



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**STUDY FIELD of BUSINESS**

at Kauno kolegija

**Expert panel:**

1. Assoc. prof. Dr. Natalie Aleksandra Gurvitš-Suits(**panel chairperson**), *academic*;
2. Assoc. prof. Dr. Zarina M. Reinhard- Charlesworth, *academic*;
3. Prof. Dr. Iveta Ludviga, *academic*;
4. Mrs. Rita Karabanovienė, *academic*;
5. Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis, *representative of social partners*;
6. Miss Indrė Baltakytė, *students' representative*.

Evaluation coordinator – *Mr. Gustas Straukas*

Report language – English

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## Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Logistics</i>	<i>International Business*</i>
State code	6531LX085	6531LX086
Type of studies	Professional bachelor studies	Professional bachelor studies
Cycle of studies	First	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years), Part-time (4 years)	Full-time (3 years)
Credit volume	180	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor in Business Management	Professional Bachelor in Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian, English
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	28/05/2015	09/06/2003

\* The study program of International Business has been implemented since 2018, having redesigned the study program of Management of Food Industry Business.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 2022.

**Ass. Prof. dr. Natalie Aleksandra Gurviš-Suits**, *Department of Business Administration, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia.*

**Prof. dr. Iveta Ludviga**, *Department of Business, RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, Latvia.*

**Ass. Prof. dr. Zarina Reinhard-Charlesworth**, *Haute Ecole de Gestion Arc, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Western Switzerland.*

**Mrs. Rita Karabanovienė**, *Socialinių mokslų kolegija (SMK), Lithuania.*

**Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis**, *“Gusania”, social partners’ representative, Lithuania.*

**Ms Indrė Baltakytė**, *Faculty of Economics & Management, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania.*

### 1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Material resources data

### 1.4. BACKGROUND OF BUSINESS FIELD STUDIES AT KAUNO KOLEGIJA

Kauno Kolegija (hereinafter referred to as KUAS/KAUKO) is a state HEI established in 2000. Today KUAS is one of the largest professional higher education institutions in Lithuania. KUAS has 4 faculties: the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Technologies, the Faculty of Medicine, and the Faculty of Arts and Education and a regional division in Tauragė. KUAS has 49 study programmes, 5034 students, 800 employees and 32 000 graduates. Since its establishment two institutional evaluations have been carried out in 2005 and 2014, the last one was carried out by an international group of experts. KUAS has more than 250 foreign partners, 218 under the European Union Erasmus+ mobility programme. It is a member of the international associations and networks like EURASHE (the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education), EAIE (the European Association for International Education), Businet (the International Association of Institutions of Business Studies), etc.

The two evaluated study programs of Logistics and International Business are conducted at the Faculty in the Business study field and after the completion of the studies students are awarded with a Professional bachelors' degree.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Business study field and first cycle at Kauno kolegija is given a **positive** evaluation.*

*Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	5
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	5
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	5
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>31</b>

\*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies.

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

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

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

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

### III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

According to annexes of the SER:

- the aim of the study field program of Logistics is: “to train a logistics manager, able to manage international cargo and passenger transport processes, the efficient operation of the logistics chain, and the flow of information for managing logistics processes; apply national and international legislation governing logistics activities; organise the activities of logistics enterprises/divisions; act independently and creatively in a changing business environment”.
- the aim of the International Business Study program is: “to train international business managers, able to analyse the international business environment; communicate and cooperate with foreign partners and customers; apply the principles of business management and the provisions of international legal regulations while planning and organising international business activities in an enterprise or its division”.

These aims confirm that KUAS pays attention to the constantly changing demand of the business environment in general as well as giving particular attention to logistics and international business.

The programs are constantly updated taking into consideration the latest changes in business environment, digitalization and the labour market requirements. KAUKO has a broad overview and good understanding of the current growing demand for specialists in the field of logistics. The programs are kept up to date considering latest changes related to innovations, digitalization and development of artificial intelligence. During the meetings, it was mentioned that in line with these rapid developments, the learning outcomes of the programs are linked to the development of such soft skills like critical thinking, creativity and digital skills, which are also highly valued by students. All these developments add value to

the programs, making them corresponding to the needs of the labour market and adding value to the sustainable business environment of the region. During the meeting, it became clear that the aim and learning outcomes of the study programs are developed in tight cooperation with social partners and are regularly reviewed and updated. One of the latest changes was that the internship of 24 ECTS was moved to third year as companies believed it would be more beneficial for students. Also, there were organised courses for students of A1 Russian language and English courses as well (5 ECTS each). During the meeting with social partners, it was mentioned that they are constantly involved in the development of the study programs, have a good overview of the study process and the qualification of the students and highly value the competences of graduates.

The expert panel considers it useful to better formulate truly unique things about the programs besides practical aspects and internalisation in order to attract potential students and actively promote programs on the market. It is also necessary to pay more attention to marketing strategy in regard to the evaluated study programs. It is recommended to the administration to make sure to take active part in this process by spreading good word of mouth, invite marketing related social partners, alumni and current students and external advisers to guide the discussions, and look for ideas outside the category.

During the visit, it became obvious that KUAS is aware of channels and methods on how to attract students from Lithuania. However, more attention should be paid to social media where all current school children spend most of their time. Students can be attracted to assist in communication *via* channels or at least asked to audit KUAS's plans or actions. It would be also useful to choose certain countries (1-2 would be the best) to have a real breakthrough for targeting foreign students. It would be helpful to participate in local study fairs, exhibitions, etc. This cooperation will be successful on both sides as foreign students will be looking for truly international experience and at the same time bring it to KUAS.

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

The aim of the study programs is in line with the mission of the Institution which according to SER is: „to provide innovation-based higher education studies focused on practical activities and promote applied science and art activities significant for the development of society” and is based on the latest KUAS strategic plan aiming “to implement practical and innovation-based higher education studies”. The latest strategy of KUAS has a



deep focus on information and communication-based teaching and learning methods. It also aims to attract international students. The purpose of the study process is to contribute to the development of sustainable community, green logistics and turn the KUAS into sustainable HEI, recognized on the European level and part of the European network. The goal of the study programs also aims to supply the region with high educated professionals, which adds value to the development of the local community and society.

During the visit, it became evident that field and cycle study programs' aims and outcomes are in line with the mission and strategic priorities of the KUAS. The structure of the evaluated study programs enables achievement of stipulated learning outcomes, preparing highly educated professionals equipped with all required knowledge, research and personal skills as well as social abilities to work in various organisations in terms of rapidly changing market conditions.

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

Learning outcomes identified for each program are coherent with the aim of the program, the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, the Description of Study Cycles, the Description of the General Study Requirements, the Descriptor of the Study Field of Business approved by the Minister of Education of Lithuania and the VI Qualification Level Description of National Lithuanian Qualifications Framework address all the main descriptions and are clearly formulated. The learning outcomes are divided into five groups outlining the ones related to knowledge and skills, research, social, personal and special abilities.

Table No. 1 illustrates the compliance of the Logistics study program to the first/cycle general requirements.

**Table No. 1** Logistics Study Program's *compliance* to general requirements for *first cycle study programs*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Legal requirements</b>	<b>In the Programme</b>
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	165 ECTS

ECTS for studies specified by higher education institution or optional studies	No more than 90 ECTS	15 ECTS the module of general collegial studies 15 ECTS freely elective module 15 ECTS module for deeper studies of the same field
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	36 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	46%
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	54%
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	40% (part time - 41%)

Source: SER

Table No. 2 illustrates the compliance of the Business study program to the first/cycle general requirements.

**Table No. 2** International Business Study Programs' compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programs*

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180 ECTS
ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 120 ECTS	165 ECTS
		15 ECTS the module of

ECTS for studies specified by higher education institution or optional studies	No more than 90 ECTS	general collegial studies 15 ECTS freely elective module 30 ECTS module for deeper studies of the same field
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	45 %
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	55%
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the program	40%

*Source: SER*

During the course students have internships, including the possibility to get practical experience abroad, enabling them to get a full understanding of the selected profession and the international business environment. The structure of the programs and the duration enable them to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes of the evaluated study programs. During the meeting it was stated that students are satisfied with their study plan, highly value the distance-learning option and communication with teaching staff.

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

The aims of the study programs are covered by 11 learning outcomes divided into five main groups in accordance with the VI Qualification Level Description of the National Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and the Order of the Minister of Education. The stipulated learning outcomes are supported by the curriculum and the courses it contains. Teaching staff use various modern teaching methods like seminars, situation analyses, team-

work, brainstorming case studies, joint projects, discussions role plays, etc. aimed to develop student skills and abilities. During the meeting, students also mentioned that distance learning enables them to meet and communicate with students in Estonia and Latvia as well as to participate in various international projects. Teachers also actively implement real-life cases into the study process.

Student oriented learning is achieved by attracting several lecturers to teach different topics within the same module, inviting experienced practitioners, collecting and discussing students' feedback after each module. During the study process students are evaluated according to the accumulative system; any problematic issues are discussed with teachers. During the visit, the expert panel noted high awareness of teaching staff on different innovative and contemporary teaching methods and their implementation into the study process .

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

The programs are developed and structured in accordance with the general requirements for professional higher education studies leading to the Professional Bachelor's Degree, the modular structure of the studies and the ECTS credit system. Each Programme consists of 180 ECTS. And each semester consists of two modules of 15 ECTS each. All study subjects in the semester are completed with an exam or evaluation of the student's independent work (project). The study programs consist of two internships (professional and final) with a total volume of 36 credits (both programs). The study programs are completed by the successful defence of the final thesis.

The curriculums of the study programs are developed in order to provide students with general knowledge, research and social skills as well as special skills and abilities. The first year gives an overview of the business and management process in general which is supported by the courses of Micro and Macro Economics, Psychology and Entrepreneurship and Innovation then followed by the ones providing an overview of the selected study field by introducing the subjects related to International Logistics, Transport Logistics, IT systems of logistics and Marketing Management and Planning, Brand Management, International Market Research respectively. These courses enable students to get a deep understanding of the selected study field and gain all necessary knowledge and skills. Programs also have a strong practical aspect achieved by two internships: professional and final. Programs also include the

foreign language courses, however, during the visit students mentioned that they would appreciate having more options to choose and study different foreign languages.

The modules are allocated in a reasonable sequence and represent a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and evaluation criteria. Each module has well-defined learning objectives followed by the learning objectives of each course included in a particular module. During the visit, it became evident that program courses ensure consistent development of competences of students enabling them to reach the learning outcomes and the aim of the programs’.

The expert panel can conclude that the evaluated programs have a well-defined module structure following the logic of the study process aiming to deepen knowledge by obtaining general skills and competences first and logically followed by the ones aiming to develop the specific skills and abilities. The expert panel finds it useful to keep on working on the development of joint programs with foreign universities to get international experience and make the programs more attractive to potential students.

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

All students can personalise their study plan and choose either to study under the program in full or to take separate modules. However, the volume of the full-time studies per year must be at least 45 and for the part-time studies - at least 30 credits. In case a student has a significant reason not to attend classes the opportunity of free study schedule may be granted. There is also the possibility to choose 15 ECTS modules of elective subjects, which are all listed on the KUAS website and reviewed annually. Students can also choose the topics of their final thesis, place of internship, take additional courses and participate in various projects and activities of the KUAS. Internship abroad and participation in Erasmus+ program also give students a perfect opportunity to personalise their studies by spending a semester or a whole academic year abroad or in other HEI, get valuable experience, obtain new knowledge and get intercultural social and personal skills. It is also possible to switch programs within the study field, requiring students to catch up with the differences in these programs.

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

Final thesis preparation and defence procedure is regulated by the Description of the procedure for the preparation, defence, and preservation of final theses and organisation of final examinations. Students have the right to defend a final thesis after the completion of the study program and getting positively evaluated for all the courses. The topics are chosen by students, offered by supervisors, social partners and are relevant to the selected study program.

Process of preparation of the Final thesis and the stipulated dates are located in Moodle and available to all students. All theses are subject to professional review and are also checked for plagiarism via the Turnitin program. The Defence Committee appointed by Order of the Director on the proposal of the Dean of the Faculty includes at least five members including three employer representatives, of whom one is appointed as the chairman.

Expert panel confirms that graduation papers are of a good quality with the topics focusing on contemporary real business problems. It can be concluded that during the studies, students get all the necessary skills and knowledge to prepare and successfully defend their graduation paper. The latter was confirmed during the visit by reviewing the selected theses by the expert panel. During the visit, the expert panel got confirmation from students that they highly appreciate cooperation with academic staff while writing their graduation papers.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. KUAS is really embracing the future;
2. High integrity and well-structured modular program and the delivery of the program;
3. Study programs stand out with a strong accent on internalisation and on latest developments in the labour market.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Limited options to study foreign languages;
2. Unclear strategy in defining and selection of target markets.

### **3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES**

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

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

Applied research is a part of KUAS latest Strategy Plan and corresponds to the mission of the Institution and aim of the study process. There are defined plans and created budgets related to research activities and publications of the results. Since 2020 and 2021 KUAS organised international research and business forums “Development of the Circular Economy in Lithuania and the EU” as well as annual scientific-practical conferences “EU Investments in Lithuania and Kaunas Region: Actualities and Perspectives”, “European Green Deal: Actualities and Perspectives”, “Europe in the Digital World: Challenges and Opportunities”. Teaching staff actively participate in international conferences and have developed and presented numerous papers at national and international conferences.

In general, it can be concluded that the research-related activity of the teaching staff is quite high, which is supported by the data of Table No. 3.

**Table No. 3.** Research-related activities of teaching staff.

Year	Scientific articles (Management, Economics)	Scientific reports (Management, Economics)	Applied research (Management, Economics)	Methodological publications, handbooks, methodological resources	Training (seminars, consultations, courses)
2019	47	27	58	7	11
2020	73	21	63	9	53
2021	95	31	104	9	38

Source: SER (p.19)

The results of the projects are practically implemented and disseminated among colleagues and social partners, who also act as the strategic research partners. KUAS is also organising training and workshops for adult professionals in the form of life-learning non-formal education, which is contributing to the region.

During the meeting the representatives of the teaching staff confirmed that they are always welcomed to use various opportunities to attend conferences and seminars as well as participate in the Erasmus program funded by the Institution.

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

During the visit, it became obvious that teaching staff implements real life case studies into the study process. Lecturers also actively use contemporary study methods like discussions, practical projects worked out in teams, visits to companies and use latest available literature and databases for research and teaching activities. Students outlined that the latest innovations are used in the form of different software during the course of International Logistics and Finances. Also highly valued real cases were implemented in the Law course.

Academic staff also share their experience during guest lectures and Erasmus visits. Teaching staff of the Institution participate in the Erasmus program bringing new knowledge, skills and contemporary teaching techniques back home to disseminate best practices among colleagues and students. The expert panel would recommend active involvement of alumni practitioners in the teaching process.

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

During the visit, it became evident that the Institution has modern facilities and resources to enable students to get involved in scientific research and study process. Each year summer camp is organised to boost students' activities. Students also actively participate in business and research forums organised by KUAS where students are encouraged to take an active part and present their research findings in joint cooperation with the teaching staff. They also take part in various research projects, conferences and carry out joint research with teaching staff. The research-related activity of students is presented in Table No. 4.

**Table No. 4.** Research-related activities of students.

Year	Articles (Management, Economics)	Students participated in publications of articles (%)	Report (Managemen t, Economics)	Students participated in reports preparation (%)
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2019	39	10	32	10
2020	51	18	10	6
2021	53	21	40	13

Source: SER, (p.20)

As mentioned before, links between research and studies are also secured by topics of the graduation paper being related to practical real-life problems.

All the above mentioned makes it possible to conclude that the evaluated study programs are well developed, perfectly combining academic studies with practical skills.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Well-determined focus on applied research.
2. High level of involvement of academic staff into the research process.
3. Strong support from the administration for academic staff in regard to participation in various scientific events and research projects.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Decent activity of students in the research field.
2. Low level involvement of alumni into the teaching process.

## **3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT**

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

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

Admission rules are provided on the KUAS website. Admission to the study program takes place in accordance with the procedure prescribed by law, which is administered by LAMA BPO (Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions to organise general admission). There are no special requirements for admission to the study program, but the competitive score of the candidates is the most important criterion. The competitive score is based on the minimum admission requirements for KUAS. The minimum requirements are established in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania. During the expert panel meeting, all students stated that they were satisfied with this criterion and had no issues with the admissions process.

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

According to SER, assessment and recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and / or informal learning and self-education at KUAS are carried out in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Assessment and Recognition of Competences Acquired through Non-formal and Informal Learning. The decision on the crediting of study results is made by the evaluation commission formed by the order of the director of KUAS. Knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning and self-education may be recognized as learning outcomes for a maximum of 75% intended to study the scope of the basic study program. Final theses and / or final examinations cannot be included in the recognition. During the last three years, there was no need to evaluate and recognize students' non-formal and informal learning achievements in the study programs of the field.

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

Students have the possibility to spend a period of studies outside of Lithuania according to the agreement and international mobility programs (Erasmus+ and Nordplus). Students' international mobility is presented in Table No. 5.

**Table No. 5.** Students' international mobility.

Year	Number of outgoing students	Institution, country (number of students)	Number of incoming students (partial studies)	Institution, country (number of students)
2019	4	Haaga-Helia UAS, Finland (1) UC Leuven-Limburg, Belgium (1); Karel de Grote University College, Belgium (2)	6	Avans UAS, Belgium (1); Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal (1) Anadolu University, Turkey (3); Universitete de Lorraine, France (1)

2020	21	<p><b>Studies (3):</b>  UCL University College, Denmark (1);  EKA University of Applied Sciences, Latvia (1);  Haaga-Helia UAS, Finland (1);</p> <p><b>Internship (18):</b>  Community Action Dacorum, United Kingdom  Acari s.r.o., Czech Republic (1);  S.Mbogforing APS, Denmark (1);  Secure Accreditation Solutions Technologies, Spain (1);  Erasmus Student Network Bilbao, Spain (1);</p>	4	Institute of Porto, Portugal (2) Universitete de Lorraine, France (2)
		Sia "Dagi", Latvia (1); Glass Point Studio, Latvia (1); AIAEM Internship, Poland (1); Alpha School of English, Malta (2); Erasmus students' network, Malta (1); PPO Invest LTD SOHO Office Space, Malta (3); Erasmus students' network, Algarve, Portugal (1); Deigas, GmbH, Germany (2); Eiswerkstaat Rostock, GmbH, Germany (1)		
2021	43	<p><b>Studies (26):</b>  UCL University College, Denmark (1)  Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Czech Republic (1)  NHL Stenden UAS, Netherlands (5)  UCL Leuven-Limburg, Denmark (3)  Villanueva University, Spain (1)  Helomo University College, Belgium (1)  Vaasa UAS, Finland (2)  Instituto Superior Politecnico de Viseu (2)  Haaga- Helia UAS, Finland (3)  Karelia UAS, Finland (1)  Karel de Grote University College, Belgium (2)  Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University Heidenheim, Germany (2)  Polytechnic Institute of Porto (2)</p> <p><b>Internship (17):</b>  Relentless Enterprise Limited, Ireland (3)  Gourmet Island Ltd, Ireland (1)  Algoos Study, Work and Travel, Greece (3)  Calogirou Real Estate Agents, Cyprus (2)  Dary Natury, Poland (1)  English Language Academy, Malta (2)  Gateway School of English GSE, Malta (2)</p>	3	Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Spain (1); IUT Nancy-Charlemagne, France (1); Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University Heidenheim, Germany (1)

Source: SER, (p. 27)

The Erasmus+ program provides students with opportunities to go to study (for 3 – 12 months) or internship (2 – 12 months) in the institutions of the European Union (EU) or non-EU countries with which KUAS has concluded a cooperation agreement. A list of institutions that students can visit is available on the KUAS website. There are two selections for Erasmus+ studies and Erasmus+ internships per academic year. One selection takes place in March and another selection in October. All students can participate in the selection. The level of proficiency in the language or language of the intended institution of study at the institution is also assessed. An important criterion is the student's academic achievements (students with academic debts are not sent to study mobility). Scholarships are given to exchange students. Students with special needs can apply for additional support. During the online-visit these aspects were all confirmed by the students. Students said that there is a great opportunity to gain more experience, during the internships they can go practice in international business companies. Students take advantage of this opportunity; they are satisfied and evaluate the process positively. Students stated that everything from the financial side to the organisational side is smooth because students are supported by KUAS staff (assistance to fill documents, etc.). It should be mentioned that the student mobility numbers in recent years have boomed.

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

All students in the field have the opportunity to take advantage of the academic, and psychological support provided by the college. Students receive a lot of information about support opportunities during the Introductory Week. Forms of support: counselling, information on various issues, group tutoring, social scholarships, loans, international mobility, library and information resource services, career services, accommodation services, cultural and leisure services, access to student activities, special needs, trilingual psychological assistance (Lithuanian, English, Russian), etc. During the meeting with the group of experts, the students stated that they were and are informed about the ways of

support. It was also stated that support is provided quickly, and counselling is helpful. All kinds of support for students are effective.

### *3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling*

Before the beginning of the studies, the faculty organises an Introductory week for students, during which they are provided with the most important information about the chosen study program, study procedure, academic integrity, and other relevant topics. Students can always consult with the mentor services or senior students. At the beginning of the course, all students are introduced to the procedure and criteria for the assessment of the study results of the subject, the responsibility for the unfairly performed tasks, interim reports, and examinations are explained. During their studies, students have the opportunity to contact the responsible administrative employee, group tutor, or lecturer at any time in a way that is convenient for them and to find out relevant issues or solve any problems. They are informed and encouraged about this during the first meetings.

#### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

##### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. KUAS provides complete, clear, and accessible information to the students;
2. Student services are very good;
3. The increase of outgoing students is remarkable.

##### ***(1) Weaknesses:***

1. The number of incoming Erasmus students is low.

## **3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT**

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

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

The teaching and learning process at KUAS is in line with the mission of the Study Field of Business Studies which is: “to provide innovation-based higher education studies focused on practical activities and promote applied science and art activities significant for the development of society” (SER p. 8). Student needs are taken into account in a very holistic manner going from the individual to the societal context. Programs can be personalised, and students may compose a study plan aligned with their needs in terms of time, volume of study. A student having additional constraints such as a young child, may be granted a free study schedule and, providing a good average score, be exonerated from the obligation to attend lectures. This option was used by seven students during the period assessed (SER p. 13), attesting to its relevance. At the macro level student needs are addressed in terms of providing a learning experience comprising studies, extracurricular activities and personalised programmes and which answers the afore-mentioned mission with particular emphasis being placed on answering needs that will allow a student to take their place as a professional once they graduate at both the national and international level. Students must go abroad for one semester either for study or on an international internship. In light of current discussions it is expected that students will also have the possibility to enter double-diploma study programs in the future (SER pg. 9).

Students are actively involved in their learning process developing both soft and core competencies that enable them to achieve the learning outcomes. The teaching methods used are very diverse, 7-8 different ones per study module according to the SER and students are encouraged to use various study methods, working both individually and in groups. In addition to the more standard lecture and project methods it is worth noting that integrated group assignments and projects are used to encourage problem-solving, creativity and entrepreneurship. Companies also provide case studies for analysis which gives students insight into the professional world that awaits them

This area stands out in comparison to what is found at both the national and international levels of this study field.

Reference to Bloom’s Digital Taxonomy might allow KUAS to go even further in the development of the learning process.

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

Comprehensive measures are in place for students in socially vulnerable groups or having special needs. They can put together an individual study plan in order to complete their degree, benefit from a free study schedule, take an academic break or alter their exam schedule if justified. According to the SER (p. 32) these measures are currently being standardised with the procedures being drawn up for the individualization of the study process for students with special needs. This will allow for such measures to be more systematically included than at this time.

Academic, material, psychological and social support is provided to all students at KUAS and also includes consultations focussed on meeting the special needs of students. Support starts during the introductory Week for 1<sup>st</sup> year students, during this time information is provided in a variety of sessions and forms from documentation to personal meetings. Details on obtaining social grants and financial assistance, whether through KUAS or the government are provided.

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

Student study progress is extremely well monitored with the assessment of student learning achievements being subject to the KUAS *Study Procedure and the Description of the Procedure for Assessing Learning Achievements* (SER p. 32). Methods of evaluation are in line with the module's learning objectives. Feedback on student learning achievements is done using the Learning Management System (LMS) as well as e-mails and in-person consultations.

To promote student self-assessment, KUAS applies a system of cumulative assessment, the results of which are communicated to the students sufficiently in advance for them to be proactive about their learning. This combined with over 50% of self-study ensures that the students develop the skills necessary to take responsibility for their learning.

Learning achievements are discussed at the department level in addition to being monitored by the KUAS Unit for Studies. An annual recapitulation evaluates overall results and if need be makes suggestions for improvements to the study program/s.

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

Information concerning graduate employment is obtained from official government sources and combined with data from the Career Management Information System. This provides statistics on employment. For the period, assessed employment six months after graduation is high across all programs.

To complement this information, feedback is also obtained from employers concerning the graduates' professional readiness. Scores received during the assessment period were extremely high. The annual institutional survey one year after graduation provides information that allows KUAS to continually improve and update the study program/s.

Graduates are also involved in the evaluation of employability through KUAS Alumni Club activities.

Overall the employability of graduates is high and the ongoing evaluation from various sources allows KUAS to allow the programs to evolve in a manner that follows the market demand.

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

Academic integrity is an important issue and the KUAS academic staff is called upon to use various measures ranging from the updating of evaluations to a variety of test tasks to ensure that students adhere to the principles set out in the *Code of Academic Ethics*. Support for best practice is also provided through practical seminars organised by the library staff.

The use of the text-matching tool *Turnitin* for the checking of selected reports and projects as well as all the Bachelor theses reinforces the importance of academic integrity and places the onus on the students to take responsibility for their learning. In the event of a violation of the Code of Ethics related to studies, a report is submitted for review by the Ethics Committee.

To ensure the application of equal opportunity and non-discrimination KUAS has internal documents which reflect the provisions of the law. Should an individual wish to lodge a complaint for a breach in these practices, this can be done in full confidentiality. It will then be dealt with by a specially formed committee composed of professionals from the fields deemed necessary.



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

There are effective procedures in place to handle appeals (*Procedure for Assessing Learning Achievements at KUAS* (SER p. 34)). In the event of an appeal a Board of Appeal is formed by the Dean to assess it and the result is communicated within 15 days after its reception. In the case of an appeal regarding the final thesis this is dealt with directly by the KUAS Director. Although no appeals were filed in the field of Business Studies during the period covered by the self-assessment, the procedures seem very straightforward and clear. A lot of effort is put into helping students understand the importance of academic integrity which may explain why no appeals have been made in recent times.

#### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

##### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. A focus on both the micro and macro levels of providing a professional learning environment;
2. Teaching methods are innovative and varied encouraging collaboration and creativity and provide the students with a good basis from which to enter the professional world

##### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The use of Bloom's Taxonomy should be extended to include Bloom's Digital Taxonomy;
2. A more systematic inclusion of a study process for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.

### **3.5. TEACHING STAFF**

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

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

The Kauno kolegija business field teachers' team consists of 45 teachers and 23% of teachers teaching the modules in the field have PhD degrees (SER, p. 36). All teachers (100%) have at least a master's degree, and the majority (70%) of the field teachers have at

least 3 years of practical experience in the subject they teach. The pedagogical work experience of the teachers ranges from 2 to 44 years, and practical work experience ranges from 0 to 35 years (Annex 5). . The student/teacher ratio is favourable throughout the years – 10 students per teacher or 21 for FTR (SER, p. 37).

All teachers are active in research and have presented scientific outputs (according to the data in the SER). The research outputs and applied science activities are well integrated into the study process, during the visit teachers confirmed that the research workload is a part of their job descriptions, and they mentioned examples of joint research with students. Generally, teachers of KUAS are very enthusiastic; they are active in professional associations. During the visit, they mentioned many examples of teaching innovation they have implemented in their courses (e.g. 'knowledge triangle'; interactive tools for students' assessment and remote teamwork; simulations and games), and they implement student-centred learning principles in their courses. Collaboration between the teachers leading to a good integration of the study courses within the modus is the strong side of KUAS.

The academic staff recruited to implement the study programs of the KUAS meet the requirements of legal acts; the qualification and number of the academic staff are appropriate to achieve the anticipated learning outcomes of the field studies; the composition of the academic staff is balanced; the turnover is consistent; the dissemination of the experience of the academic staff who have great pedagogical experience and those who have practical experience is ensured. All these points allow the expert panel to conclude that the number of the lectures in the Kauno kolegija study field, their experience of pedagogical and practical work, and qualifications are sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes.

### *3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility*

The mobility of teachers in the business field of study at Kauno kolegija programs takes place mainly as part of ERASMUS+ and Nordplus exchange programs and is particularly encouraged. During the visit, teachers confirmed that they regularly receive information about mobility opportunities and that all teachers have equal opportunities for academic mobility. Teachers of Kauno Kolegija programmes are active in outgoing mobility - on average, 11 members of the academic staff teaching modules in the field of study participated in academic mobility programmes per year (some had more than 1 visit). During Covid-19 virtual mobility was organised and therefore numbers did not drop.

Experts conclude that this is quite unusual and KUAS has well managed the teachers' mobility process.

In addition to mobility, every year, KUAS organises *International Weeks*, during which guests from foreign countries give lectures, and share their experiences with the administrative, academic staff and the students. Both students and teachers actively participate in the lectures taught by foreign guests and the number of participants is growing (incoming teaching mobility has more than doubled in 2021 if compared with 2020 and 2019; SER, p.41).

It should be concluded that conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility are good, nevertheless, KUAS has acknowledged the need to increase the effectiveness of mobility, and thus, they are working in the right direction.

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

KUAS has developed a procedure for in-Service Training of employees. The need for improving the competencies of the academic staff is identified while analysing the data provided in the annual self-assessment reports of the academic staff. The academic staff is encouraged to participate in in-service training that corresponds to the field of the study course; moreover, they can suggest topics for organising events within KUAS.

Experts during the visit had the impression that teachers of KUAS are very active in professional development. They confirmed that they have a very wide choice of topics for qualification development and mentioned many examples of their professional development. The academic staff can develop competencies systematically and purposefully by linking the topics of internships, courses, training, and seminars with the module taught, which ensures professional development, and links with the courses taught and the field of scientific interests.

It should be concluded that the academic staff is provided with good conditions for systematic improvement of competencies, which are periodically assessed.

### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. The study programs are staffed by professional teachers including foreign nationals thus ensuring international experience to the students.

2. Highly developed collaboration between teachers leading to good integration within study modules.
3. Very enthusiastic teachers focusing on teaching innovations.
4. Field teachers have good possibilities for the development of competences including subject, didactic, and general competences financed by KUAS which are actively used by teachers.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. None.

### **3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

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

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

In addition to the traditional library, computer room type spaces, the learning facilities are very good with many different types of space to encourage learning. Attention is also paid to student well-being with a well-equipped sports centre and well-designed leisure spaces.

Informational resources are on par with national and international institutes and comprise hard copy publications, printed journals as well as a good selection of electronic resources and academic databases both paid and open source. The library provides areas for individual and group studies.

Financial resources are set aside for the annual updating of physical and informational resources including specialised software. The staff and students are encouraged to help identify needs sufficiently in advance to budget for them. With KUAS' focus on modern work and leisure spaces and a desire to be more interdisciplinary, they are aware of the importance of being aware of changing industry expectations and the need to provide students with ideal learning spaces.

KUAS' position on learning facilities and resources is exceptionally well-evaluated by the Expert Panel.

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

The Institution has an ongoing program of resource updating which includes input from staff and students alike as well as taking suggestions from social partners. This all enhances the teaching and learning of the study programs.

Financial resources are allocated in sufficient amounts and related to student numbers. The percentage of online resources has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to expand.

The expert group can only conclude that this area is in line with what one would expect.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Very good formal and informal learning spaces available;
2. Up-to-date resources in line with the KUAS mission;
3. New and up to date informational resources;
4. Good leisure and living facilities.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. None.

## **3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION**

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

### ***33.7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies***

According to SER: „KUAS internal quality assurance system includes the management of the quality assurance system, the responsibility of various KUAS divisions and individual employees for quality assurance, and stakeholders’ participation in implementing the measures for monitoring and improvement of the study programs.” College created a quality assurance system that covers different levels of implementation of study quality. The process is regulated following the concrete documents and strict procedures that are documented. The study program Committee analyses different fields that cover all

stakeholders' involvement. More detailed committee work coverage is detailed in SER. Experts found that the study program committee's systematic work helps to improve the quality of studies.

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

KAUKO collects regular feedback from students and other stakeholders. Students participate in surveys twice a year after each semester; the same procedure is also valid for the teaching staff. Social partners fill in surveys after students finish their internships. Student representatives have the possibility to participate in study program committee meetings and discuss possible improvements. During the site-visit, it was noticed that students, teachers, and social partners' opinion about study quality is very important and the reaction to changes are very timely. It was mentioned that KUAS collects opinions from social partners during round table discussions, after students' internships, etc. The feedback from social partners are not publicly available, on the website you can only find results from 2015 years. College has a good survey collecting procedure, just a bit of a lack of updates publicly.

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

College has a clear system and process on evaluation of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, improvement processes and outcomes. According to SER: „The data on lecturers' performance are accumulated in the Academic Staff Activity Planning System; the data on students' learning achievements are stored in the Study Management System; the data on general annual performance indicators (number of students, dropouts, the results of the mobility of students and the staff, graduates' employment, number of lecturers, etc.) are available in the KUAS Document Catalogue. The data relating to the implementation of the studies in the study programmes in the study field of Business Studies (SFBS) (progressiveness reports, study schedules, reports on the evaluation of the final theses, etc.) are preserved in the Faculty and Department". The results of surveys are publicly available on the KAUKO website together with other quality management documents. In the KAUKO website you can find the columns, what stakeholders ask and what the college has

done according to the needs and possible improvements of study quality. The survey results in English are missing on the website.

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

The College collects answers about study quality from 1st year students to graduates. Students fill surveys regularly after each semester (The scope n-72). It could show the full study quality picture through different angles, as it was written in SER: „The surveys of first-year students of SFBS study programmes conducted in 2019-2021 revealed that students felt that the studies chosen met their expectations; they had competent lecturers who motivate students, engage them in the course taught, and provide a lot of practical knowledge. Second-year and senior students were positive about the competence of the academic staff, stating that they are knowledgeable about the course they teach and make their teaching clear (2019 survey of senior students) “. KUAS has a strong alumni community, Alumni Club and regular Alumni meetings that could be helpful for study quality improvements. College has regular graduate surveys about study quality and after evaluation they can react timely to possible improvements. Alumni participation in surveys is a rather good indicator.

#### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

##### *(1) Strengths:*

1. Strong Alumni involvement in study quality process;
2. Clear Procedure of study quality management.

##### *(2) Weaknesses:*

1. The feedback from social partners is not publicly available.

## **IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE**

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More options to study foreign languages and a wide selection of courses could be offered.</li> <li>2. Be more strategic in defining and selection of target markets and outlining the unique features of the programs.</li> </ol>
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Higher activity of students and teachers in the research area would be beneficial.</li> <li>2. Involve alumni practitioners in the teaching process.</li> </ol>
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage the mobility of incoming students. Be clear about your target groups and develop a clear strategy in targeting foreign students.</li> </ol>
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The addition of Bloom's Digital Framework to the basic Bloom's Framework currently in use.</li> <li>2. The inclusion of a digital competence framework for the structuring of both course content and the program in the future.</li> </ol>
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep promoting internationalisation.</li> </ol>
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage the use of independent language learning facilities and resources to increase the hours that the students can study foreign languages.</li> </ol>
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make the results of surveys, round table discussions from social partners publicly available on the KAUKO website.</li> </ol>



## VI. SUMMARY

### **Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field of *Business at Kauno kolegija***

The evaluated study programs are developed and regularly updated in accordance with the legal requirements as well as the needs of the labour market and the modern business environment. Programs have a well-balanced module structure and all modules are compatible with each other. The aims, objectives and Learning Outcomes are compatible with each other and are in line with the mission and strategy of the KUAS. However, it would be useful to develop a clear market strategy in targeting potential students. It would also make sense to share modules with HEIs from Baltic and Scandinavian countries to boost the number of students and add value to the program.

There exists a strong link between arts and science teachers actively participating in various projects, conferences and disseminating the results of their research in academic journals. However, higher activity of students and teachers in the research area would be beneficial.

Student support and admission process is well-organised and transparent. There is a developed and implemented procedure for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning results. After the admission students are introduced to the life of AK during the introductory week. Students get all kinds of support including personal and psychological support. Information on Erasmus opportunities is publicly available. However, the incoming students' mobility still remains low and it is recommended to have a clear vision about the target groups and develop a clear strategy in targeting foreign students.

Study programs operate in a teaching and learning environment that is responsive and supportive to student needs. Various teaching methods used by teaching staff ensure the achievement of learning outcomes. However, the inclusion of a digital competence framework for the structuring of both course content and the programs in the future would be recommended.

The programs are delivered by professional teaching staff, implementing student-oriented teaching, involved in research and publication activities. These activities are keeping up to date with their subject. It is recommended to promote internationalisation and developing more interesting options for the mobility of teaching staff.

Learning resources and facilities are at a very good level, all rooms have the necessary equipment. Students have access to databases and library resources from HEI and home. Resources are updated regularly and funds allocated to this procedure are sufficient.

Management and Quality Assurance functions are in place and well managed; existing academic regulations are comprehensive and transparent. KAUKO implements various measures to ensure internal quality by involving all stakeholders in the form of surveys and meeting roundtables. However, it would be beneficial to make the feedback from social partners publicly available.

Expert panel chairperson signature: