



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of Management
at Utenos kolegija

Expert panel:

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6. **Ms Ieva Porutytė**, *students' representative*.

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Business Management and Innovations¹</i>
State code	6531LX076
Type of studies	Professional bachelor college studies
Cycle of studies	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)
Credit volume	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education, passed at least one state matriculation exam
Registration date of the study programme	19 March 2021

¹ In the academic year 2020-2021, the Business Management study programme (6531LX076; registration date 22 June 2011) was updated and renamed Business Management and Innovation (6531LX076; registration date 19 March 2021).

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluations of study fields in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are based on the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport on 17 July 2019, Order No. V-835, and are carried out according to the procedure outlined in the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) on 31 December 2019, Order [No. V-149](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on 12 May 2023.

1. Prof. Dr. Steffen Roth (Germany-France), panel chair - academic member, Professor of Management at Excelia Business School La Rochelle, President of the Senate at Kazimieras Simonavicius University;
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adam Jabłoński (Poland), panel member – academic member, Professor and director of the Institute of Management and Quality Sciences at the WSB University in Poznań, expert of the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA);
3. Prof. Dr. Christian Schachtner (Germany), panel member – academic member, Professor and Head of Public Management at IU University of Applied Sciences;
4. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dmitrijs Kravčenko (Latvia), panel member – academic member, Professor and Director of Entrepreneurship at Stockholm School of Economics in Riga;
5. Ms Dalia Švelnytė (Lithuania), panel member - representative of social partners, co-founder and Deputy Director at Litprint Ltd.;
6. Ms Ieva Porutytė (Lithuania), panel member - students' representative, third-year Professional Bachelor's student of study programme Creativity and Business Innovations at Vilnius University of Applied Sciences.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of document
1.	Additional information on Evaluation of cooperation with external partners in carrying out scientific (applied science, art) activities in the field of science (art) related to the field of study; Assessment of linking study content with the latest achievements in science, art and technology; Assessment of the conditions for students to engage in scientific (applied science, art) activities corresponding to the level of study; Assessment of the adequacy of the level of scientific (applied science, art) activities carried out by the higher education institution in the field of science (art) related to the field of study; Strengthening Internationality
2.	Examples of course works and final thesis and teachers' publications
3.	Short descriptions of study subjects
4.	Photos of the Career Centre

1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT UTENOS KOLEGIJA

Utenos kolegija (hereafter, UK or the College) is a Lithuanian state institution of higher education. Utenos kolegija was established in 2000 as part of the reorganisation of UTENA Medical School of Advanced Vocational Education and Training and Utena Business School of Advanced Vocational Education and Training. Utena kolegija has two study and research units – the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Business and Technology. The institution offers the first cycle of studies with 1676 students. Today, the College provides 22 programmes in 17 fields of specialisation.

The present assessment is for the study programme in the field of business and technology *Business Management and Innovations*. The aim of the programme is to carry out applied research and to train specialists with higher education and professional qualifications in the field of management studies in order to meet the needs of employers in the Utena region and other regions of Lithuania. Studies are focused on practical activities.

The previous assessment of the *Business Management* programme was conducted in 2017 by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC). The programme was accredited for a period of 3 years. The current evaluation period covers the period of the last few years, starting with the 2019-2020 academic year and ending with the 2021-2022 academic year. During the evaluation period, the programme's previous title, *Business Management*, was updated to *Business Management and Innovations*, to focus more on business innovation management and to introduce innovative methods and forms of study and teaching in response to labour market needs and student feedback.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The **first cycle** of the **Management** study field at Utenos kolegija is given a **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	2
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	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
Total:		20

*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 society and/or the labour market

(1) Factual situation:

According to the SER, there are two programmes of study in the field of management offered to students: Business Management (BM) and Business Management and Innovation (BMI). During the period of evaluation, the BMI programme was in the process of superseding the BM programme. New student intake for the BM programme ceased in 2021 as the BMI programme was introduced.

The BM programme is a generalist programme which aims to develop managers with skills and competencies to operate in a variety of business environments and contexts. The programme is taught in Lithuanian and broadly corresponds to the principles outlined in the 'Lithuania 2030' State Progress Strategy.

The BMI programme is a generalist programme which aims to supersede and improve on the BM programme but with, ultimately, the same goals to develop graduates with skills and competencies to operate in a variety of business environments and contexts. The programme is taught in Lithuanian and corresponds to the principles outlined in the 'Lithuania 2030' State Progress Strategy. The BMI programme follows the Lithuania 2030 strategy closer than BM by placing a greater emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation.

The need for generalist graduates in the management field of study for society and the local labour market is not well explained in the SER. The SER draws on NUTS 1 and NUTS 2 level data to suggest that the need for management professionals in the job market is medium. Sessions with employers and social partners revealed that the needs of the job market are significant and growing, albeit for a more specialised workforce.

(2) Expert judgement:

Programmes in the study field do not meet the requirements of society and the local job market well.

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:

According to the SER, the HEI's mission is to "train specialists with a higher college education through applied research, lifelong learning and creating value for the region and the country" (SER, p. 3).

In terms of the stated mission:

- Integration of applied research into the teaching process: The expert committee witnessed evidence of applied research (to a lesser extent) and professional practice (to a much larger extent) feeding into the study curriculum. The College is an active participant in national and international professional development and exchange activities, and lessons learned by staff and faculty during those visits find their way into the classroom. The quantity and quality of applied research is more limited.
- Lifelong learning: The expert committee did not observe sufficient evidence to conclude that lifelong learning plays a significant role in the study programmes or among recent graduates.
- Value for the region and country: While graduates of the HEI are valued by their employers, study field programmes in the field of management lack clear focus or differentiation to make a valuable contribution to the region or on a national scale.

(2) Expert judgement:

Study field programmes do not conform with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Table No. 1 Study programmes' Business Management and Business Management and Innovation compliance to general requirements for first cycle study programmes of College level (professional bachelor).

Criteria	General legal requirements	BM	BMI
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180	180
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	157	158
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	48	54
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	32	30
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9	9
Practical training and other	No less than one-	~ 33%	~ 33%

practice placements	third of the programme		
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	48%	46%

The study field programmes comply with the legal requirements. Given the information provided, the share of practical training and other practice placements has been approximated to 60 ECTS for BM and BMI programmes.

The structure of the programme is based on the legal documents regulating the conduct of higher education in Lithuania. International frameworks on higher education and quality assurance requirements (ECTS Guide 2015 and the 2022 AACSB's business accreditation standards), as well as sessions with the SER team, teachers and students have been consulted by the expert committee to validate data presented in the SER.

(2) Expert judgement:

Study field programmes comply with 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 compatibility is achieved by fulfilling the requirements of the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Five categories of aims and learning outcomes at the programme level are defined: Knowledge and its application, Research skills, Special abilities, Social abilities, and Personal abilities. Each category has specific learning objectives which are related to individual modules of the study programme (SER, Annex 2). The expert committee finds that the learning objectives used to describe each category of aims and learning outcomes properly reflect essential elements of knowledge, skills, and abilities expected from the graduates of first-cycle study programmes in management.

A range of teaching and assessment methods is used to facilitate more interactive teaching, including, but not limited to, work on the business model canvas, video projects, oral presentations, group work, practical presentations and demonstrations. During the evaluation visit, students confirmed to the expert committee their satisfaction with the assessment methods and the expert committee finds these in line with accepted practices.

Students reported a very relaxed attendance policy at the HEI. Attendance of classes is not mandatory and, where it is mandatory, is often poorly monitored. Given a proven positive correlation between attendance and exam performance, a clearer and better-enforced attendance policy should be considered.

An area of concern for the expert committee with respect to this area of evaluation is the risk of grade inflation. Sessions with students and teachers highlighted a tendency where the grading scale is, in practice, used following the pass/fail principle, where those capable of passing a module of study tend to attain high grades (students, teachers and even social partners reported average grade to be in the 80% percentile). Further information provided by the HEI shed light on grade distribution, which, while still skewed towards the higher limit, is of less concern than reported by interview participants.

(2) Expert judgement:

Aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods in the study programmes are generally compliant with the expectations and practices of the study field.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Programmes in the study field display a coherent structure typical of similar programmes elsewhere in the region and in accordance with international practices. The BMI programme is meant to be an upgrade of the BM programme, introducing a larger emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation to account for an ongoing macroeconomic shift towards a higher added value economy.

The expert committee welcomes innovations into the study field programme that align it closer with internationally contemporary standards and practices of management education. There was ample evidence of international mobility, exchange and professional practice having a positive impact on didactics at the HEI. The expert committee is, however, concerned that the focus on innovation in the BMI programme is superficial and poorly integrated. This is because any explicit modules on innovation are at the very end of the programme of study, resulting in students studying innovation as a peripheral/contextual subject, not a core capability. When this concern was raised during a meeting with teachers, the response was that innovation is diffused throughout the BMI programme.

In order to gain better insight into what is being taught in the study programmes, the expert committee requested module outlines for a selection of modules from across the two study programmes. Outlines of modules requested were: Fundamentals of Management, Fundamental of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management. A much wider selection of module outlines was kindly provided by the HEI, including the requested ones. Having reviewed these, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. BMI programme is, indeed, more up-to-date and innovative compared to the BM programme.
2. The expert committee did not find sufficient evidence to confirm that innovation as an ethos is diffused throughout the BMI programme to a sufficient degree to justify Innovation Management to be a 4 ECTS module in the 6th Semester in the full-time programme.

(2) Expert judgement:

Aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods in the study programmes are generally compliant with the expectations and practices of the study field, although the BMI programme does not place sufficient emphasis on innovation to justify its title.

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:

Programmes in the study field display a coherent structure typical of similar programmes elsewhere in the region and in accordance with international practices. There are ample opportunities for students to organise their studies around employment or other commitments. Indeed, students were very satisfied with the class scheduling practices at the HEI.

BM study programme offers 2 free electives (6 credits), 1 alternative Philosophy/Sociology (3 credits) and three specialisations, 12 credits each (trade and services management, international business management, international marketing management). BMI study programme offers 2 free electives (6 credits) and 5 alternative electives (5 alternatives) for a total of 22 credits.

(2) Expert judgement:

Opportunities for students to personalise the structure of their studies are moderate on both the BM and BMU programmes, with slightly more flexibility provided on the BMI programme of study.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The procedure that regulates the final thesis covers all necessary aspects (guidelines for the topic selection, writing issues, ethical conduct, mentoring process, defence, and grading criteria). The thesis is written in the final semester, although this is done in parallel with other modules. Students may suggest a topic of their choice or pick one from topics suggested by the HEI. Social partners are involved in the assessment of the final thesis.

Theses are written in Lithuanian language and appear to focus on either societal issues or challenges of local businesses. Theses appear to comply with the requirements of the study field descriptor.

(2) Expert judgement:

Theses comply with the management field of study requirements and expectations.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. International mobility, exchange and professional practice are readily translated into the study programmes.
2. The BMI study programme is an improvement on the BM study programme and is in closer alignment with similar programmes internationally.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Programmes in the study field do well to follow Lithuania 2030 guidance on the management field of study but, as a result of the local job market appearing to have limited demand for managers with a skillset envisioned by the Lithuania 2030 strategy,, struggle to meet the requirements of society and the local job market well.
2. The focus on innovation in the BMI programme is insufficient and the structure of the programme should be reconsidered to foreground innovation better.
3. Potential for grade inflation is an area of concern that should be carefully monitored by responsible committees.

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:

As indicated in the SER (p. 10), research activities at UK are focused on “Research and Experimental Development”, consulting for regional actors, and tailor-made educational and research services. Applied research generates between EUR 40.000 and 75.000 annually, and UK benefits from “state budget allocations” of EUR 26.000 to 39.000 annually. During the years of the coronavirus crisis, the return on tailor-made services declined from close to EUR 50.000 in 2019 to little more than EUR 3.000 in 2022. True to the SER, the general direction and even topics of research at UK are determined by an Academic Board.

UK claims to systematically register and upload “intellectual property objects (scientific publications, textbooks, studies, etc.)” produced by its faculty. UK has co-/organised several applied research conferences and activities. UK faculty has participated in several international conferences. UK has listed a decent number of research publications; in some individual cases, the quality of the listed publications can be considered high in terms of being internationally competitive. During the on-site visit, it was confirmed that the time the 20 relevant faculty members can spend on research amounts to the equivalent of 3-4 FTE.

(2) Expert judgement:

In the early morning of the day of the on-site visit, the expert panel asked UK to provide it with full copies or at least title pages of a selection of the publications listed in the SER report and

annex. UK failed to provide these documents within a reasonable timeframe, which indicates that the above SER claim of systematic “intellectual property” management is unsubstantiated. The reason why the expert panel asked for the respective selection of publications is twofold: first, some of the listed publications could not be found in research databases or elsewhere on the Internet. Second, a closer look at the ultimately provided publications showed that several of these were published by persons with (part-time) affiliations with UK who have, however, not listed UK among their affiliations. The most striking of these cases is that of one Full Professor, who is reported to have a 0.14 FTE employment with UK. During the on-site visit, it was confirmed by the senior management team, the SER team, and professor himself that has been a very active member of the UK faculty for “many years”. Consequently, the SER report Annex 4 lists three of professor’s “most significant works prepared during the last 5 years”. All three articles have been published in decent, SSCI-/Scopus-indexed journals; and yet, in none of these three articles professor has listed UK as his main or secondary affiliation. This pattern is repeated in several other, though less blatant cases. The expert panel concludes that publications where UK is not listed as an affiliation cannot be considered for the assessment of UK’s research performance and that UK’s declaring such publications as UK’s publications might well have been considered as an act of deceit by a less well-meaning expert panel.

The panel further concludes that UK’s research performance is insufficient not only with regard to the just mentioned issues but also with regard to the fact that the presented list of most significant works does not reflect the amount of time teacher-researchers at UK are allowed and expected to spend on research. In brief: a team of 3-4 dedicated full-time researchers could produce research outcomes in a shorter time or a greater number and definitely of higher quality than the outcomes listed in ANNEX 4, particularly if one deduces a considerable amount of unduly appropriated publications without UK affiliation. Research in terms of publications in indexed journals or with internationally renowned publishing houses as well as participation in well-established conferences must therefore be strengthened considerably at UK. Intellectual property and knowledge management must be taken more seriously, as must be research more generally.

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

(1) Factual situation:

In the SER, UK reports that teaching staff regularly engages in applied research, consulting, and other contacts with external partners, that is, mainly local and regional SMEs and start-ups. These experiences are said to feed into the teaching content at UK. The report identifies business management systems as one of the most relevant innovations in business in recent years and claims that many aspects of this key innovation are currently being implemented in UK’s study programme.

(2) Expert judgement:

The larger part of the elaborations in the SER sections 2.2. and 2.3. does not actually pertain to the link between science and the content of studies at UK. There is some generic reference to innovations being integrated into the study programme, yet, during the on-site visit, the expert

panel has verified that most notably aspects of innovation have been patched onto rather than systematically integrated into UK's study programme. Overall, the link between the content of studies and the latest developments particularly in science must be considered as low.

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:

True to the SER, UK is keen to include students in applied research activities. To this end, UK publishes a special issue of a journal dedicated to the publication of student research results. The report provides a list of research projects conducted at UK with the support of UK students. Students also participate in research competence trainings, some of which have been funded by the Research Council of Lithuania. Students also participated in conferences organised by this Council. Selected students also participate in research-oriented Erasmus+ initiatives. UK is proud to report that all final theses defended by UK students "address real problems" in the local and regional context.

(2) Expert judgement:

The expert panel finds that there is a true motivation and some individually successful initiatives to include students in applied research at UK. On the other hand, none of the UK students the expert panel met during the on-site visit could report on participation in a somewhat longer-term research mission at UK, nor could students point to examples of other students pursuing such a mission. The overall impression is that student integration in applied research at UK is a result of individual initiative(s), and not of a dedicated systematic strategy.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. True *ambition* to include students in applied research.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. UK's research performance is sub-standard.
2. There are ethical concerns at UK tried to hide its weak research performance by passing off as UK publications articles that have not been published in the name of UK.
3. There is no evidence of a solid link between science and the studies' content.
4. Student involvement in applied research in UK is primarily driven by individual initiatives rather than being a product of a deliberate strategy.

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:

UK follows admission regulations and criteria, ensuring transparency and selectivity in the admission process, including state-funded and non-funded study places. Information regarding admission procedures and deadlines is available through various channels, including websites and in-person service points. The College employs various strategies to attract suitable students, such as events, publications, open lectures, school visits, and partnerships with local schools and business organisations. BMI study programme is promoted through multiple media channels (SER, p. 19-20).

(2) Expert judgement:

Admission guidelines, qualification criteria, and enrollment procedures are put into practice smoothly. They are clear and enable the selection of candidates possessing the knowledge and skills necessary to attain educational objectives. The College strives to draw in students from partner companies and does not solely concentrate on local high school graduates. Nevertheless, simply reducing the expected admission grade is not an adequate strategy to address declining admission rates and alternative approaches to tackle this decline should be explored.

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:

UK follows established regulations, including the Lisbon Convention, for recognising foreign qualifications and partial studies. Learning outcomes from partial studies abroad are acknowledged based on Utena UAS Study Regulations and the Study Quality Management System Manual. UK allows admission beyond the first year for students with previous education or non-formal and informal learning. Competencies from these sources are assessed using specific procedures (SER, p. 21).

(2) Expert judgement:

The rules and conditions as well as the procedure for recognising learning outcomes and periods of education and qualifications obtained at another HEI, including a foreign institution, are applied.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

(1) Factual situation:

The College provides information about academic mobility opportunities through its website, Moodle platform, social media and meetings with students organised by teachers and the International Relations Department. The College also offers individual counselling to students regarding academic mobility abroad. While the institution had several incoming and outgoing students in previous academic years, academic mobility was affected in 2020 due to the pandemic (SER, p. 21-22).

(2) Expert judgement:

The institution systematically provides information and support for academic mobility, uses various communication channels to ensure accessibility, actively promotes mobility opportunities, and facilitates both student and academic staff exchanges. However, it should be noted that measures have to be taken to increase academic mobility even though it was temporarily disrupted.

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:

Students at UK receive support, including academic, career planning, financial, and psychological assistance. Academic support is provided through course materials, methodological tools, and consultations with teachers, programme committees, and department administrators. Career and Communication Department offers career planning and management support through individual consultations and seminars on communication and career planning. Financial support options include scholarships, state loans, and grants, ensuring equal opportunities for all students based on academic performance and financial needs. Psychological counselling is also available (SER, p. 22-23).

(2) Expert judgement:

Student support in the learning process is comprehensive, takes various forms, is adequate to the learning outcomes, takes into account the diverse needs of students, promotes the social and professional development of students by ensuring the availability of teachers, assistance in the learning process and achieving learning outcomes, and in preparation for conducting professional activity in the areas of the professional labour market relevant to the field of study, motivates students to achieve very good learning results, as well as provides competent assistance of administrative employees in solving student matters.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation:

Students start their studies with a special introduction to their studies, which familiarises them with the College's structure, academic ethics, study procedures, and available support services, including library resources and the Academic Information System. Relevant documents and information for students are accessible on the College's website, and students have access to subject-specific consultations through scheduled hours, email, phone, and online platforms like VLE Moodle (SER, p. 23-24).

(2) Expert judgement:

The scope and methods of ensuring the publicly available information on the conditions of admission to studies, the study programme, its implementation and achieved results have been defined. Information on studies is systematically developed and updated. However, during the evaluation visit, though the information was accessible online, it was not accessible using the Microsoft Edge internet browser, thus, ensuring that all avenues for accessing information are

functional should be prioritised. Moreover, the site visit interview revealed that students possess a limited comprehension of the innovation concept and were unable to provide concrete instances of contemporary educational tools within their learning environment.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The College makes an effort to attract learners from partner companies and not only focus on local high school graduates.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Lowered expected grade for admission is not a sufficient method to bypass declining admission rates, other means of dealing with the decline should be considered.
2. Information, while available online, at the time of assessment was not available on Microsoft Edge internet browser, ensuring all means of finding information are available should be done.
3. Students have a low understanding of the concept of innovation and could not give tangible examples of modern teaching tools in their learning environment.

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:

Various forms (full-time and part-time, in a distance and in sessions) and methods (traditional and non-traditional lectures, video conferences, practical work, training practices, seminars) are used to organise the teaching and learning process. The possibility of independent studies (self-study) is provided. In pursuing these aims, all currently required e-courses have been prepared. The Electronic Learning Centre ensures that the necessary information is available.

The evaluation of student achievements is clearly defined in the Procedure for Assessment of Learning Outcomes. Students are introduced to this procedure in the introductory lecture of each subject. A Qualification Commission is formed to evaluate the students' final theses. Teachers from other institutions and social partners are invited to the Commission.

The organisation and evaluation of student internships are regulated by the Description of Procedure for Organising Student Internships. The student prepares an internship report, and the internship supervisor at the institution submits an evaluation in the prescribed form.

Students who have obtained a Professional Bachelor's degree may continue their studies in higher education institutions according to the requirements of these institutions in first and second-cycle university study programmes in the field of management.

(2) Expert judgement:

The forms and methods of study meet the needs of students. This was confirmed by the students during the visit. The flexibility of the study process was a key factor for most students in choosing to study at this institution. The evaluation of student achievements is clear and detailed. A strong commitment to supporting students in achieving the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by all those involved in the learning process. Students recognise and appreciate this support as well as the feedback they receive. At the same time, students of sessional studies wanted to receive schedules earlier.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The study process is adapted for students with special needs. These students have the opportunity to study and report according to an individual schedule. Conditions have been created for distance learning and for alternative modes of reporting.

Due attention is given to quality studies of students from socially vulnerable groups. Individual solutions are also used for this. As mentioned in the SER, starting from 2020, 5 students in detention facilities have been studying in the study field of management programs (p. 135).

(2) Expert judgement:

The institution is flexible in organising the study process, the same applies to the study process for students with special needs and for socially vulnerable groups. Individual solutions for different socially sensitive students are envisaged and described to ensure a quality learning process. It is commendable that the College implements measures to improve students' psychological condition and climate.

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:

Student study progress is monitored systematically, twice a year, at the end of the semester in the Department, the Dean's Office and the Faculty Board levels. The results, achievements, and problems are analysed, and the methods of their solution are foreseen.

The student academic base is dedicated to monitoring and evaluating students' achievements. There are procedures and conditions for the settlement of academic debts. The dropout rate is monitored. The management takes measures to reduce drop-out rates by creating better

student support: offering individual conditions and schedules, reminding about counselling and other possible measures.

(2) Expert judgement:

Students have the opportunity to self-assess the results of their progress. There is a clear process. Students are fully supported to plan their further development. Students who attended the meeting were satisfied with the level of support and feedback offered to them. They believe that the right conditions have been created to complete their studies. They know that they can count on individual solutions when needed. Despite the efforts and measures, the drop-out rate is over 11 per cent.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Graduate employment and career monitoring are carried out by the Careers and Communications Department. For this purpose, data is collected in several ways. The information used is obtained from official sources, as well as data from student surveys. Official sources do not have data on the employment of graduates abroad.

The information provided by the SER (p. 28) shows that the employment rate of management graduates 12 months after graduation is quite high. However, the share of highly qualified employees is significantly lower.

(2) Expert judgement:

Graduates of the College are in demand in business and municipal companies of the Utena region. Employers' representatives responded positively about the graduates' knowledge and employability. They also mentioned that they could hire more College students and graduates. All the graduates who participated in the meeting with the expert group are working in the field of management.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The Academic Ethics Committee of the College has been formed to examine issues of academic ethics. It takes care of the implementation of the policy of ensuring academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. The principles and implementation procedure of this policy are provided in the Code of Academic Ethics, the Student Internal Order Regulations and the Policy of Equal Opportunities. Every member of the academic community of the College signs the Declaration of Integrity when applying to work or study at the College. Students are introduced to the Code of Academic Ethics in the introduction to studies, and principles of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are discussed throughout the study process. During the period under analysis, there was a case of academic dishonesty on the part of one student and unethical behaviour towards lecturers.

(2) Expert judgement:

Ethical and honest behaviour is expected of all members of the academic community. The Academic Ethics Committee consists of various members of the academic community – employees and students. In the meeting with the panel of experts, students confirmed that they are informed about the requirements of academic ethics, that they are constantly reminded of the intolerance of plagiarism and that they understand the importance of honest and ethical behaviour.

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:

The procedures for submitting and considering appeals relating to the study process are set out in various College documents. They are all united by the Appeals Procedure, for Appeal Submission, Investigation and decision-making. It provides that appeals shall be submitted to either the Dean of the Faculty or the Director of the College. An Appeals Commission consisting of 5 persons is formed to consider the appeal. During the analysed period only 1 student complaint regarding the incorrect evaluation of the exam was submitted.

(2) Expert judgement:

At the meeting with the expert panel, students confirmed that they are aware of the institutional procedures regarding the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process. The procedures for submitting and examining appeals regarding the study process seem clear and adequate and offer sufficient opportunity for students to challenge the College's decisions in respect of any case of academic disagreement.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The flexibility of the study process is appreciated by students.
2. Positive feedback from students.
3. Strong connections with social partners ensure a high level of employment.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. High drop-out rate.
2. Earlier submission of schedules is preferred.

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:

Teaching in the relevant programme at UK is covered by 24 faculty members, the majority of which are working full-time at UK and have expertise in a management subfield. The ratio of students per teacher has, in recent years, been fluctuating between 1:5 and 1:8. The teaching-related workload for assistants at UK is 900 h out of a total of 1500 h annually, which decreases to 680 h for Full Professors (of which, to the knowledge of the expert panel, UK has none). 38% of UK's faculty hold a PhD and close to 80% are fluent in a foreign language at level B2 or above. The SER also reports on some pillars of a structured onboarding process.

(2) Expert judgement:

During the on-site visit, it was verified that the teaching workloads indicated above pertain to academic hours of 45 mins. The teaching workload particularly of the younger teacher-researchers is nonetheless very high, particularly given the fact that this group needs to invest even greater time in preparing teaching content than more experienced teacher-researchers. Adding administrative tasks to such a workload, it seems almost impossible that young researchers at UK to conduct high-quality research in contexts other than their private life. Whereas this systematic teaching overload of particularly the younger faculty members is not untypical of institutions of higher education in Lithuania, it is the more unfortunate in the context of an institution such as UK, that is, an institution that has serious problems with producing enough high- or at least reasonable quality research outcomes (see 3.2.1.). Whereas the expert panel commends UK on its efforts to further qualify its assistants, e.g., by encouraging this group to participate in dedicated summer schools organised by the Research Council of Lithuania, the key issue remains that particularly the younger staff members – who could easily develop research skills that put them on par with international colleagues and thus make UK's research more competitive nationally and internationally – are clearly overloaded with teaching, teaching-related administration, and most likely further administrative expectations and requirements. Given the overall weak research performance at UK, the expert panel therefore recommends that UK finds a way to creatively deal with the national legal framework conditions pertaining to workload distribution at institutions of higher education in a bid to secure its early career staff members the greatest possible amount of time possible for increasing their research quality and qualification.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staff's academic mobility

(1) Factual situation:

UK has a dedicated written policy regulating the who's and how's of participation in international staff mobility. UK's main interface to other partner institutions clearly is the Erasmus+ programme. For the period of 2018 to 2022, UK reports 2-3 dozen of outgoing Erasmus+ mobility visits for teaching and internships each. UK has also been host to more than

50 incoming visits within the same period. There is also some evidence of faculty involvement in international projects.

(2) Expert judgement:

Conditions for international staff mobility are favourable at UK. Target institutions for outgoing mobility make a solid impression, yet some of the partners for repeated mobility visits are not available anymore due to the geopolitical situation. A strategic re-orientation of staff mobility activities might therefore be required.

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

(1) Factual situation:

UK's reported self-assessment of the conditions for the improvement of its faculty's competencies is "good". UK points to "various" offers and initiatives provided and launched to this end. According to an article in the UK Statutes, faculty members are entitled to a maximum of one-year sabbatical after every five years of service. UK invests a dedicated budget of a few thousand EUR annually to raise the qualification of its teacher-researchers, e.g., through seminars and trainings.

(2) Expert judgement:

There is some evidence that UK is truly motivated to raise the qualification of its staff members in general and its assistants in particular. Still, the latter group's high teaching workload considerably complicates the further development of competencies, particularly in fields other than teaching.

It is commendable that the UK Statutes entitle faculty members to regular sabbatical leaves for research purposes. However, the on-site visit discussions have unveiled that faculty members cannot make use of this opportunity because the workload their absence would leave behind would need to be covered by the remaining colleagues as (largely) unpaid overtime. Against the backdrop of UK's poor research performance, the expert panel strongly recommends UK to eliminate the moral constraints that prevent UK faculty members from making use of their certified right to a sabbatical. Moreover, the sabbatical policy ought to be fair and transparent, that is, there should be a guaranteed minimum duration of this sabbatical of six months for everyone who has been with UK for (another) five years, and an additional period of again another six months for faculty members who have been meeting ambitious research targets (funding, high-quality publishing) within the past five years.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Solid level of faculty members with PhD.
2. Solid level of international staff mobility.
3. Conditions for staff mobility favourable at UK.
4. UK Statutes entitle faculty members to a research-oriented sabbatical every five years.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There are moral constraints to actually use the above sabbatical option. These constraints must be removed.
2. The quality of research outcomes is not commensurate with the UK's faculty comparatively high levels of academic qualification.
3. The teaching workload particularly of the youngest UK faculty members prevents this group from developing research expertise and thus the transition of UK to an inter-/nationally competitive institution of higher education *and research*.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

(1) Factual situation:

The Facilities at the Faculty of Business and Technology of UK consist of 19 auditoriums and classrooms with projectors and other multimedia equipment for the realisation of theoretical teaching and practical training. The auditoriums and classrooms are located in separate buildings, where additionally a new conference hall with modern equipment and computer rooms was established as a state-of-the-art project financed by funding from the national government and the European structural fund. Near the College buildings, nine ramps are equipped to help people with physical disabilities enter the premises with a wheelchair.

Also, ten computer-based laboratories with 16 workplaces in each were established. Additionally, a social room project, where students have built the plan of interior design for leisure time and networking was provided.

The library of UK Faculty of Business and Technology is hosted at the modern building of the city community library and provides optimal conditions to reach the aims of studies, research, and continuous learning. It contains a reading room with 10 workstations and 5 computerised workstations. UK library subscribes to over 26.000 scientific and professional journals such as 10 EBSCO databases, SpringerLink or BASE as well as Open Access Repositories (e.g., OpenDOAR), Open Access Books (e.g., DOAB), or the Lithuanian Electronic Theses and Dissertations (eLABa).

Specific Software for reaching the study outcomes such as Festo and ArcGis, Zfx CAD and PVS could be used onsite or in a virtual learning edition in Moodle environment. Also, international web applications like Google Digital Garage as an online course platform for digital businesses in a virtual space or PrestaShop, as the leading e-commerce platform in Europe are available.

For students with disabilities special equipment adapted for the visually impaired, hearing and/or mobility impaired is provided on four computers that have Domino Pro for hearing-impaired people or JAWS as a speech synthesiser.

For simulating student practice in business communication, social skills and business plan development, classrooms with specific software applications in two virtual “Business Practical Training Firms (BPTF)” are established. Under provisions of EUROPEAN criteria for international accreditation, there are processes simulated of business departments like Personnel, Purchasing, Sales, Marketing, and Finance.

(2) Expert judgement:

Overall, the premises and the learning resources are appropriate and conditions for problem-based teaching and independent learning are established. However, since most of the premises are located in an older building, some improvements are needed in terms of the energy balance of buildings or air fresheners for long-term lectures in the big auditorium.

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

(1) Factual situation:

Based on the faculty needs addressed by teachers to the Head of the Department every month, the library acquires books, magazines, and e-content by subscription from various databases and journals, which are relevant to the subject of the programme. A great part of e-publications and other learning resources are available in Lithuanian, English and Russian. Another planned system is providing services that students can use to participate in conferences, listen to lectures, and participate in projects, discussions, and various meetings.

Till the year 2022, the College implemented the project “Modern Technological and Engineering Studies and Creation of an e-Training Base, Meeting to the Needs of the Utena Region”, where modernising the learning infrastructure was the target.

A further process of planning refers to internships in companies because of methodological support by standardized templates and, checklists lists of recommendations and cooperation agreements with 32 companies related to the field of study. Close cooperation with the social partners allows also an update of options to use modern infrastructure, which is used in practice.

(2) Expert judgement:

The provision of updated scientific resources, internationalisation through multi-language offerings, and the incorporation of social partners into the learning process are adequately fulfilled. A step further would be establishing a rating system for excellent scientific research which could be used during the procurement process and the use of artificial intelligence in analysing the efficacy of a distance-learning environment in contrast to onsite lessons.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The UK's infrastructure ensures distance learning as a fully adaptable alternative for part-time students as a proper implementation of the study programme.
2. Constant attention is paid to the updating of information resources (publications, databases, etc.) in the library.
3. Strong connections with social partners and graduates ensure good conditions for internships.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Closer cooperation with social partners and more active investments in the buildings and technical infrastructure and equipment for practical training of students, e.g., by real-conditioned software suites in practice, would be possible.
2. Because of the old infrastructure, renovations in the buildings or energy balancing are necessary points of investment.

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:

UK uses a Study Quality Management System (SQMS) aligned with ISO 9001, the EFQM model, and ESG to ensure the quality of education. The Study Quality Committee gathers feedback from students, graduates, employers, and internship managers, publishing results online. Students can anonymously evaluate teachers. The SQMS covers processes like admission, scheduling, internships, and career planning. Responsibilities for quality management are shared among staff. Department meetings address study issues, exam tasks, and student progress. The Study Program Committee oversees programme implementation, conducts evaluations, and suggests improvements based on feedback. Quality assurance follows a sequence: data collection, analysis, discussions, decision-making, and continuous improvement. Progress reports on programme quality are submitted to the Rector, and the Academic Council evaluates them (SER, p. 38-40).

(2) Expert judgement:

The effectiveness of the quality system was assessed through the analysis of the study programme, its structure, the selection of topics for lectures and classes, and the proportions between lectures, classes and seminars. The mechanisms of conducting lectures and methods of examining students were analysed. The effectiveness of direct and online communication

methods of students with lecturers and administrative staff was verified. The results are satisfactory.

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

(1) Factual situation:

The College's employees, students, strategic partners and alumni are considered social stakeholders of the College.

Students, together with other interested parties, are involved in internal quality assurance through participation in various activities, committees and commissions: Study Quality Committee, Academic Council, Academic Ethics Committee, Faculty Council, College's Competition Commission, and Faculty Certification Commission.

Strategic partners also give lectures, accept students for internships, and participate in the work of the Qualification Commission for Final Thesis and Qualification Examination.

(2) Expert judgement:

There is cooperation with the socio-economic environment, including employers, in the construction of the study programme, its implementation and improvement. During these meetings, the content and topics of the study programme are discussed. The potential of the local market in terms of jobs for new graduates of the College is also being verified. Opportunities for internships for students in organisations on the local labour market are discussed.

There is little interaction between UK students and alumni so far. Moreover, the role of the UK Alumni Club must be redefined. Strengthening the role of the alumni club could encourage alumni to become members of the club and provide feedback as well as networking, internship, or job opportunities to future students of their former institution of higher education.

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

(1) Factual situation:

All key information related to the implementation of the study programme, external evaluation and survey results are available on the College's website. This information channel is common to all target groups: the founders, the College community and the public. Other channels are also used for individual target groups: social networks, mass media, public lectures and seminars, as well as targeted events and discussions.

At the faculty level, discussions are organised to evaluate the sufficiency of information. Results from surveys of lecturers, students, graduates and employers are used for this. The effectiveness of social networks and mass media is periodically analysed by the career and communication department.

(2) Expert judgement:

The entire package of information about studying is provided. The order of collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes meet the basic criteria.

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:

Every year, after the autumn semester, a student survey is conducted to evaluate the quality of studies. Summarised results are published on the College's website. The most recent survey conducted in 2023 showed that students of management studies rate the quality of studies at 3.93 points on a five-point scale. The work of lecturers and other academic staff was rated above 4 points. Cooperation between lecturers and students was rated the highest.

(2) Expert judgement:

The results of student surveys indicate an above-average assessment of study quality. Individual fields were rated quite highly.

The students who participated in the meeting with the experts were satisfied with their studies. They believe that the education culture is high and the study climate is positive. Also, students are satisfied with study conditions (balance between studying and free time) and practical knowledge. Interviews with students confirm their satisfaction with studying. Students believe that the transferred knowledge is modern and needed in the labour market.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. In the students' opinion, studying is friendly to them and gives a chance to balance between studying and free time.
2. Students receive good practical knowledge from lecturers.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The little interaction between students and alumni.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Core definition: Excellence means exhibiting exceptional characteristics that are, implicitly, not achievable by all.

Utena College has a good organisational culture, committed teachers, and satisfied students.

Active participation in international mobility and professional development and practice is easily translated into the study programme, which results in a higher quality study programme and better experience for students.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<p>The study programme claims to be focused on innovation, yet particularly the most innovation-related modules are currently patched onto the programme at its very end. A programme focused on innovation must - visibly - integrate innovation in the majority of its modules. Innovation-related modules ought to be offered in the early stages of the programme.</p> <p>Study field programmes do not fit the needs of the local society and the job market well. This is in no small part because the programmes, and the new BMI programme in particular, attempt to adjust to the Lithuania 2030 strategy, which does not (yet) correspond to the needs of the local job market well. The focus should be identified and pursued in order to differentiate the programmes better (there appears to be more demand for specialists than generalists in the local market).</p> <p>More attention should be paid to ensuring the correct use of grading scales. Potential for grade inflation is an area of concern as it undermines academic excellence among students.</p>
Links between science (art) and studies	<p>The quality of research at UK is poor. UK has tacitly admitted this fact by listing as its own research production publications without UK affiliation. UK must establish a true (!), quality-oriented research culture. This may be achieved through the implementation of a fair and transparent research incentive system as well as the elimination of moral constraints that currently prevent faculty members from making use of their chartered right to a sabbatical.</p> <p>To foster more structured student participation in applied research, it is recommended for UK to develop a deliberate strategy that would incentivise students' engagement in research activities.</p>
Student admission and support	<p>It is recommended to explore alternative strategies beyond lowering admission grade requirements, such as enhancing marketing efforts, expanding programme offerings, or strengthening partnerships with local schools or organisations.</p> <p>To ensure accessibility to information, it is recommended to optimise web compatibility, making sure that all online resources and information are readily accessible on popular internet browsers like Microsoft Edge, thus improving the user experience.</p>

	To enhance students' understanding of innovation and modern teaching tools, it is recommended to incorporate interactive workshops and real-world examples into the curriculum to provide tangible experiences that help students grasp the concept effectively.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<p>In order to reduce the number of dropouts, it is recommended that the effectiveness of existing measures be reviewed and, where possible, new ones introduced.</p> <p>Earlier scheduling of sessions would allow students to better balance their time between work and study and could also serve as a preventive measure to reduce dropout. It is therefore recommended that timetables be published as early as possible.</p>
Teaching staff	<p>Teaching staff is recommended to benchmark the working conditions and the research outcomes at similar institutions in Lithuania and abroad.</p> <p>Moral constraints to actually use the sabbatical option must be removed.</p> <p>The practice of allocating high teaching workloads particularly to the youngest UK faculty members must be reconsidered as this prevents this group from developing research expertise and thus UK's transformation into an inter-/nationally competitive institution of higher education <i>and research</i>. Generally, a more balanced distribution of workload between younger and more experienced faculty members is required. Note that at many institutions of higher education abroad, younger faculty members are assigned <i>lower</i> teaching loads in order to allow them to develop both their teaching content and their research pipeline.</p>
Learning facilities and resources	<p>Social partners asked for closer cooperation and more active investments in the infrastructure and equipment for practical training of students, e.g., by up-to-date software as used in business (rather than governmental) practice.</p> <p>Because of the old infrastructure, renovations in the buildings or energy balancing are necessary points of investment.</p>
Study quality management and public information	<p>The interaction between UK students and alumni must be increased. The role of the UK Alumni Club must be redefined.</p> <p>Research outcomes must be tracked, stored, and showcased more systematically.</p>

VI. SUMMARY

The renewed Business Management and Innovation programme offered by Utena College is presented as unique and innovation-oriented. A programme focused on innovation is expected to integrate innovation into most of its modules, however, most innovation-related modules are designed for the very end of the programme, although they should definitely be offered in the earlier stages.

The quality of research at Utena College is poor. The connection between science and study content is weak. The ambition to involve students in research activities is commendable but underdeveloped. Teachers have the right to a sabbatical, but it is not used due to moral restrictions. A structured strategic plan is required to establish the right quality-oriented research culture.

Utena College has a good organisational culture, committed teachers and satisfied students. A flat hierarchical structure is used here, and there are very warm and close relationships between the administrative staff, teachers and students. There is only positive feedback from students.

Students especially appreciate the flexibility of the study process. The College has an infrastructure that ensures proper remote implementation of the study programme for part-time students. However, students would like the timetables to be provided at least a little earlier.

Utena College has a solid level of faculty members with a Ph.D. There are favourable conditions for staff mobility and international initiatives or collaborations. In addition, UK Statutes entitle faculty members to a research-oriented sabbatical every five years. However, all this does not yet produce significant research results. The situation should be resolved by removing any moral restrictions to actually use the aforementioned sabbatical option. The workload should also be redistributed between experienced and young teachers.

The College has strong relations with social partners to ensure internship and employment opportunities. It is recommended to look for opportunities to expand these connections by improving the learning base and infrastructure. The renovation of the old infrastructure requires investments.

Social partners are sufficiently involved in the activities of the College. Students also participate in internal quality assurance. Meanwhile, more alumni involvement would be needed. The interaction between UK students and alumni must be increased, thus, the role of the UK Alumni Club must be redefined. Strengthening the role of the alumni club could encourage alumni to become members of the club.

Expert panel chairperson signature:
Prof. Dr. Steffen Roth