



**STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS**  
**CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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## **INFORMATICS ENGINEERING FIELD OF STUDY**

**Kauno kolegija**

### **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **1.2. REVIEW PANEL**

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

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

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

## **1.3. SITE VISIT**

The site visit was organised on 29 November 2025 onsite.

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

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

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

## 1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

### Overview of the HEI

Kauno Kolegija (KK), in the sequel also referred to as the Higher Education Institution (HEI) is a public state multidisciplinary higher education institution. It was established in 2000. In 2005 it was accredited as a non-university higher education institution. In 2014 and 2022, it was accredited by international external evaluators. It is managed by the Director, who has three deputies. The collegial governing bodies include the KK Council with 11 members, and the Academic Council with 38 members. Employees are represented by the KK Labour Council. In 2024, KK was merged with Alytus Kolegija (AK).

The HEI consists of 4 faculties (Business; Informatic, Engineering, and Technologies; Arts and Education) in Kaunas, 1 faculty in Alytus, and a branch in Tauragė. It has about 5,200 students, 850 employees, and 37,000 alumni. It implements 60 professional bachelor's degree programmes and 2 short-cycle programmes organized in 33 study fields.

KK actively cooperates with more than 200 foreign partners, including 166 under the EU Erasmus+ mobility programme, is a member of EURASHE, EAIE, Businet, ICEIGATM, EFRS, ENPHE, CRES international associations and networks.

### Overview of the study field

At the time of the merge with Alytus Kolegija, 4 Full-Cycle Degree Programmes (Cyber Systems and Security; Multimedia Technology; Multimedia and Visual Communication; Information Technology) and 2 Short-Cycle Programmes (Systems Administration; Graphical User Interface Development) were offered. However, following the merging with AK, a clear course of consolidation was taken: Beginning with the study year 2025/26, students are admitted only to three study programmes: Cyber Systems and Security, Multimedia Technology and Systems Administration. It is planned that from 2026 onwards, the HEI will only admit students to two study programmes in the informatics engineering study field: Cyber Systems and Security; and Systems Administration. The Multimedia Technology study programme may be moved to a different study field. Since this is an ongoing process, the current evaluation will include the study programme Multimedia Technology.

The objectives and learning outcomes of the programmes offered in the study field align with the institution's strategic goal of delivering practical, innovation-driven higher education and providing studies and educational services that contribute to state and regional development. The content integrates technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), cyber-physical systems and security, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, and other technologies that are relevant in today's digital society and economy.

### Previous external evaluations

In previous evaluations of the area under evaluation, some recommendations have been made which have been addressed by the Committee of the field of study. Consequently, e.g. elective courses have been added to the study programmes, a title was adapted, and course descriptions have been updated.

### Documents and information used in the review

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

- Self-evaluation report and its annexes
- Example of final theses

**Additional sources of information used by the review panel:**

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

- Lithuanian Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030”;
- Study "From Graduate's Desk to a Career in ICT Professions", conducted by Invest Lithuania and InfoBalt Lithuania (Invest Lithuania <https://investlithuania.com/>)
- HEI's web pages at <https://www.kaunokolegija.lt/en/>

## II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

### Short cycle/LTQF 5

|                                                                                                       |                                                     |                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Title of the study programme                                                                          | <b>System Administration</b>                        | <b>Graphical User Interface Development</b>         |
| State code                                                                                            | 5701BX001                                           | 5701BX002                                           |
| Type of study (college/university)                                                                    | College                                             | College                                             |
| Study cycle                                                                                           | Short cycle                                         | Short cycle                                         |
| Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)                                   | Full-time, 1,5 years                                | Full-time, 1,5 years                                |
| Workload in ECTS                                                                                      | 90                                                  | 90                                                  |
| Award (degree and/or professional qualification)                                                      | Systems Administrator                               | User Interface Developer                            |
| Language of instruction                                                                               | Lithuanian                                          | Lithuanian                                          |
| Admission requirements                                                                                | Secondary education and Professional qualifications | Secondary education and Professional qualifications |
| First registration date                                                                               | 2022                                                | 2022                                                |
| Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision) | –                                                   | –                                                   |

### First cycle/LTQF 6

|                                                                                                       |                                    |                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of the study programme                                                                          | <b>Cyber Systems and Security</b>  | <b>Information Technology</b>                                                     |
| State code                                                                                            | 6531BX024                          | 6531BX001                                                                         |
| Type of study (college/university)                                                                    | College                            | College                                                                           |
| Study cycle                                                                                           | First cycle                        | First cycle                                                                       |
| Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)                                   | Full-time, 3 years                 | Full-time, 3 years<br>Part-time 4 years                                           |
| Workload in ECTS                                                                                      | 180                                | 180                                                                               |
| Award (degree and/or professional qualification)                                                      | Professional Bachelor of Computing | Professional Bachelor of Computing                                                |
| Language of instruction                                                                               | Lithuanian                         | Lithuanian, English                                                               |
| Admission requirements                                                                                | Secondary Education                | Secondary Education                                                               |
| First registration date                                                                               | 2000                               | 2004                                                                              |
| Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision) | –                                  | Has been consolidated to the programmes Cyber Systems and Security also in Alytus |

**First cycle/LTQF 6**

|                                                                                                       |                                    |                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Title of the study programme                                                                          | <b>Multimedia Technology</b>       | <b>Multimedia and Visual Communication</b> |
| State code                                                                                            | 6531BX023                          | 6531BX039                                  |
| Type of study (college/university)                                                                    | College                            | College                                    |
| Study cycle                                                                                           | First cycle                        | First cycle                                |
| Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)                                   | Full-time, 3 years                 | Full-time, 3 years<br>Part-time 4 years    |
| Workload in ECTS                                                                                      | 180                                | 180                                        |
| Award (degree and/or professional qualification)                                                      | Professional Bachelor of Computing | Professional Bachelor of Computing         |
| Language of instruction                                                                               | Lithuanian                         | Lithuanian                                 |
| Admission requirements                                                                                | Secondary Education                | Secondary Education                        |
| First registration date                                                                               | 2005                               | 2019                                       |
| Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision) | –                                  | –                                          |

### III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **short cycle** of the Informatics Engineering field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

| No.           | Evaluation Area                                                      | Evaluation points <sup>1*</sup> |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1.            | Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum                         | 4                               |
| 2.            | Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education | 4                               |
| 3.            | Student admission and support                                        | 4                               |
| 4.            | Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment   | 3                               |
| 5.            | Teaching staff                                                       | 4                               |
| 6.            | Learning facilities and resources                                    | 4                               |
| 7.            | Quality assurance and public information                             | 4                               |
| <b>Total:</b> |                                                                      | <b>27</b>                       |

The **first cycle** of the Informatics Engineering field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

| No.           | Evaluation Area                                                      | Evaluation points <sup>2*</sup> |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1.            | Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum                         | 4                               |
| 2.            | Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education | 4                               |
| 3.            | Student admission and support                                        | 4                               |
| 4.            | Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment   | 3                               |
| 5.            | Teaching staff                                                       | 4                               |
| 6.            | Learning facilities and resources                                    | 4                               |
| 7.            | Quality assurance and public information                             | 4                               |
| <b>Total:</b> |                                                                      | <b>27</b>                       |

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1\*

**1 (unsatisfactory)** - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are substantial shortcomings that hinder the implementation of the programmes in the field.

**2 (satisfactory)** - the area meets the minimum requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings that need to be eliminated.

**3 (good)** - the area is being developed systematically, without any substantial shortcomings.

**4 (very good)** - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings.

**5 (exceptional)** - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

2

## IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

### AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

#### FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The Cyber Systems and Security (hereinafter referred to as "CSS") study programmes (including the short cycle programme System Administration), as well as the programmes in the Multimedia Technology (MT) group of study programmes align with the needs of society and the labour market. They reflect global and regional labour market trends, as well as national priorities, especially with the rise of Artificial Intelligence (hereinafter referred to as "AI") and digital transformation.

The emergence of AI is leading to structural changes in the knowledge and skill set required by information and communication technology (hereinafter referred to as "ICT") specialists. According to a report by the World Economic Forum published in September 2023, 75% of survey respondents plan to implement AI in their organizations, while 62% aim to use text, image, and voice processing technologies.

The CSS and MT programmes are designed to give students the skills and knowledge they need to meet the growing demands of both global and regional job markets, especially in the fields of cyber systems and their security aspects, AI and machine learning, and multimedia technologies. The programmes focus on giving students a strong foundation in informatics engineering preparing them for real world challenges. Graduates leave the programmes ready to design, develop and deploy complex IT systems, including Internet of Things (hereinafter referred to as "IoT") systems and machine learning models. By focusing on AI integration and data engineering, the programmes ensure that students are equipped to take on required industry roles keeping pace with what employers are looking for today and in the future.

Kaunas region seeks to develop the information society, infrastructure, and e-services, while modernizing the labour market, retaining talent and ensuring workforce supply meets demand. The HEI verified the recruiters' demand via [www.cvonline.lt](http://www.cvonline.lt) that include machine learning engineers, artificial intelligence specialists, and machine learning researchers, data analysts, and security specialists.

The relevance and uniqueness of the learning outcomes of the programmes in the study field are in alignment with the needs of global and local labour markets. The programmes aim to provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the growing demand for professionals in the field. This aligns with the predicted trends of increasing demand for ICT specialists as AI continues to transform industries and business practices.

The outcomes of the CSS and MT programmes are closely connected to the shifting needs of the tech industry, which now requires professionals who can create and build complex systems. The HEI highlights the importance of equipping students with both theoretical and practical skills to meet the evolving demands of the job market, particularly in AI, machine learning and IoT development, but also (especially MT graduates) in the fields of creative industries, e-publishing, or game-development. Both programme groups (CS as well as MT) offer programmes that meet the needs of the fast-changing global, national, and regional labor market. They provide graduates with

practical skills combined with deep knowledge in important aspects of digitalization and technological development.

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

The mission of the programmes in the informatics engineering study field aligns with the HEI's goal of providing practical, innovation driven education focused on societal development. Its necessity is driven by: changing labour market needs for new skills in cyber systems design and application with a special focus on the issue of systems security; EU higher education reforms, particularly the Bologna Declaration's emphasis on integrating science and studies; the evolving field of computer science, including AI, cloud computing, and mobile access; HEI's partnerships with universities that support science and education integration and collaboration with industry to continuously update the programme's goals, outcomes, and content.

The study aims, learning outcomes, and consequently the programme contents focus on innovative technologies and trends, such as AI, cloud computing, cyber security, IoT, as well as virtual and augmented reality.

After KK and Alytus Kolegija were merged in 2024, the HEI decided to approach a strict and complex consolidation process regarding the programmes in the study field Informatics Engineering. This consolidation process is still ongoing. As a result of the merge, the HEI offered a total of 6 study programmes (4 full-cycle, 2 short cycle programmes). After undergoing a complex and sometimes difficult process, integrating also social partners, national and regional businesses, currently three programmes are offered for admission of new students. The program Cyber Systems and Security is offered at both locations, Kaunas and Alytus. This consolidation process and the resulting changes ensure that the offered study programmes are aligned with the HEI's mission, goals, and strategy. The results of the consolidation also contribute to ensure a stable number of students, and provide a situation that allows the previously independent organizations to collaborate in a constructive and future oriented way.

**ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)**

The strategic approach of the HEI aligning the study programs in the informatics engineering study field to the demand of the labor market is highly effective. By integrating industry collaboration in both research activities as well as adaptation of the curriculum in each programme, it is made sure that students obtain the skills that are required in existing and presumably also future job markets. The approach is particularly visible in the Cyber Systems and Security study programme which directly responds to global and national trends and demands. The strong focus on cyber security, AI and Machine Learning, Internet of Things, and related technologies emphasises this observation.

The strategic decision to follow a process of consolidation after merging with AK, subsequently reducing the number of programmes offered in the study field, substantially contributes to the alignment of the content as well as quality of the study programmes to both, the needs of society and the labor market, as well as the mission and strategy of the HEI.

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

**FACTUAL SITUATION**

### 1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

All first-cycle programmes comply with the legal requirements: all four programmes provide 180 ECTS, all four programmes allocate at least 120 ECTS to the field of study (123 ECTS in Cyber Systems and Security, 156 ECTS in Multimedia Technology, 144 ECTS in Multimedia and Visual Communication, 150 ECTS in Information Technology). All programmes require at least 9 ECTS for the final thesis (10 ECTS in Cyber Systems and Security, 12 ECTS in all other first-cycle programmes). An internship of 30 ECTS is included in every programme. In every programme, less than 90 ECTS can be chosen by the student. Practical training accounts for more than 33% in all four programmes, the number of contact hours is far above the required 20% in all programmes, and the student's level of self-study is above 30% in all programmes.

Also, both short-cycle programmes comply with the respective legal requirements: both offer 90 ECTS in total, 50 ECTS are assigned to aspects to achieve the outcomes of the study field, 10 ECTS are assigned to an applied project and a final examination, 30 ECTS are assigned to an internship, 10 ECTS can be chosen by the students, the volume of contact hours is above 20%, and the volume of student's self-study is above 30% in both short-cycle programmes.

For all available study programmes (first as well as short cycle), the programme aims, intended learning outcomes and curriculum design are well aligned with the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, EHEA descriptors and national regulations for first- and short-cycle studies. The volumes of 180/90 ECTS are sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes are achieved. The detailed allocation of credits to study-field courses, internships, final theses, electives, practical training, contact hours and self-study demonstrates systematic compliance with the academic and professional requirements. The composition of study credits is consistently based on student workload (hours per credit) and the contribution of each component to programme learning outcomes. This data is transparently presented for all programmes.

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

**First-cycle programmes:** The Cyber Systems and Security study programme states a clear first-cycle aim aligned with the informatics engineering study field. It emphasizes practical preparation for cybersecurity technologies, cyber-physical systems, ICT infrastructure, user support, and project management. Its aims, learning outcomes, and assessments are coherent and comply with LTQF/EHEA, enabling systematic acquisition of general and specialized competences. The Multimedia Technologies study programme trains graduates to assess market needs and manage the full lifecycle of multimedia products; it is strongly practice-oriented and interdisciplinary, and employs coherent teaching and assessment. The Multimedia and Visual Communication study programme, also at LTQF Level VI, integrates engineering and artistic competences for digital design, visual communication, VR, 2D/3D animation, and e-publishing, with clear alignment between aims, activities, and assessment. Finally, the Information Technologies study programme is application-driven and coherently structured to prepare graduates to implement, administer, integrate, and improve enterprise computer systems while fostering continuous learning for ICT-sector employment. Its aim is also clearly in line with the aim of the study field under evaluation.

**Short-cycle programmes:** The Systems Administration short-cycle programme is well aligned with its study field: it aims to prepare graduates to implement, administer, and secure ICT systems in real workplaces, and its learning outcomes, teaching, and assessment methods coherently support this practice-oriented goal. The Graphical User Interface Development programme (also Level V) likewise fits the UX/UI and digital product design field, combining user-centred design, usability management, programming, and information structuring; its aims, outcomes, and applied methods meet the IESF description and ready graduates for professional UX/UI roles. Across IESF curricula, learning outcomes balance special and general competences - engineering problem-solving, software development, teamwork, critical information evaluation, professional

communication, and innovation - and are explicitly mapped to pedagogy and assessment. Teaching/learning is modern and engaged (interactive lectures, case studies, group and project work, labs including virtual environments, problem-based tasks, and guided/independent research), with over 50% practical workload and a 30-ECTS internship delivered with business and public partners, ensuring strong workplace relevance. Assessment uses varied instruments (exams, tests, practice reports, coursework, projects, thesis defense) within a criterion-based ten-point, cumulative system involving academic and social partner input, upholding validity, reliability, clarity, usefulness, and impartiality. Overall, aims, outcomes, and methods are mutually consistent and tightly coupled to the informatics engineering field.

### 1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

The set of course units in the programmes of the study field forms a coherent, competency-driven sequence. Year one builds a robust foundation in mathematics, computer science, electronics, and engineering while introducing early professional courses to anchor motivation and context. Core theoretical units - programming, algorithms and data structures, and computer architecture - progress logically to advanced topics such as AI, IoT, cloud computing, and software engineering; these components are complementary and mutually reinforcing, ensuring systematic deepening of knowledge. Extensive practical work - laboratories, projects, internships, and the final project - integrates theory with real-world application and cultivates problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork. Overall, the curriculum's structure ensures coherent development from fundamentals to specialization, preparing students for professional practice and lifelong learning.

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

In all programmes of the study field, students do have several options to personalise their path of study. In the Cyber Systems and Security study programme, students can choose one of two specializations (Cyber Physical Systems or Cyber Security). In both first-cycle programmes, a long list of freely elective courses is available. This includes specializations within the study field as well as subjects from other study programmes which allow students to broaden their horizon. However, sometimes students can not choose the course they would desire, if too many students try to enroll for a specific course. Additional options for individualization are offered via internships, Erasmus-based Blended Intensive Programs (BIPs) which are offered frequently, Erasmus+ exchanges, hackathons and other events. An opportunity to participate in double-diploma studies is offered via two partner Universities.

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

The final theses comply with the requirements of the Informatics Engineering field and the professional bachelor (first-cycle) level. The process is formally regulated by institutional procedures and methodological guidance, topics are aligned with programme aims and selected in consultation with students, staff, and social partners. Timelines include interim and final departmental reviews plus plagiarism checking (Turnitin) and integrity training (Moodle/Library). Assessment arrangements, such as external reviewers (often practitioners), and defence by a committee with strong employer representation, ensure relevance and alignment with labour-market needs. Theses are required to apply research methods, analyse empirical material, and produce an implementable project/prototype; the topic portfolio (e.g., cybersecurity, networks, embedded/IoT, cloud/VR, multimedia systems) reflects current field trends and programme

specialisations, with frequent company-commissioned work. Overall, the theses appropriately evidence programme learning outcomes at the cycle level.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

Across the Informatics Engineering study field, both first-cycle and short-cycle programmes fully comply with legal requirements. Programme aims, learning outcomes, and teaching/assessment methods are consistently aligned. Cyber Systems and Security, Multimedia Technologies, Multimedia and Visual Communication, and Information Technologies each articulate practice-oriented aims coherent with the field and cycle, mapping outcomes to modern pedagogy and criterion-based, cumulative assessment. Short-cycle Systems Administration and GUI Development show the same coherence, integrating user-centred design and ICT competences with applied methods and clear compliance with IESF descriptors.

Curricula ensure a logical, competency-driven progression. Extensive practical components connect theory to authentic contexts, strengthening problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork. Personalisation is enabled through specialisations, electives, internships, Erasmus/BIPs, hackathons, and double-degree options.

Final theses comply with field and cycle requirements. Governance is robust (formal procedures, interim and final reviews, Turnitin, integrity training), topics align with programme aims and labour-market needs. Theses require applied research and implementable outputs, reflecting current trends and often industry commissions.

The still ongoing consolidation process after merging with AK has already led to a great potential of synergies. Minor uncertainties and unclearities have been aligned and the students as well as staff experience the results after the transition phase as mostly smooth. This is also confirmed by social partners. In the HEI and in the study field the merge and subsequent consolidation is mostly seen as an opportunity to further improve and optimize the set of offered study programmes, research opportunities, and collaborations with social partners. The consolidation process can also be seen as an important step in approaching the desired status to become a University of Applied Sciences within the next few years.

In summary, the study field demonstrates strong constructive alignment, with a clear, practice-oriented design that coherently develops competences from fundamentals to specialization and culminates in industry-relevant final theses. For continuous improvement, the field could further systematize monitoring of elective/personalisation pathways against intended learning outcomes.

## AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

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

## COMMENDATIONS

1. The HEI successfully started a process of consolidation after the merging with AK.

2. The HEI offers a very well aligned process for the final theses. This process seems well-equipped to also address current and future challenges related to the integration of AI in education.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **For further improvement**

1. Further strengthen collaboration and integration between the Kaunas and Alytus locations. Increasing joint activities, knowledge sharing and coordinated academic processes could enhance benefits for both students and staff.
2. It might be considered to include freely elective courses also in the short cycle programmes (if these are to be continued) in order to make them more attractive to potential students.
3. Since sometimes students cannot attend an elective course they would have liked to, in the case of very popular elective courses, the possibility of offering more than one group might be considered.
4. The study field could further systematize monitoring of elective/personalisation pathways against intended learning outcomes.

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

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

### FACTUAL SITUATION

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

Kaunas College has established a structured applied research programme for Informatics Engineering. The discipline is identified as a priority research area, with dedicated research teams formed (e.g. on cloud computing, software engineering, cyber-systems, digital media). A multi-year applied science plan (2022–2024) defines specific research fields within Informatics Engineering research area (ICT infrastructure and cloud computing solution, cyber security and reliability research, etc), expected outputs and required resources (SER - Table 2.1). HEI has carried out numerous projects (machine learning for crowdfunding, DHCP attack simulations, 3D modelling for publishing, etc.) many of them in cooperation with the social partners. The results were published in indexed journals. The SER indicates that applied research activities undertaken by teachers and students are well-aligned with practical needs, developed in cooperation with business partners, and effectively integrated into the study process through the use of current scientific innovations. This was also confirmed during the site-visit interviews.

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

Informatics courses are regularly updated with the latest scientific and technological advances. For example, AI topics have been added to key courses (e.g. AI in cybersecurity; generative AI in graphics and publishing). New content on 3D printing, virtual/augmented reality and advanced networking also appears in the curriculum. Results of internal research projects (e.g. DHCP protocol attacks, optical network designs, 3D imaging) have been incorporated into relevant subjects, such as Computer Network Security and Cyber Security, Computer Graphics, Visualisation and Modelling, etc. Thus the curriculum evolves continuously, which was confirmed by the students at the site-visit.

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

Student involvement in applied research is strong. The SER reports that the students “systematically participate in applied science activities”: they are involved in research projects, (co)author articles and present some of them at student conferences. Figures for the period 2022-2025 that are given in SER – Table 2.2 show that 77 applied researches were carried out in the evaluated research field, of which 65 were carried out jointly with the students. In that period 67 articles were published in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings, only two of them without students’ participation. The students are also engaged in real-world IT projects and commissioned developments. Examples include developing secure wireless networks, surveillance systems, VR games, multimedia tools and industry websites. The faculty mentor students and fund conference participation. On average 6–8% of students each year publish articles or present at conferences, and nearly half of final theses are externally commissioned (SER – Table 2.3).

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

Kaunas College has effectively linked science (applied research) with its Informatics Engineering studies. The applied research structure (policy, teams, funding) is well-defined, ensuring that teacher research addresses practical ICT topics. The curriculum is continually refreshed: faculty proactively integrate recent findings into course content. Student opportunities in research are plentiful – the SER documents a wide array of projects and conference participation. These practices promote a research-informed learning environment.

At the same time, some scope for improvement is noted. The HEI's self-evaluation highlights that student participation in research, while substantial, could be expanded further, especially in applied science activities. International collaboration in applied research is also cited as an area to develop. To conclude, links between research and teaching in Informatics Engineering are very good (grade 4). Applied research is systematically conducted by qualified staff and clearly tied to course content, and students are active participants. The internal quality of these links is high, though continued expansion of international research and even broader student engagement would further enhance this area.

## AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

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

## COMMENDATIONS

1. Systematic integration of applied research teams and projects into the Informatics Engineering curriculum.
2. Up-to-date course content reflecting latest tech (AI, IoT, VR) and faculty research outputs.
3. Strong student engagement in practical research and industry projects, with faculty mentorship.
4. High quality of student project outputs (publications, conference presentations) demonstrates effective linkage of learning and research.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For further improvement

1. Further increase involvement of students in applied research activities (e.g. encourage more to join ongoing projects or pursue research-based theses).
2. Strengthen international research cooperation (joint projects, conferences) to broaden the research perspective and expose students to global developments.
3. Continue monitoring and documenting research-teaching links (e.g. track student participation rates, thesis topics) for ongoing improvement.

## AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

### FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The analysis of admissions to Kaunas faculty in 2022-2024 shows stable but mixed demand for programs. The Cyber Systems and Security (KSS) program maintained steady growth - the number of first-priority applications increased from 56 to 60, while the total number of applications remained high and reached its highest point in 2023 - 302. The number of students in state-funded study programs was stable - accepting from 33 to 37 students annually. Meanwhile, the Multimedia Technologies (MT) program saw a noticeable decrease in applicant interest; the number of first-priority applications decreased from 75 to 39, and the total number of applications decreased from 305 to 206, resulting in a decrease in the number of students in state-funded study programs from 47 (2023) to 34 (2024). The demand for short-cycle study programmes was moderate: the systems administration programme received between 19 and 29 first-priority applications each year, and the graphical user interface development programme between 19 and 20, although the low number of students in the latter programme of 4-6 in state-funded studies led to the programme being discontinued. The academic quality of admitted students remained high: the average competitive scores for state-funded places in CSS and MT consistently ranged from 5.32 to 5.85, i.e. well above the minimum thresholds. The state-funded places consistently required higher scores than non-funded places, with the highest recorded score reaching 8.79.

Admissions data for the same period on the Alytus faculty show a strong focus on the information technology (IT) programme and a marked decline in the prospects for the multimedia (MT) programme. The number of full-time, first-priority IT applications increased significantly from 11 to 30, while the corresponding number of state-funded students increased from 3 to 13. Conversely, the MT program received minimal interest in full-time studies - no applications or registrations were recorded in 2024. Part-time studies were active in both programs only in 2022 and 2023, while the IT program attracted 5-7 first-priority applicants each year. The competitive scores of admitted students reflect this dynamic; while the average score for state-funded IT places remained between 5.43 and 6.03, the scores for unfunded places were significantly lower - the lowest recorded score in 2024 was 2.56 - only slightly higher than the minimum score set for the campus of 2.5. This trend confirms that the Alytus campus is successfully filling its IT program with qualified candidates, but the MT program has become inactive, indicating a clear change in student preferences and the need for specialization in this location.

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

The process for recognizing prior learning outcomes at Kauno kolegija is governed by distinct institutional procedures, ensuring alignment with national regulations and the principles of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework. Academic recognition of foreign higher education qualifications is conducted in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Academic Recognition of Education and Qualifications Related to Higher Education, as established by the institution's Director. This process involves the verification of documentation and a substantive evaluation to determine equivalence to the Lithuanian system. Over the last three years, the institution has seen a steady increase in such requests, with 79 submissions in 2022, 110 in 2023, and 125 in 2024. It should be noted that this data encompasses the entire institution and is not specific to the Informatics Engineering study field (IESF), within which separate data on the final recognition or non-recognition of full foreign qualifications is not detailed for the review period.

For students enrolled in IESF programmes, the recognition of learning outcomes from prior formal education follows the Procedure for Recognition of Study Achievements. The assessment focuses on the alignment of previously acquired learning outcomes with those of the target programme, with a maximum of 75% of programme credits eligible for recognition (excluding final theses and examinations). During the evaluation period, 51 students across Kaunas and Alytus submitted

requests related to formal studies from other higher education institutions. As detailed in the provided tables, this resulted in the recognition of outcomes for a total of 27 students in Kaunas over three years and 26 students in Alytus, with activity declining to zero in the most recent academic year in Alytus. The primary sources were transfers from Lithuanian universities and, to a lesser extent, foreign institutions, facilitating the continuation of studies for those who did not complete their initial degrees.

The assessment and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning are governed by a separate Procedure for Assessment and Recognition of Competences Acquired through Non-formal and Informal Learning. This process allows for the inclusion of skills gained through work, volunteering, non-formal education, or self-study. Applicants must demonstrate the equivalence of their competences to specific subject learning outcomes via a portfolio assessment conducted by a formally appointed assessment board. The same 75% credit limit applies. Importantly, during the evaluation period, no requests for the recognition of non-formal or informal learning were submitted by students in the IESF programmes at either the Kaunas or Alytus faculties. Consequently, there are no data on credits awarded or cases of non-recognition in this category for the last three years within the field.

In summary, while robust procedures exist for all forms of recognition, their application within IESF has been selective. The recognition of prior formal studies has been actively utilized, particularly for integrating transfer students with clear annual data. In contrast, the pathways for recognizing non-formal and informal learning, though established and regulated, have not been employed by IESF students during the period under review, indicating a potential area for future student information and engagement.

## **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)**

The analysis confirms that student selection and admission criteria and procedures are transparent and adequately implemented, supported by a centralized system managed by ALHEIJA with clearly defined minimum competition scores. The popularity and high rankings of IESF programmes, along with detailed application data, demonstrate the effectiveness of the admission process in attracting candidates. However, varying enrollment trends across programmes and locations such as declining part-time studies in Alytus and the discontinuation of the Graphical User Interface Development programme due to low applications highlight the need for ongoing monitoring and adaptability to market demands.

Regarding the recognition of prior learning, established provisions and procedures are in place and functional, as evidenced by the 51 formal recognition requests processed during the evaluation period. The structured approach, including credit limits and exclusion of final theses, ensures academic integrity. However, the declining recognition activity in the Alytus Faculty, culminating in no recognitions in 2024-2025, suggests a potential decrease in student mobility or transfers, which may warrant further investigation to ensure the system remains responsive and promoted effectively. In conclusion, both admission and recognition processes are fundamentally sound and transparent, but attention to evolving enrollment patterns and recognition uptake is recommended to maintain their adequacy and effectiveness.

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

## **FACTUAL SITUATION**

### **3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured**

International academic mobility is well-structured and actively promoted. The institution has a dedicated framework involving an International Relations Department and faculty-level coordinators to manage mobility flows, with transparent selection processes conducted digitally via Moodle. Student participation is encouraged through information events and supported by additional funding for disadvantaged groups. During the evaluation period, 22 ITF students participated in study mobility (with annual participation rates of 4.63%-5.96%), and 20 students joined Blended Intensive Programmes in countries like Portugal, Finland, and Spain. Programme-specific mobility included 11

Multimedia Technology and 11 Cyber Security students undertaking long-term studies, with CSS students frequently pursuing double degrees in Finland. The faculty also hosted incoming students, welcoming 10 study mobility participants into the MT programme and 3 internship students in CSS, while organizing its own BIPs and a summer camp on "Applied Cyber Security" that attracted students from multiple countries.

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

Academic support begins with an Introductory Week for first-year students, who are assigned both a teacher and an upper-year student as mentors. Throughout their studies, students receive ongoing guidance from teachers, department heads, and international coordinators, with consultations provided both in person and remotely via Moodle. The library offers training on information sources and plagiarism prevention, and specialized career support is provided through the Student Affairs and Career Unit (SACU). This includes annual Career Days, which attracted over 3,100 registered visitors in 2022 and 3,400 in 2023, with IESF students making up approximately 4-4.5% of participants. SACU also provides group and individual counselling on topics like CV writing and public speaking, serving around 4,000 students annually.

Financial support includes institutional and state study grants, as well as targeted incentive scholarships from industry partners like Teltonika UAB and the Ministry of Economy and Innovation. For instance, in the Alytus faculty, targeted scholarships were awarded to 15 IT and 14 MT students in 2022-2023, and 24 IT and 14 MT students in 2023-2024. Psychological support is available through free, confidential counselling in multiple languages, complemented by a dedicated meditation room and various helplines. For accommodation, student requests are fully met, with 178 IESF students housed in Kaunas dormitories and 68 in Alytus over the evaluation period. Extracurricular activities are encouraged through sports facilities, e-sports tournaments, art groups, and events organized by the Students' Representative Council, which also helps integrate first-year students into the community.

### **3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient**

A comprehensive introductory week is organized for first-year students at both locations to facilitate a smooth transition into academic life. In Kaunas, students are familiarized with the key legal documents governing studies, the institutional and faculty structure, study organization, timetables, examination sessions, scholarship regulations, and library services. This information is also available online and via Moodle. First-year students receive full support through a dual-mentorship system, being assigned both a teacher and an upper-year student mentor. Furthermore, round table discussions with student representatives from various years provide a channel for feedback on the organization of studies.

In Alytus, the introductory week similarly covers the study programme's aims, learning outcomes, career opportunities, and administrative details. Each academic group is assigned a tutor from the beginning of their studies, who provides ongoing advice and organizes group events. The orientation process is enhanced with practical elements, including familiarization with the dormitory and information systems, and is complemented by study visits to companies related to the students' chosen programme, featuring meetings with managers and specialists.

## **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)**

The provisions for student mobility, support systems, and information services are highly comprehensive, robust, and effectively integrated into the student experience.

The institution has established a well-structured and proactive framework for international academic mobility. This is evidenced by dedicated administrative structures, transparent digital selection processes, and meaningful participation rates in both study exchanges and Blended Intensive Programmes. The strategic focus on double degrees and hosting incoming students further enriches the international learning environment.

The system of student support is a particular strength, characterized by its holistic and multi-layered nature. The combination of academic mentoring from the outset, extensive and well-utilized career

services, substantial and diversified financial aid, accessible psychological support, and guaranteed accommodation creates a strong safety net that addresses the full spectrum of student needs. The active promotion of extracurricular activities further contributes to a vibrant campus community and student well-being.

Furthermore, the provision of information and counselling is systematic and sufficient. The comprehensive introductory week and ongoing mentorship programs ensure students are well-oriented and continuously supported. The inclusion of practical elements, such as company visits, effectively bridges the gap between academic theory and professional practice.

In conclusion, the opportunities for student mobility are well-ensured, and the academic, financial, social, and psychological support provided is not only relevant and adequate but is delivered through coherent and effective structures that significantly contribute to student success and development.

### AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. The institution has successfully established structured and regular student leader meetings since the last evaluation, creating effective channels for student-administration dialogue.
2. The implementation of dedicated Student Union representative training demonstrates a strategic commitment to developing meaningful student governance and leadership capabilities.
3. Students demonstrated exceptionally active and valuable participation during the expert evaluation, providing substantial, high-quality input that significantly enriched the assessment process.
4. The institution has developed a truly comprehensive student support ecosystem that seamlessly integrates academic mentoring, substantial financial aid, psychological services, and extracurricular activities, effectively addressing diverse student needs.
5. The proactive approach to international mobility is commendable, particularly the strategic focus on double degrees and the successful integration of Blended Intensive Programme outcomes into the curriculum.
6. The institution maintains excellent industry connections through targeted scholarships and company visits, demonstrating strong commitment to practical education and graduate employability.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### For further improvement

1. To enhance practical learning and industry relevance, the institution should establish more efficient processes for collaboration with social partners, specifically focusing on integrating real-world projects and data into the curriculum in a more timely and responsive manner.

2. To ensure programme sustainability, the institution should develop targeted strategies to address fluctuating enrollment patterns, particularly for part-time studies and programmes with declining interest.

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

|      |                                                             |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.1. | Students are prepared for independent professional activity |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------|

### **FACTUAL SITUATION**

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

The organization and delivery of studies in the Informatics Engineering study field (IESF) are structured and regulated. The study process is governed by the KK Study Procedures, with annual schedules developed well in advance and published online. Studies are offered in full-time and part-time modes, with a new full-time session-based IT programme launched in 2024 to accommodate working students through intensive sessions.

The workload is clearly defined. In Alytus, full-time IESF programmes comprise 1544 hours of contact work and 2536 hours of self-study (52.83%). In Kaunas, contact work for full-time programmes ranges from 1898 to 2570 hours (39.05 - 52.88% of the total workload), with self-study making up the remainder. Since 2021-2022, a hybrid learning mode has been implemented, utilizing certified VLE Moodle classrooms where at least 50% of contact time is remote and 50% of course material is available online.

A ten-point cumulative assessment system is used, where the final grade is based on interim assignments and a final examination or project, with the exam or project weighting at least 50%. A variety of teaching methods are employed, including interactive lectures, practical lab work, case studies, and project development, with teachers typically using 3-4 different methods per course.

Internships, totalling 30 credits across all programmes, form a crucial component. Their organization is regulated by institutional procedures, and places are recommended based on programme objectives, with students also able to find placements through events like Career Days. Theses and final projects in short-cycle studies represent a significant self-study effort. Graduates have further study opportunities in Master's degree programmes in computer science at various Lithuanian universities.

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

The institution is committed to fostering a democratic, safe, and inclusive academic environment, guided by its strategy and the Law on Equal Opportunities. A dedicated programme promotes diversity across various dimensions, including disability. To implement this, a formal Procedure for the Individualisation of the Study Process is in place, allowing students with disabilities or learning difficulties to request adapted study conditions. Support includes the creation of Individual Study Plans and the adaptation of assessment methods, such as extending time limits or modifying physical environments.

Staff training has been a priority, with 11 ALF staff members receiving specialized training on disabilities, technical aids, and content adaptation. The infrastructure is continuously developed to be accessible, featuring lifts, mobile stair climbers, specialized software for visual impairments (e.g., JAWS, Magic Screen Magnification), and hearing support systems like the Bellman Audio Domino. An identified need for further improvement is the procurement of additional camera devices to serve as assistive technology for online class participation. A current project is also adapting the sports hall complex to be fully accessible. While there were no students with registered special needs in the IMT Department or ALF during the evaluation period, comprehensive support systems which include psychological services and detailed online information are established and available for all students.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)**

The teaching and learning process is systematically designed to meet student needs and facilitate the achievement of intended learning outcomes. Clearly regulated study procedures and flexible study modes are established. The HEI promotes an innovative session-based format for working students and a balanced definition of workload that creates a structured yet adaptable framework. The implementation of a certified hybrid learning model and the use of diverse teaching methods cater to different learning styles and ensure educational continuity. To further enhance this hybrid model, an investment in additional camera devices is needed to ensure all students participating remotely have an equitable and engaging classroom experience. The robust, cumulative assessment system, with its transparent weighting, ensures consistent and objective evaluation. Furthermore, the strong emphasis on practical training through regulated internships and the clear pathways for further studies demonstrate a programme design that is both relevant and forward-looking.

The institution demonstrates a strong and proactive commitment to ensuring access for all students. This is evidenced by a clear strategic commitment to equal opportunities, underpinned by a formal procedure for individualizing the study process. The investment in staff training and the continuous development of physical and digital infrastructure, including specialized software and ongoing facility upgrades, create a tangible and accessible learning environment. While the absence of registered students with special needs in certain units during the evaluation period is noted, the comprehensive support systems are established, promoted, and ready for use, indicating a high level of preparedness for inclusion.

In conclusion, the methods of teaching and learning are well-aligned with student needs and programme goals, and the policies for ensuring access are thoroughly implemented. The institution successfully creates an environment that supports the achievement of learning outcomes for a diverse student body.

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

## FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The institution applies a regulated system for assessing student achievement, guided by the KK Study Procedure and Student Achievement Assessment Procedure. The process is based on principles of clarity, objectivity, and impartiality. Teachers employ a variety of assessment methods, including oral surveys, written tests, projects, and case studies, which are outlined in the course programme and approved by the Study Field Committee.

At the start of a course, teachers inform students of the objectives, learning outcomes, and cumulative assessment criteria. Assessment is focused exclusively on the knowledge and skills defined by the course's learning outcomes. Results from interim assignments are published within 5 working days, and students can review their results, including feedback on errors and suggestions for improvement.

Students who fail an examination or project defense have the right to one free retake. Further retakes are available at the student's expense. Progress is systematically monitored by the Dean's Office and relevant departments, which use the data to develop plans to prevent student attrition. Teachers provide continuous feedback to students through the VLE Moodle, the Study Management System, and email, with comments and recommendations on submitted work to guide improvements.

### 4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

The institution conducts an annual analysis of graduate employability using both objective and subjective data. Objective data is sourced from the Lithuanian Employment Service and the State Social Insurance Fund (SoDra), tracking employment rates at 6 months, 12 months, and 3 years

after graduation. However, the data from SoDra is noted to not reflect career progression or changes in occupation.

The results indicate that for IESF programmes at the Alytus Faculty (ALF), the overall average employability over the last three years is 77%, with 75% of employed graduates working at a level matching their qualification. At the Kaunas IT Faculty (ITF), employability rates vary by study field, ranging from 61% to 87.5% over three years, with an average of 79% of employed graduates working at their qualification level.

For subjective data, the institution conducts alumni surveys at 6 months and 1 year after graduation to assess employability quality and professional readiness. This feedback is used for programme improvement. Additionally, the KK Alumni Club facilitates ongoing engagement where alumni share experiences and provide career guidance, further supporting current students and graduates.

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

The institution upholds principles of transparency, academic honesty, and non-discrimination, governed by a Code of Academic Ethics that binds all community members. Students and staff are required to sign declarations of integrity, and violations can lead to penalties, including expulsion for students or disciplinary action for employees.

A key focus is on preventing academic dishonesty, facilitated by a Plagiarism Prevention System. The text-matching tool Turnitin is used mandatorily for checking final theses and other written work. The institution provides regular training for both students and teachers on topics like source citation, copyright, and plagiarism prevention, including the challenges posed by artificial intelligence.

Mechanisms for reporting misconduct are clearly established. Confidential trust email addresses are available for reporting harassment or discrimination, and a dedicated email exists for reports on ethical breaches. All reports are investigated by relevant committees. During the evaluation period, the Ethics Committee received and investigated 4 complaints concerning the ITF, resulting in recommended measures such as warnings and mandatory training. In contrast, the Alytus faculty (AK) recorded no cases of academic integrity violations or related complaints during the same period.

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

A formal procedure for handling student appeals is established. Students have the right to appeal the final assessment of a course if they believe it does not comply with pre-specified criteria. This appeal must be submitted to the Faculty Dean in writing within 3 working days of the result being announced. The Dean then establishes an Appeals Committee, which must investigate and reach a decision within 15 working days. Possible outcomes include rejecting the appeal, changing the grade, or allowing the student to retake the examination. A separate appeals process exists for procedural irregularities during the defense of a final thesis, which must be submitted to the Director of KK within 3 working days, though the assessment itself cannot be appealed. During the assessment period, no appeals were received from students in the Informatics Engineering study field (IESF).

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)**

The monitoring of student learning progress is deeply integrated into the institutional processes. The regulated assessment system, which emphasizes timely feedback, clear retake policies, and the use of cumulative evaluation, effectively promotes continuous learning and self-assessment. The systematic tracking of progress by administrative bodies, coupled with the development of targeted plans to prevent attrition, shows a proactive and data-driven approach to supporting student success. Graduate employability is monitored through a comprehensive methodology that leverages both objective statistical data and valuable subjective feedback from alumni and employers. The reported employability rates, especially the high proportion of graduates working in qualification-matched roles, are strong indicators of the programme's relevance and quality. The use of this data for programme improvement and the active engagement of alumni further enhance the cycle of quality assurance.

The policies for upholding academic integrity and a respectful environment are exemplary. The combination of a binding Code of Ethics, mandatory declarations, preventive training, and accessible

reporting mechanisms creates a strong ethical framework. The investigation of a small number of complaints at the ITF demonstrates that the system is functional and responsive, while the absence of cases at the Alytus faculty suggests a healthy academic culture there.

The appeals procedures are clearly defined, accessible, and time-bound, ensuring students' rights are protected. The fact that no formal appeals were lodged in the IESF field during the period could be interpreted as a sign of general student satisfaction with the fairness of assessments and the effectiveness of the prior feedback mechanisms, rather than a flaw in the appeals system itself.

In conclusion, the processes for monitoring learning and employability, ensuring academic integrity, and handling grievances are not only well-established but are operating effectively to maintain high standards, support student development, and foster a trustworthy academic environment.

## AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

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

## COMMENDATIONS

1. The institution has developed a highly sophisticated and multi-layered system for monitoring student learning progress, which effectively integrates continuous assessment with timely, constructive feedback, creating a powerful framework for supporting student self-assessment and success.
2. The graduate employability monitoring system is commendably comprehensive, utilizing a robust mixed-methods approach that combines objective state data with valuable qualitative feedback from both graduates and employers to ensure programme relevance and continuous improvement.
3. The proactive, prevention-oriented approach to academic integrity is exemplary, featuring a well-established ethical framework supported by mandatory declarations, systematic training, and accessible reporting mechanisms that have effectively fostered a culture of honesty.
4. The institution demonstrates strong commitment to inclusive education through substantial investment in both physical and digital accessibility infrastructure, specialized staff training, and formal individualisation procedures that create tangible support for diverse learning needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To address shortcomings

1. To enhance the quality and accessibility of hybrid and distance learning, the institution should address the need for additional camera devices to facilitate effective streaming of lectures for online students.

### For further improvement

1. To increase student autonomy and cater to diverse interests, the institution should develop and implement greater flexibility in the selection and range of free elective subjects across study programmes.
2. To improve the user experience and efficiency of administrative processes, the institution should prioritize a user-centered redesign of the Liemsis information system's UI/UX.
3. To gain deeper insights into long-term graduate outcomes, the institution should enhance its tracking of graduate career progression beyond initial employment, focusing on career advancement and further professional development.
4. To maintain academic integrity in a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the institution should develop and implement comprehensive guidelines and training on the ethical use of artificial intelligence for both students and staff.

## AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

|      |                                                         |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.1. | Teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------|

### FACTUAL SITUATION

#### 5.1.1. The number, qualification, and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff is sufficient to achieve learning outcomes

A total of 53 academic staff members are engaged in study field related programmes, of whom 7 are assigned to general education courses. The remaining 46 instructors serve a student body of 357, with 26 (exceeding 50%) employed at the institution on a minimum of 0.5 full-time equivalent contracts and possessing at least three years of professional experience. Detailed information regarding the academic qualifications, scientific expertise, pedagogical competencies, and professional profiles of the teaching staff involved in the study field programmes is presented in the Self-Evaluation Report and provided annexes. Some lecturers work in several study field programmes. The student-staff ratio differs across study programmes. The highest ratio is observed in *Cyber Systems and Security* (1:8), followed by *Multimedia Technology* (1:6). In all other programmes, the ratio remains below 1:6. Within the Informatics Engineering study programmes, 28.3% of the teaching staff (13) hold a PhD. The majority of teaching staff are lecturers (74%), followed by lecturer-practitioners (15.2%), associate professors (4.3%), assistants (4.3%), and senior lecturers (6.5%). On average, the teaching staff possess nearly 22 years of teaching experience and approximately 17 years of practical professional experience. Within the *Information Technology* study programme, just 2 of the 10 teachers are employed at  $\geq 0.5$  full-time equivalent and have more than three years of experience. In the *Multimedia Technology and Visual Communication* programme, the proportion is 3 out of 9 teachers (Table 5.2, pg. 58 of SER). These variations should be monitored to ensure consistent quality across all programmes.

The report also briefly outlines the dynamics of practitioner-lecturer involvement, staff turnover trends, and associated legal and practical challenges. Although not formally required, given the absence of English-taught or joint degree programmes, the institution has nonetheless highlighted that 30 faculty members possess English language proficiency at a minimum of CEFR Level B2.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The institution demonstrates a structured approach to the recruitment of teaching staff. The process is documented and aligned with institutional regulations and bylaws, ensuring consistency and legal compliance. The outlined eligibility criteria, selection procedures, and qualification requirements reflect a commitment to academic integrity and professional standards. Based on the documented procedures and referenced regulatory framework, it is evaluated that the recruitment process for teaching staff is appropriately regulated.

The composition of the teaching staff demonstrates a well-balanced alignment with the intended learning outcomes of the study field. The number of teaching staff is adequate relative to the student population (1:7) ensuring manageable workloads and sufficient student support. The academic qualifications and competencies of the teaching staff, combined with the presence of teaching staff possessing both academic and practical expertise, strengthen the relevance and applicability of the curriculum. This integrated profile supports the development of students' theoretical understanding and practical abilities, thereby confirming the adequacy of the teaching staff in achieving the intended learning outcomes.

The institution has made efforts to describe the challenges of definition and involvement of practitioner-lecturers and the turnover of teaching staff. Further clarification on retention strategies, capacity-building mechanisms, and long term academic workforce planning would strengthen the evidence of sustainability of the study field.

The HEI provides clear evidence regarding the current ratio between teaching staff delivering study field subjects and the number of students enrolled. This ratio is presented in detail and confirms compliance with the required standards. Furthermore, the share of teaching staff who teach field

subjects, are employed at least part-time, and have more than three years of experience is indicated and commented upon. ( Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 , pg.58 of SER). Information on the dynamics of lecturer-practitioners who have been teaching field subjects over the past three years is described, though only to a limited extent. Regulations governing teaching staff turnover are acknowledged; however, the information does not provide detailed insight into how the replacement of retired staff and the integration of younger staff are managed. Data substantiating the compliance of teaching staff with legal requirements is presented. Prospective staff members with at least B2-level English proficiency are identified as a share of the overall teaching staff, which is particularly relevant in the context of programmes delivered in a foreign language or in joint study programmes with partner institutions abroad.

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

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

The documentation provided by the institution includes a description of the structures and conditions established to support the academic mobility of teaching staff. It presents and analyses quantitative data on the number and proportion of outgoing and incoming academic staff over the past three years, specifying the countries of origin and destination (Table 5.3, pg.60-62 of SER). The institution has concluded more than 20 Erasmus+ cooperation agreements, organizes on a regular basis the International week and has signed two Double Degree Study Programme Agreements with XAMK South Eastern UAS Finland and Thomas More UAS Belgium. During 2022-2025 there were 66 teaching staff outgoing mobilities and 42 incoming mobilities.

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

Teaching staff competence development is guided by national and institutional procedures, with department heads overseeing planning and implementation. New teachers receive targeted training to support their integration and teaching effectiveness.

Over the past three years, the institution has offered diverse internal training for staff, covering didactics, digital tools, interactive content, and research methods. Some examples of organized trainings grouped in respective domains are: Didactics and Teaching ( “ Fundamentals of Didactics”; “Lecturer’s Culture of Professional Speech “ etc.); Digital and Interactive Teaching ( “Creation of Digital Educational Content”; “ Interactive Content in Moodle VLE Classrooms “; “Preparation and Management of Course/Module Descriptions in Moodle VLE”; “Application of Mobile Applications in the Study Process” etc) ; Collaborative and Active Learning ( “ Opportunities for Group Work in Distance Learning”; “ Project based Learning” etc); Research related trainings ( “Processing Qualitative Research Data”; “Use of Scientific Information”; “ABC of Applied Research Methodology: A Beginner’s Course”, etc)

The staff are offered training such as “Emotional well-being at work”, “Prevention of professional burnout”, “Stress management with the help of sound therapy”, “Leadership Academy for Managers”, “Immunity to manipulations and conflicts” etc. ( Pg. 58 of SER).

Recent sessions have also addressed emerging topics such as AI tools and plagiarism prevention, reflecting a responsive and up-to-date approach to professional development. In the period 2022-2024, each year 40- 50 teaching staff from study field under evaluation participate in developing their competences, focusing more on professional and research competences and less on didactic competences.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

The evidence indicates that the institution offers appropriate and periodically reviewed conditions for the development of teaching staff competences, alongside well supported opportunities for academic mobility. These findings were further validated through interviews with teaching staff.

Since the aim is to be upgraded to the University of Applied Sciences, there is a supported opportunity offered to staff to upgrade their research competencies as well by participation in applied research seminars, conferences etc.

General competences were strengthened through diverse training covering well-being, leadership, communication, teamwork, media and information literacy, AI tools for productivity, data protection, and foreign language skills.

Over the last three year period, the institution has demonstrated consistent efforts to enhance teaching staff competences across four key domains: professional, didactic, research, and general.

## AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

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

## COMMENDATIONS

1. The recruitment process for teaching staff is appropriately regulated
2. The experienced teaching staff who demonstrate a clear international orientation and possess English language proficiency at a functional level
3. Institutional consistent efforts to enhance teaching staff competences across four key domains: professional, didactic, research, and general.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For further improvement

1. Increase the number of FTE teaching staff in junior positions to ensure study field program sustainability. Build internal capacity by investing in early-career academics and practitioner-lecturers.
2. Prepare a teaching staff development plan that will address turnover related shortcomings.
3. Continue efforts for internationalization via organizing joint study programmes, double degrees, joint summer schools etc.
4. Continue offering tailored and systematic trainings that address the professional, applied research and innovative didactic competence needs of teaching staff

5. Teaching staff should be actively encouraged to participate in ongoing competence development initiatives across professional, didactic, research, and general domains.

## AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

### FACTUAL SITUATION

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

Informatics Engineering studies are delivered in Kaunas College premises at Pramonės pr. 20/22/22A in Kaunas and at the Alytus sites (Seirijų g. 2; Studentų g. 17). The available teaching and laboratory spaces are sufficient for the size and structure of the programmes, and rooms are equipped to support both classroom-based and hybrid/distance teaching. Practical activities take place in laboratories where each workstation is equipped with a computer and relevant specialised software; for more equipment-intensive subjects, larger student groups are divided to ensure adequate access to workstations. The College maintains a consistent practice of renewing tools, hardware and software in line with programme learning outcomes and emerging labour-market requirements. Digital learning is supported through the institution-wide Moodle VLE, which ensures unified access to materials and assessments. Library and informational resources are updated annually based on needs identified by academic staff and students, with a notable focus on electronic publications and digital tools. The physical environment includes accessible infrastructure such as lifts, a vertical platform lift, a mobile stair climber and a portable ramp, and established procedures allow individualisation of studies and assessment for students with disabilities.

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

Financial and resource planning is carried out on a continuous basis. Funding for study equipment and information resources is allocated using a formula that combines the three-year averages and current student numbers, after which Deans submit prioritised proposals and final decisions are taken by the College Directorate. Annual planning processes include forecasting of new IT applications and reviewing existing infrastructure, ensuring systematic adjustment of resources according to programme needs. The College reports ongoing renewal of laboratories, classrooms, practice facilities and library spaces, all of which were assessed as modern and in good condition. Number of workstations across facilities is sufficient to support students in achieving the intended learning outcomes.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

Evidence indicates that KK provides sufficient and fit-for-purpose facilities and resources to achieve programme learning outcomes across Kaunas and Alytus sites. Labs with dedicated workstations, regulated use of Moodle, and a structured purchasing process support consistent delivery, including hybrid/remote modes. Accessibility measures and individualisation procedures align with ESG expectations for inclusive learning.

Indicator 6.1 is met. Facilities and resources are adequate and systematically planned/renewed. The panel notes improvement opportunities in the pace of infrastructure upgrades and targeted expansion of CPS/AI laboratory capacity. Overall, the area meets requirements with manageable, clearly identified improvements.

## AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. Inclusive infrastructure and assistive technologies, clear procedures for individualising studies/assessment for students with disabilities. [OBJ]
2. Structured annual planning and funding model for equipment and information resources, with decisions at Directorate level and emphasis on e-publications and Moodle governance. [OBJ] [OBJ]
3. Modern labs and co-working spaces with adequate workstations and provision for hybrid/remote delivery supporting achievement of learning outcomes. [OBJ]

### RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Set up a CPS & AI internship lab. Create a small, dedicated lab for cyber-physical systems and AI internship and pilot internships there next academic year.
2. Speed up equipment / software refresh. Introduce a simple 3-year renewal rhythm with a mid-year fast track for priority tools.
3. Ensure resource parity across sites. Use one shared inventory, common software images, and unified lab-booking so students get equivalent access everywhere (in both cities - Kaunas and Alytus).
4. Monitor resource use to guide planning. Track lab occupancy and e-resource usage once per semester; use the results to tune timetables, purchasing, and licensing.
5. Deepen cooperation with employers for resources. Run a simple annual call for in-kind support (equipment, cloud credits, datasets, guest lab time) to refresh capacity and keep tools authentic.

## AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

### FACTUAL SITUATION

#### 7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

Kaunas College has established a comprehensive internal quality assurance (QA) system. It is codified in a Quality Manual and aligned with the Kaunas College Quality Policy, national laws and ESG standards. All study processes (programme design, approval, evaluation, certification of

courses, recognition of learning, internships, distance learning, anti-plagiarism measures, etc.) are governed by formal procedures. The QA system covers every level of the field: responsibilities for quality are clearly assigned to departments, committees and officials. Governance of curricula involves multiple levels (institutional, faculty, department). All QA documents and procedures are maintained in the internal document system and intranet, ensuring transparency.

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

The institution actively involves stakeholders in QA. An official feedback procedure mandates periodic surveys and discussions with students, graduates, faculty and employers. Student representatives sit on committees and meet with administration regularly. Industry partners participate in final-thesis assessment boards and report on students' readiness. Feedback results are shared broadly (on the HEI's website and intranet) and used to update curricula and processes. For example, summarized evaluation reports are published annually, and social partners (e.g. Festo UAB, Teltonika UAB) are consulted on labour market needs. The SER concludes that "social stakeholders are successfully involved" in QA of the studies, which was confirmed by the representatives of the social stakeholders at the site visit.

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

Study programmes and results are well documented and publicised. The HEI's website and the national AIKOS portal provide detailed information on programmes (location, outcomes, qualification) and assessment results. Admission requirements are published online (e.g. ALHEIJA system). Graduate employability data are reported to the Lithuanian Employment Service. Internally, the department systematically collects data on key metrics (mobility rates, research outputs, student enrolment and attrition, graduate employment, etc.). Quality indicators (student feedback, employer satisfaction, graduate success) are analysed. Data collection methods include surveys, document reviews and course observation, including discussions with the students after the course; analyses are discussed monthly in department meetings, biannually at the committee, and yearly at faculty level. These formal monitoring processes ensure that information is used to improve the field.

#### 7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

Students regularly evaluate study quality. HEI conducts anonymous electronic course surveys each semester (via the Study Management System) immediately after grading, giving immediate feedback to instructors and committees. Annual centralized surveys are also held: first-year students are surveyed on motivation and adaptation; upper-year students on overall study quality and conditions. Results are analysed in management meetings and published online on the HEI's intranet and website. The survey data are explicitly used to refine curricula and organisation. Notably, the student satisfaction is very high: the 2023–24 average score for teaching and content quality was 4.37/5 (up from 4.36 in 2022–23), placing Informatics Engineering first among HEI's fields.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)**

Kaunas College has developed an effective QA system for Informatics Engineering. The framework is thorough, covering all academic processes with formal rules and regular review. Quality documentation is complete and accessible. Stakeholder engagement is embedded: students and employers actively give feedback, attend committees and help shape programmes. The SER confirms that feedback loops are in place (reports are published and discussed) and that stakeholder participation is a strength. Data-driven evaluation is evident: key performance data are routinely gathered and analysed.

One limitation noted is insufficient alumni involvement in quality surveys, especially those who graduated recently and are not yet among the representatives of the employers. This suggests opportunities remain to broaden stakeholder feedback further. However, current student and industry

involvement is strong. The exceptionally high student satisfaction scores attest to the system's success.

To conclude, study quality management and public information are very good (grade 4). The internal QA system functions effectively, with clear responsibilities, documentation and continuous monitoring. Programs are transparently presented, and feedback mechanisms ensure stakeholder input drives improvement. Ongoing efforts (e.g. engaging alumni) will further enhance this robust quality culture.

## AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

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

## COMMENDATIONS

1. A comprehensive internal QA framework, with all procedures documented and aligned to strategic and legal requirements.
2. Active involvement of students and industry in QA (committees, surveys, internship feedback), ensuring curricula respond to actual needs.
3. Transparent publication of programme information and outcomes (HEI's website, AIKOS, employment data) that informs prospective and current students.
4. Systematic collection and analysis of data (mobility, research, surveys) at multiple governance levels, enabling evidence-based improvements.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For further improvement

1. Increase the engagement of alumni in the feedback and evaluation processes (e.g. dedicated alumni surveys) to capture recent graduate perspectives.
2. Regularly review and streamline QA procedures to maintain efficiency, ensuring that documentation remains up-to-date and user-friendly.
3. Continue to disseminate QA findings widely (e.g. social media, newsletters) to raise awareness of improvements and encourage community involvement.

## V. SUMMARY

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

The HEI and specifically the informatics engineering study field presents itself as a modern, welcoming, and quality-oriented institution - a good place to study and work with a collegial atmosphere. The institution is navigating two interconnected transformations: the merger with Alytus College and the transition to University of Applied Sciences status. These still ongoing changes are being managed in a way that appears smooth for students and external partners; nonetheless, they are understandably more demanding for staff across both locations, particularly colleagues from Alytus. Overall, the direction of travel is positive and purposeful.

### **Strengths**

The institution sustains a strong quality culture and a safe learning environment, underpinned by visible commitment from leadership, academic, and administrative staff. Alumni report feeling well prepared for employment, a view confirmed by employers and social partners — evidence that the learning outcomes of the offered programmes are relevant and effectively delivered. Student–staff interaction is appropriately frequent and constructive. The strategic focus on core competencies — especially in cyber systems and security — provides a clear academic identity and a solid platform for consolidation. Existing links with industry (e.g., career days, numerous partner connections) and an active events culture further enhance relevance and student engagement.

### **Areas for development**

To maximize the benefits of consolidation and the approached new institutional status, we encourage a more systematic approach in some domains, such as Internationalization (more proactive promotion of Erasmus opportunities, Blended Intensive Programmes, and other mobility/short-term international experiences could broaden student and staff horizons and strengthen the institutional profile); Capacity building (targeted support for teaching and research staff could be extended, e.g. via institutional support for dissemination of applied research results in international conferences and indexed credible journals, professional development, and pedagogical innovation; over time, the ratio of full-time academic staff might be increased guided by a transparent staff-development plan); Post-merger integration (the merger can be used as a catalyst for deeper collaboration across locations, shared projects, cross-campus teams, and aligned processes could accelerate a common culture); Curriculum flexibility (the elective system might be reviewed and enhanced in order to improve student choice and alignment with evolving labour-market needs while maintaining coherence of programme outcomes); Student services and systems (e.g., the usability of the student information system for accessing grades could be improved, in employability, career fairs could be maintained but a more systematic, centralized approach to industry cooperation could be added, such as e.g., a partnership CRM, clear placement workflows, and short, company-embedded projects to complement longer internships might be considered); Collaboration with industry could be strengthened and structured (e.g., contracts for commissioned research and professional expertise could be approached or an Industrial Advisory Board for Informatics Engineering with representatives from leading tech companies, distinguished alumni working in the sector, etc. could be established). This could facilitate opportunities for internships, capstone projects, advice on curriculum, etc.

All in all, Kauno Kolegija is on a strong trajectory. It combines a supportive climate with programmes that prepare graduates effectively for professional life, and it is handling major institutional change with care and competence. By amplifying internationalization, investing in staff capacity (including a gradual increase in full-time positions), consolidating processes across

campuses, and refining electives and student support systems - particularly around internships - the institution can convert current momentum into sustained excellence as a University of Applied Sciences. We commend the dedication of all responsible persons and encourage continued focus on these priorities to further enhance the quality of the study environment and outcomes.

## VI. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

The panel recognises as an example of excellence the institution's effective management of two parallel transformations, the merger with Alytus College and the transition to University of Applied Sciences. Despite the complexity of these processes, both are progressing smoothly and without disruption to daily operations, demonstrating strong leadership, organisational stability, and the institution's capacity to adapt while maintaining high-quality performance.