinking about the real world, which is essential for science.

In the wake of the Covid 19 pandemic, teachers have behaved very professionally, adapting their teaching to online delivery and there has been no disruption to teaching standards.

 (2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

From the documentation presented for the review, and through discussions with staff, students, administrators and managers, the Expert Team confirms that there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers with the necessary scientific, didactic and professional

competences to teach in the business field and support students to achieve the learning outcomes. Although staff have few publications in high impact journals, they are practitioners in their fields and bring this expertise to their teaching. However, as recommended by the previous team of experts, KSU needs to increase the number of permanent teaching and research staff and attract new talent to the university, such as doctoral students and young scientists, who could implement their ideas while developing studies and new research fields at the university.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile)

(1) Factual situation

KSU has several agreements with Erasmus partners and teaching staff are encouraged to use the Erasmus exchange opportunities for lecturing and qualification improvement. In 2018/2019, incoming personnel (16) greatly exceeded outgoing staff (6). This was helpful in integrating international elements into the curriculum.

In 2019/20 there were plans for further visits from lecturers from Spanish, Polish, Turkish, and other European countries' but due to the pandemic many of these visits did not take place or had to be postponed. However lecturers from KSU continued to take up the opportunities of international mobility. There were no exchanges between March 2020 and June 2020 and in 2021 no exchanges were organised due to the pandemic.

In view of the uncertainty about the continuation of Erasmus funding and the uncertainty of future pandemics, KSU is looking for alternative ways to engage with international mobility and stay in contact with its international partners to enable the exchange of knowledge, international experience and students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert Panel confirms that the University is sufficiently active in promoting academic travel and international cooperation, and is actively investigating ways to offer the benefits of international mobility to teaching staff and students and further the exchange of international knowledge and experience.

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

(1) Factual situation

To support the professional development of teaching staff, the Human Resources Qualification Improvement Programme was developed and approved last year. During this period, the following events were held to improve the competencies of teaching staff:

- Training to improve pedagogical qualifications - designed to introduce new, innovative and student-centred teaching approaches that support student motivation and active involvement in the study process.
- Training to improve evaluation methodologies and the organisation of studies.
- International visits to improve teaching and qualifications under Erasmus and other international mobility programmes.
- Internal seminars and discussions within the university.

Teachers are also encouraged to constantly improve their qualifications, engage in research or artistic activities, participate in conferences and science fairs, and strive to learn from experiences abroad.

Surveys and teacher meetings are organized to identify educational needs and hear suggestions for improving the learning process. The organization of employee qualification development activities is currently largely focused on introducing new, innovative and student-oriented methods of teaching and learning and improving the quality of teaching.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert Panel confirms that KSU provides suitable conditions to improve the competences of teaching staff through their qualification improvement programme, which put in place a number of effective training sessions during the last academic year.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. University teachers demonstrate a positive and enthusiastic approach to their scientific activities and the development of their professional competences.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There is a low number of full-time teachers, and the objective of the previous period still needs to be achieved: increasing the number of permanent teaching and research staff and attracting new talent to the university, such as doctoral students and young scientists, who could implement their ideas while developing studies and new research fields at the university.
2. Faculty have very few publications in foreign journals with a higher impact factor.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Study field learning facilities and resources shall be evaluated in accordance with the following indicators:

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

(1) Factual situation

Since 2018 lectures for students studying in the Business Field at KSU have taken place on the Dariaus ir Gireno Str. Campus in Vilnius. The building provides a total of 1700 square metres with two large auditoriums, one with a seating capacity of 90 and the other 64. There are four smaller teaching rooms with a seating capacity of 32. In addition there are six rooms for individual work and/or seminars. The two computer rooms each have a capacity of 12 seats and can be made into one larger auditorium. In addition there is an Engineering laboratory with 10 workspaces. The library has a reading room with further computer workstations. The teaching rooms are equipped with computers, internet access and projectors.

Effective provision is made for students with disabilities through the physical resources available, with wide corridors and doorways and elevators to all study areas. Students who are socially vulnerable are supported by faculty and the administration, who have been fully trained to provide both pastoral and academic support.

The library holds some text books, periodicals appropriate to the Business Field and the reading room provides access to e-text books and databases including Ebsco, Emerald, Grove Art Online, JSTOR and INFOLEX. It also provides open access to a number of European online journals and offers students access to test databases on a regular basis. The library is available during University opening hours.

A co-operation agreement with the Lithuanian Technical Library, Library of Psychology Academy provides access to additional resources, including books, for the university faculty and students.

The University campus uses a wireless internet connection. Software packages available to students in the Business Field include Office 365 cloud services, Adobe programmes and SPSS. These packages were made available to students and staff to use off campus during the pandemic.

During 2021 portable computers, mobile cameras and microphones were purchased to support teaching off campus. The Moodle system is used for uploading details of courses/modules which are being taught. The information provided on Moodle includes recordings of lectures – invitations to join zoom meetings, MS PowerPoint lecture presentations and assessment tasks.

Both staff and students stated that the move to online learning during the pandemic was well managed. Staff made recordings of lectures which they put online for any students who missed a lecture. Training was provided for members of staff who struggled with the technology required to deliver online courses.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert Panel confirms that the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies are suitable and adequate to ensure an effective learning process. This was confirmed by students and staff although the majority of students are currently being taught by either blended or distance learning so are not using the physical resources on campus. In general students indicated that this mode of teaching suited their learning needs, particularly as the majority are in employment. The Expert Panel commends KSU on the modern and up-to-date facilities which welcome and accommodate all students, together with an inclusive approach to students who are socially vulnerable.

Students confirmed that moodle is easily accessible and contains the necessary information for each course, although the amount of information provided is variable and this may need further upgrading if hybrid/distance learning continues.

Students are able to access scientific journals and e-books as well as hard copies of textbooks via the library system both on and off campus.

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

(1) Factual situation

The University campus for the Business Field Students was opened in 2018 and is designed to provide comfortable and up-to-date accommodation. KSU states that the library "is constantly updated and supplemented with new books and periodicals". The Study Programmes Committee and the subject teachers make recommendations about the resources required for the study field.

KSU uses its social partners as an additional resource for the provision of internships and the opportunity for students to apply the theory they have learned during their studies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Business Innovation School (in which the field is placed) has procedures in place for the planning and upgrading of resources needed for the programmes in the study field.

Resources are reviewed through the Study Programme Committee. The library circulates information about new texts and databases to teaching staff. The Head of the Business and Innovation School is responsible for upgrading the resources and considers all requests for additional resources submitted by faculty and students.

During the pandemic, to further assist both staff and students with the technology, KSU appointed an electronic services manager. Computers have been upgraded and an extra

computer laboratory has been set up. The School has invested in conferencing equipment and software to support remote learning.

The involvement of social partners in the provision of resources is commendable, but the Expert Panel recommends that this is further developed to ensure that KSU has the latest technological, practical and theoretical resources available for its students.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Modern and up-to-date facilities which welcome and accommodate all students and provide effective and equal access for those with physical disabilities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The Moodle system may need upgrading if hybrid learning continues.
2. More use could be made of social partners to identify key resources for the field to ensure students continue to acquire the skills to meet the ever changing demands of the industry.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The processes and procedures for the internal quality assurance system for the Business Field are set out in the Quality Handbook. The Director of the Business Innovation School is responsible for quality management in the Business Field.

The Study Programme Committee (SPC) manages the two first cycle programmes in the Field – Business Management and Entrepreneurship and Management as well as a Digital Marketing Programme. The Committee is compliant with the regulations of the University and meets twice a year. The responsibilities of the committee include: improving the quality of programmes; evaluating and planning learning resources; selecting and assessing staff; considering proposals for the involvement of social partners; evaluating changes and innovation in the field of study and considering their implementation; encouraging the adoption of new management models and increasing the international elements of the programmes including the mobility of students.

The SPC is chaired by an Associate Professor and its membership includes a social partner, a student, six lecturers and one researcher.

Programmes in the Business Field are updated each year through the SPC taking account of feedback from students, social partners, the demands of the labour market and developments in the study field.

A summary of action taken in response to feedback from stakeholders was presented to the panel. However this does not appear to be formally considered and monitored through the committee structure.

 (2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

From the documentation presented, meetings with students, staff and social partners, the Expert Panel concludes that the internal quality assurance system of the studies is effectively applied. The internal quality procedures of the Business Field are set out in the Quality Handbook and the SPC minutes indicate that the Committee considers quality matters relating to feedback from stakeholders, changes to the content and structure of the curriculum and the development of new courses and programmes. The Committee reports to the Head of the Business Innovation School and action is taken where necessary to improve quality, however action plans do not appear to be formally recorded or monitored through the committee structure. The Expert Panel recommends that the Field adopts a more formalised approach to considering and monitoring action taken to enhance the quality assurance process.

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

(1) Factual situation

The Business Innovation School seeks to create a system of inclusivity which enables all stakeholders to participate in quality improvement. This includes interaction with students to obtain their feedback and recommendations for improvement through surveys, meetings and focus groups. The School also "feeds back" to students the action taken as a result of their comments.

Social partners are invited to give guest lectures and demonstrate how the theory can be applied in the workplace. They also act as mentors for project work and provide internships. They are represented on the SPC.

Programme graduates provide feedback on how the skills and knowledge acquired during their studies has prepared them for the workplace.

 (2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Stakeholders are involved in internal quality assurance. Students indicated that they are actively involved in quality management through their membership of the SPC, the completion of surveys and regular meetings with teaching staff and the study coordinator. They were able to cite action taken in response to their feedback which included spreading the assessment load more evenly over the semester, and changing the lecturer for one course where students indicated the teaching was not satisfactory.

Evidence of changes made to programmes as a result of the involvement of social partners includes KSU joining the Open Society University Network (OSUN), the addition of a Social Entrepreneurship Course into the Entrepreneurship and Management study programme and the strengthening of the marketing stream with the addition of digital marketing, tactical marketing and performance measurement.

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

(1) Factual situation

Information about the programmes and their admission requirements is published on the website together with qualifications and possible career routes.

The University systematically collects and analyses data relating to admission and enrolments, and the competitive scores of students. It also monitors student performance and progression.

The evaluation of programmes, and the reports and recommendations made by external review experts are analysed and disseminated. Feedback from students, lecturers, graduates and programme partners is published on the website.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is evidence that the School collects, uses and publishes information on studies, their evaluation and improvement, and that it responds effectively to feedback from stakeholders. Action has been taken in a number of areas based on the outcomes of programme evaluation. This includes, creating the position of Manager of Electronic Services, scheduling more lectures in the evenings, holding meetings with individual lecturers to discuss student feedback.

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

(1) Factual situation

The University implemented a number of measures to obtain feedback from students in the field during the period under review. In the second month of each semester, face-to-face or online meetings are held between the School's management and students to discuss students' expectations, concerns and suggestions regarding the content and organisation of their programme. Students are asked to complete a survey at the end of the semester assessing the quality and organisation of their courses. A questionnaire regarding the quality of the internship is distributed after the placement, and at the end of the programme graduating students are asked to complete a survey assessing the quality of their entire programme of study, including assessment methods and the organisation of the final thesis.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The opinion of field students (collected via surveys, formal and informal discussions) about the quality of the studies at KSU is generally positive. The outcomes of the surveys implemented during the review period indicate that students are satisfied with the quality of their programme of studies. Aspects of the programme such as consultations with lecturers, the knowledge of the lecturers, the study schedule and extra-curricular activities were rated between 6.9 to 10. The main area for improvement was the speed of communication and the help provided by the studies department. This has been addressed and later ratings in 2021 rose from 6.9 to 8.4. Evaluations of individual lecturers ranged from 7.75 to 9.51. However, it should be noted that there is a small number of students in the field and the survey response rates are low. In some cases the results represented the views of one student.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The small number of students on the programmes enables them to give feedback on an informal basis to their tutors and management, and for action to be taken immediately.
2. Staff, students and social partners are effectively represented in the management of quality.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low participation rates in surveys – partly due to the small number of students on the programmes - may mean the results do not give a true picture of student satisfaction.
2. Although KSU provided a list of actions taken, there is little evidence of action plans being considered formally through the committee structure.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

1. Robust measures exist to monitor and support student progress, by continual follow-up activities which enables students to achieve the learning outcomes.
2. KSU has modern and up-to-date facilities which welcome and accommodate all students, and provide equal access for students with disabilities.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	1. The SER document should make it clear that programmes meet legal requirements. 2. Ensure that learning outcomes are clear and consistent across the two programmes. 3. Ensure that learning outcomes are consistent for similar courses of study across the two programmes. 4. Link each learning outcome to a specific piece of work ensuring an audit trail to demonstrate that each learning outcome has been achieved by each student.
Links between science (art) and studies	1. Provide better documentation of R&D activities, reporting as requested by certification bodies and aligned with official reporting standards (e.g. % students/staff involved in research projects; % budget allocated to research, etc). 2. Evaluate R&D actions against the objectives/milestones defined in the R&D strategic plan. 3. Design and implement a system of research KPIs, including - but not limited to - the use of operative and managerial indicators. 4. Explore forms of collaboration with external partners to conduct research activities, particularly through the use of virtual learning environments (e.g. participative research projects, applied research/enterprise).
Student admission and support	1. Review initiatives to increase the number of applicants and monitor these efforts. 2. Include more short-term mobility programmes in order to provide more students with the opportunity to join academic mobility programmes.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	Review the low graduation rate and develop an action plan to improve it.
Teaching staff	Achieve the objective of the previous period by increasing the number of permanent teaching and research staff and attracting new talent to the university, such as doctoral students and young scientists, who could implement their ideas while developing studies and new research fields at the university.

Learning facilities and resources	The involvement of social partners in the provision of resources is commendable, but the Expert Panel recommends that social partners are further involved in the provision of resources to ensure that the latest technological, practical and theoretical resources are available for students.
Study quality management and public information	1. Adopt a more formalised approach to considering and monitoring action taken to enhance the quality assurance process. 2. Increase the participation rate in surveys.

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field *Business* at Kazimieras Simonavičius University:

KSU provides two programmes at first cycle level – Entrepreneurship and Management and Business Management. Graduates are motivated and determined and are well regarded by social partners. Good institutional level processes exist to monitor students' academic performance and to support students whose progress is below standard. Learning outcomes could be made clearer and more consistent across the two programmes. They could also be tied more closely with specific pieces of student work to ensure that each student achieves each learning outcome and that a clear audit trail exists,

The university has a commitment to conduct R&D activities and programmes in the business field have close links with external/social partners to develop R&D alliances, generating a positive balance in knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship. The delivery mode of some programmes seems to be a limitation in respect of the involvement of students in research projects, and the documentation of research activities and results is not consistently aligned with official reporting standards

The number of applicants is significantly low in both programmes and KSU has taken on several initiatives to advertise the study programmes in question. However, the number of accepted students into the programmes suggests that there is a strong need to further advertise to potential applicants and attract students who are better academically prepared for the study programmes.

Individualised feedback is provided to students, allowing them to assess the progress made during their studies and, on that basis, to model studies to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Social partners are effectively involved in the delivery and development of courses, but further cooperation could help to identify key resources for the field and ensure that graduate skills meet the ever changing demands of industry. Graduation rates are low, reflecting the small number of students taking the programmes.

The academic staff have a positive approach to their scientific activities and the development of their professional competences. However there are very few publications in foreign journals with a higher impact factor. There is also a low number of full-time teachers, and the objective of the previous period has not been achieved: to increase the number of permanent teaching and research staff and attract new talent to the university, such as doctoral students and young scientists, who could implement their ideas while developing studies and new research fields at the university.

KSU has modern and up-to-date facilities that ensure access for all students, including those with disabilities. During the pandemic staff efficiently moved to online delivery and were effectively supported to cope with new technologies.

The small number of students on the programmes enables them to give feedback on an informal basis to their tutors and management, and for action to be taken in a timely manner.

Staff, students and social partners are effectively represented in the management of quality. Participation rates in surveys are low, but this is partly due to the small number of students on the programmes. KSU provided the Expert Panel with a list of actions taken in response to feedback from stakeholders, but this needs to be formalised through the committee structure.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Brenda Eade