CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of FILM

at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre

Expert panel:
1. **Dr. Annie Doona (panel chairperson),** *academic;*
2. **Prof. Rene Maurin,** *academic;*
3. **Mr. Mika Ritalahti,** *independent film producer;*
4. **Ms. Agnė Marcinkevičiūtė,** *representative of social partners;*
5. **Mr. Lukas Alsys,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator – *Ms. Evelina Keturakytė*

Report language – English

Vilnius
2021

Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	*Film Art*	*Film Art*
State code	6121PX008	6211PX003
Type of studies	University cycle studies	University cycle studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies, 4 years	Full-time studies, 2 years
Credit volume	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Arts	Master of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Higher university education (Bachelor's Degree)
Registration date of the study programme	19 May, 1997	19 May, 1997

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

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CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 Order No. V-149. The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on *22 April, 2021.* Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Review Visit was organised online using video-conferencing tool (Zoom).

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1. **Dr. Annie Doona (panel chairperson)**, *freelance Consultant in Quality, Equality and Strategy, Emeritus President IADT, Institute of Art Design and Technology Dun Laoghaire, Ireland;*
2. **Prof. Rene Maurin,** *associated lecturer at University of the Arts London: Camberwell College of Arts, UK; Professor at Academia Maribor, Slovenia; Director and Screenwriter*
3. **Mr. Mika Ritalahti, independent film producer,** *CEO and partner in Silva Mysterium, a production company in Helsinki, Finland. Previously Head of the department at Aalto University, School of Art and Design, Department of Film and Scenography, Finland.*
4. **Ms. Agnė Marcinkevičiūtė,** *Film director (screenwriter, cameraman, editing director, script supervisor), Lithuania*
5. **Mr. Lukas Alsys,** *Vytautas Magnus University, Graduate of the Second Sycle Study Programme Theatre Studies and Performing Arts Management, 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 the site visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	The list of bachelor graduates' final thesis (creative projects) in the field of Film in 2015, 2017-2019
2.	The list of master graduates' final thesis (creative projects) in the field of Film in 2018
3.	The list of course works of bachelor and master students in 2017-2019
4.	The list of festivals where students' films were shown
5.	The list of teachers having pedagogical / didactical studies and scope of studies
6.	The list of teachers and durations of the creative holidays used for creative holidays
7.	A description of the Film and Television Studio
8.	The information about the agreement between Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LMTA) and Lithuanian Film centre (LFC)
9.	The budget figures for allocated funds for the Film study field's facilities and resources and the budget figures for the infrastructures of Film study field
10.	The inventory list of spaces for Studio with mostly mobile grip and light
11.	The information about cooperation with AMMI Incubator
12.	The information about the overall evaluation of the study programmes, surveys
13.	The information about students' internships

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

The Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (hereinafter referred to as LMTA, Academy) is a specialised tertiary higher education institution that delivers studies in arts, as well as art history and theory, trains professional music, theatre, film and dance artists and researchers. In the Academy founded in 1933, art activities and scientific research, as well as dissemination of their results are carried out.

The mission of the Academy is to ensure sustainable development of art and art research, participate in the shaping of the national artistic education and cultural policy, foster spiritual harmony and national identity in society, educate the most artistically gifted young people into creative, proactive, entrepreneurial members of society who are open to Lithuania and the world.

There are three faculties in the Academy: the Faculty of Music, the Faculty of Theatre and Film, and Klaipėda Faculty. The Faculty of Theatre and Film trains highly skilled specialists in theatre, dance, cinema, art history and theory, and arts management. The faculty was established in 1991 and initially drama theatre actors were trained there. However, over several decades it has developed into the main centre in Lithuania for the education of professionals of stage, film and related professions.

The faculty consists of five departments: Acting and Directing, Film and Television, Dance and Movement, Art History and Theory, and Arts Management. Around 350 students are studying at the faculty and about 100 teachers work there.

The **first cycle** study programme *Film Art* (state code - 6121PX008) (hereinafter referred to as the first cycle study programme) delivered at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre is the only study programme of this type in Lithuania where film art professionals with good knowledge of the specific nature of film, television and other screen arts who are able to create and implement film projects of different types individually and in a team, as well as work in the national and international film market are trained. There are 6 specialisations of the first cycle study programme: Dramaturgy, Sound Design, Editing, Production, Cinematography and Film Directing.

The **second cycle** study programme *Film Art* (state code - 6211PX003) (hereinafter referred to as the second cycle study programme) is the only study programme of this type in Lithuania where film professionals broaden and extend knowledge and abilities acquired in the first study cycle by implementing a creative film art project and conducting artistic research relevant in their area. There are 4 specialisations of the second cycle study programme: Sound Design, Production, Cinematography and Film Directing.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Film study field and first cycle at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre *is given **positive** evaluation.*

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

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

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field is being developed systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (excellent) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

Film study field and second cycle at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	2
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	20

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field is being developed systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (excellent) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

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)

<u>*The First Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

Chapter 1.1.1. of SER attempts to evaluate the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and the labour market by self-evaluation and without any documented feedback gained by surveys or statistics.

Intended learning outcomes of the general study cycle regardless of the specialisation are specified in the chapter 1.1.2.1. of SER on pages 9 and 10.

The document "5an_links_betw_learn_outc_and_subj_Film-Art_BA.pdf" describes the intended learning outcomes of the singular subjects by attempting to create a systemic table whereby several subjects share intended learning outcomes categorised into 5 groups (Knowledge and its application, Research skills, Special abilities, Social abilities and Personal abilities).

The first cycle is divided into 6 specialisations each with their own curriculum: Dramaturgy, Sound Design, Editing, Production, Cinematography and Film Directing.

Regarding the needs of society and the labour market no detailed written report was presented on this area in the SER but the expert panel were able to obtain their answers in the verbal interactions with the representatives during their visit.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel concludes that the relevance of the outcomes regarding the first cycle study field is very good. The first cycle study programme is well structured in its horizontal and vertical composition and well-balanced concerning workload, theoretical learning and practical skills.

It is clear the tradition of the institution and its central role in Lithuania is unique. Professional activity areas of the specialists trained under the study field are indicated and well-structured resulting in a strong programme divided into meaningful specialisations that follow the conventional structure of work divisions in the film industry.

Despite the obvious high quality of the programme and conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of society, the expert panel would like to emphasise two things:
- The HEI could prepare a document with written outcomes regarding each specific specialisation.
- The manner of describing subject-specific aims, outcomes and competencies in a "checkmark" combined table is not adequate, generic and difficult to navigate.

In assessing the SER and other documentation the panel noted that the same aim is repeated across several subjects. The experts are aware that in reality this is probably not the case, however, if it is, it presents a problem as the aims of subjects overlapping in such quantity is

not the best practice. For example, the intended outcome "Will know the theoretical and practical principles of filmmaking and will be able to relate them to each other" is shared across some 50 subjects.

Despite written evidence or research with regard to the needs of society and the labour market was not presented, the expert panel understands that the HEI is the principal and sole Film School in the country, therefore crucial for the existence of the labour and creative force of the industry and art. The close and active link between the school and social partners was very evident during the discussion with their representatives. The first cycle study programme is able to fulfil their needs and prepare the students for confident entry into the industry and art in Lithuania and internationally.

The leadership of LMTA should not overlook the changes in the industry and media landscape concerning digitalisation and computer-generated images. It is a sector with growing needs for skilled creatives and LMTA would surely benefit from a more active and documented interest in the dynamics of the labour market.

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

Chapter 1.1.1. of the SER evaluates the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and the labour market by self-evaluation and without any documented feedback gained by surveys or statistics.

Intended learning outcomes of the general study cycle are specified in the chapter 1.1.2.1. of SER on pages 9 and 10.

Regarding the needs of society and the labour market the SER did not include any written report but the expert panel were able to get answers to their questions on this area in the interactions with the representatives during their visit.

The document "6an_links_betw_learn_outc_and_subj_Film-Art_MA" describes the intended learning outcomes of the singular subjects by attempting to create a systemic table in the same manner as the first cycle of the programme.

The second cycle is divided into 4 specialisations each with their own curriculum: Sound Design, Production, Cinematography and Film Directing.

The general outcomes and aims of the second cycle study programme can be somewhat deduced from chapter 1.1.1. of the SER.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The conformity of the outcomes regarding the field and labour market in the case of the second cycle is not as self-evident as such programmes generally seek their identity between artistic practice, research and theory. The second cycle at the LMTA is not an exception and struggles to clearly articulate its mission and vision.

Precisely because of this, clear and dedicated learning outcomes would benefit from more definition in respect to the cycle and each specialisation. The SER states that the aim is to "broaden and extend knowledge and abilities acquired in the first study cycle by implementing a creative film art project and conducting artistic research relevant in their area" (SER, p. 7) however this description is too general to enable a clear understanding of the aims.

By inspecting the curriculum, it becomes evident that the second cycle study programme is somewhat undefined with open elective courses and a small number of mandatory courses (8

- 9). This points to the fact that the master course is a project-oriented programme that serves as an extension of the second cycle or an opportunity for enrolment from related non-film first cycle studies. This was also confirmed in the discussion with the students.

While this practice is good and may help educate specialised profiles in the field of film and media, the specific outcomes of the course would benefit from a clear definition regarding the specialisations. The courses aim at firmly establishing methods and relationships of artistic research and practice are a crucial element of the second cycle.

The links to needs of the society and the labour market are not analysed in particular documents and the panel had to rely on their discussion with the leadership, alumni and social partners. The second cycle remains adequate to the needs of students, however only in its generality, leaving the panel uncertain about the exact nature of the graduate and their employment possibilities beyond those obtained in the first cycle.

The panel is aware of the programming challenges with regard to practice-based research programmes. However, such programmes are gradually gaining ground in contemporary international education and LMTA may wish to explore and reflect upon cases of good practice throughout the European Union. Only in such a manner may it establish a clear and compact conformity with the needs of society and the labour market that in neither opinion of the panel, are now rather arbitrary or simply mirroring the first cycle.

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 First Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The strategy of the HEI and the general learning outcomes of both cycles are conceptually described in the SER on page 9 and 10. There is no description of learning outcomes by the specialisation of the cycle nor specialisation.

The vision of the institution is described as "an open and creative academic art and research community that inspires culture breakthroughs and creates values". The proposed strategy and vision are focused on "sustainable activity, international school, transferrable culture".

Internationalisation is one of the keystone areas of development of the HEI's mission and vision and the SER proposes some initial conceptual actions that will support development of the cycle in the desired direction.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In the meetings with management the panel found that the leadership of the HEI has a clear vision and understanding of the core of the first cycle study programme. The objectives of this mission are fulfilled as the programme fully conforms to the mission, vision and strategy of the HEI and are presented clearly in the SER.

Learning outcomes are somewhat generic and do not describe outcomes for the specific specialisations. As each specialisation is of a different nature, publishing such descriptors of outcomes and competencies would present an important document for introducing the programme and its specialisations to students and public.

The vision of LMTA is ambitious and, like most institutions, focused on international and pan-European integrations. Upon inspection of the documents and discussion with the leadership of the school, the experts were informed about the biggest hindrances to their international

vision. Languages of smaller nations are the common problem that is, however becoming less and less pronounced with younger generations of academic staff.

The HEI is actively searching for strategic partnerships and expanding their international involvement. However, the action plan for internationalisation of the first cycle study programme is not yet fully formed and consists mainly of generalised ambitions such as:
- Promote subject instruction in English;
- Attract a greater number of international students under mobility programmes.

The expert panel is aware this is a hard task and supports a careful and slow approach to fulfilling this vision. However, a more thought out and detailed strategic document with an action plan would benefit the institution at reaching their goals, understanding of the local, national mission in arts, culture and media landscape which is the core of the programme.

The Second Cycle

1) Factual situation

The strategy of the HEI and the general learning outcomes of both cycles are conceptually described in the SER on page 9 and 10. There is no description of learning outcomes by the specialisation of the cycle nor specialisation. The mission and vision of the institution regarding the second cycle is not specified separately from the first cycle.

(2) Expert judgement and analysis

In the meetings with management the panel found that the leadership of the HEI has not defined the mission and strategy for the second cycle of the Film study field.

This is especially troubling because it is exactly the second cycle that needs to establish a clear strategy and vision that can ground it in the complexity of practice based artistic research.

The expert panel can deduce the qualities of the programme mostly by its connections to the first cycle and links to the theoretical department of the LMTA, however the programme's proactive strategic contemplation as a whole is weak. The strategy and vision of the specialisations was not presented to the experts. The flexibility of research is important and welcomed, however only when defined with a firm programmatic frame.

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

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

According to the HEI and submitted documents the first cycle study programme is a four years programme of 240 credits (ECTS) (8 semesters with 30 credits each).

Credits allocated to singular courses are between 3 and 12. Total scope of the planned internship is 15 credits while the final thesis project allocates 15 credits.

The planned student workload for a semester regardless of the specialisation is 800 hours. The contact hours for each subject are between 34.19 and 36.92% according to HEI.

The scope of a student's individual learning is between 63.08 and 65.81% according the HEI.

No less than 50% of the teachers at both cycles are recognised artists or hold a scientific doctoral degree and are active in research. The structure and qualifications of teachers meet the legal requirements of Lithuania.

The second cycle programme is a two years programme of 120 credits (4 semesters with 30 credits each).

Studies of the study field, during which the study results established in the descriptor of a corresponding study field are accomplished, lie between 65-70 depending on the specialisation.

30 credits are allocated for the final degree thesis while the remaining 20 or 25 credits are electives that may be used for deeper learning in the study field or in neighbouring fields.

The planned student workload of the cycle is 3200 hours distributed unevenly across specialisations and semesters. The contact hours for each subject are between 21.09 and 24.28% according to HEI.

The lay-out is consistent with legal requirements.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study plans of the field study programmes are presented (as an annex to the SER) in the document. The compliance of the curriculum design with the legal requirements is substantiated in "THE DESCRIPTOR OF STUDY CYCLES" and "GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF STUDIES".

However, the requirements of the curriculum description are modest and could include more precise information about crucial module parameters such as:
- Learning methods and modes (with ECTS);
- Assessment methods (with weighting of parts e.g., written assignment, practical project etc.);
- Obtained skills;
- Literature.

Despite this observation that hindered the assessment of the expert panel, has inspected the compliance and have not found breaches of legal requirements. The study programmes of Film Art study field meet the general legal requirements of first and second cycle study programmes in Lithuania.

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

<u>*The First Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

The general methods of studies and assessment applied in the first cycle study programme in the field of Film by the Academy are covered in detail in Chapter 4.1.1.1. (SER, p. 42).

Learning methods and weighting is showcased in an example in chapter 4.1.1.2. (SER, p. 44).

In chapter 1.2.2.1 (SER, p. 14 - 17) the detailed learning outcomes, study methods and assessment methods are systematically documented on the example of 5 subjects - History of Film, Copyright and Related Rights, Grammar of Film Language, Sound Design and Creative Project (Film Directing).

The Academy provides teachers with freedom to choose their teaching and assessment methods (SER, p. 14).

The assessment methods are described without the weighting of different tasks in a literary manner without a clear distinction of assessment methods and grading.

Standard parameters are not used in defining the methods and assessment by individual subjects/modules in the showcased examples.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel recognizes the aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle are presented and partially compatible with the field of the study. The examples of the 5 subjects' description are a good example of how to define and introduce all taught courses, mandatory and elective and form a subject catalogue.

Descriptions also leave desiring a precise indication of study and assessment methods that remain largely literary and generic - e.g., "Explanation of theoretical material, demonstration of video and audio material, individual work (viewing of films), practical assignments, discussions, debates, individual work (preparation of the paper)." (SER, p. 14).

The study and assessment methods are best divided into recognised categories that allow a better understanding of workload, contact hours, individual work and assessment weighting.

The panel is well aware of historical approaches to learning and assessment methods of traditional art academies and does not oppose the culture per se. However, the HEI needs a clear structure beneath it that will allow sufficient transparency and methodology required for students and staff to know their rights and study.

Assessment of artistic practices could be defined clearer and avoid any arbitrary and overly subjective treatment with clear weighting of different parts of a module (theoretical, practical).

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

Regarding the second cycle, the HEI describes the concerned standard as: "The methods of teaching, learning and assessment are similar in the first and second cycles, however, the content of assignments, their complexity and expression of the student's independence are different." (SER, p. 43)

There is no text defining the methods and assessment by individual subjects/modules beyond the two examples.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel experienced some difficulties obtaining a clear picture and retrieving data about the teaching and assessment methods of the second cycle. Expert panel concludes from the text in the SER that there is no real difference from the first cycle beyond raising the demanding standards in knowledge.

Because the aims, learning outcomes and parameters are not well defined in the first cycle either, it is very hard for the panel to confidently affirm their compatibility.

The panel urges the HEI to correct this practice and start applying the standard methods of course catalogues described in ECTS Users' Guide chapter 7.1. This will enable students and staff to know their obligations and rights in relation to assessment.

The present state of this matter also presents a potential risk in cases of serious student complaints with regard to grading and knowledge assessment.

Assessment of artistic and academic practices could be defined clearer and avoid any arbitrary and overly subjective treatment with clear weighting of different parts of a module (theoretical, practical).

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 First Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The vertical and horizontal structure, that is distribution and sequentially of courses, of the field and cycle study programme subjects / modules is described in SER beginning on page 17. It divides the first cycle in parts and subject groups from practical to theoretical.

The detailed composition of the totality of the first cycle and its specialisations can be accessed in the document "1an_film_field_Film-Art_BA_st_pl.pdf". The document allows a clear and detailed insight into specialisations, courses and their progressing from first to last semester.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The totality of the first cycle with its vertical and horizontal architecture of subjects is well balanced and carefully thought out across all specialisations. The Academy documents this structure in a clear and consistent manner that is easily understandable to the experts and, most likely, staff and students.

Based on analysis of the documents and the meetings with students and staff, the expert panel can conclude the consistent development of competences is guaranteed across the first cycle starting at the basics and resulting in projects based on professional competency in the Film study field.

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The vertical and horizontal structure, that is distribution and sequentially of courses, of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules is described in SER beginning on page 19. It divides the second cycle in specialisations and explains their credit weighting.

The detailed composition of the totality of the cycle and its specialisations can be accessed in the document "2an_film_field_Film-Art_MA_st_pl.pdf". The document allows a clear and detailed insight into specialisations, courses and their progressing from first to last semester.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The totality of the second cycle with its vertical and horizontal architecture is somewhat vague and does not demonstrate clearly the level and module structures that allow understanding of the curriculum.

The catalogue of courses is modest. The shared subjects do not describe the level of the study and are not always meaningfully shared across specialisations (i.e. Laboratory of Film Editing and specialisation Production).

The academy collaborates across its own internal departments and with Vilnius University (hereafter referred to as VU) and Vilnius Academy of Arts (hereafter referred to as VDA); however, the programme documentation and SER could have explained these procedures to the prospective the second cycle students and offer the possibility of several elected courses that would broaden the modestly structured curriculum.

It is hard to conclude about the level of artistic research in subjects that are not precisely defined and share names across cycles - "Practical Training of Film Directing'', "Mastery of Cinematography" or "Composing for Theatre, Cinema". Building a second cycle study

programme simply by unstructured mentorship with emphasis on practical and research projects is not good practice.

Mandatory supportive subjects as methodology, practice-based research etc., would strongly support the capacity of meaningful research among the students.

The expert panel can confirm only partial consistency leading to development of competences of students in the second cycle of the Film study field. This is an area the HEI leadership could improve and give more attention to.

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

The First Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The first cycle study programme offers general and specialisation specific elective subjects chosen either by the students or the Academy.

The number of general elective subjects is 8 while the number of specialisation specific subjects fluctuates between 15 in the specialisation "Production" and 6 in the specialisation "Cinematography".

The workload of the elective subjects spans between 3 and 6 ECTS.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The first cycle study programme offers the students a substantial number of "cross specialisation" and "specialisation specific" subjects that logically and valuably provide the possibility to focus on desired competencies and skills according to their personal learning objectives and learning outcomes.

The workload of elective subjects is well balanced while the subjects are well thought out and relevant for the field of study.

What is slightly unclear is when the subjects are elected by the student and when by the Academy as the course documentation uses the phrase "Courses determined by the Academy or chosen by the student. "It would be good practice to have clear information about the precise possibilities and methods of choice available not only to the expert panel but even more so to the prospective students.

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The second cycle study programme offers 3 shared elective subjects and 1 (2 in case of "Sound design") specialisation specific subjects that are not defined but "/.../ determined by the Academy or chosen by the student /.../".

Free elective subjects in the specialisations of the second cycle study programme Film Art are allocated from 5 to 10 credits.

General and specialisation specific elective subjects are chosen either by the students or the Academy.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The specialisations of the second cycle offer little formal and structured opportunities for personalisation. The personalisation occurs spontaneously especially with regard to the practical project and Master thesis which is understandable per se.

Personalisation of the curriculum itself is limited by the modest catalogue of taught courses and relies on one true elective course each student may choose from LMTA, VU or VDA. This aspect could be given more attention especially in the light of a very limited offering of courses in general. The expert panel emphasizes individual mentorship of the second cycle students cannot be a substitute for a well-structured and rich curriculum.

The expert panel is aware however that the number of the second cycle students is small and the course intake is biannual. Clearly the Academy cannot offer a plenitude of courses for a limited cohort of students. Precisely because of this it could undertake a strategic assessment and solve this problem in a way   that will suit its size. Such expansion of the curriculum may be perhaps achieved via closer collaboration with domestic and international partner institutions.

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

The First Cycle

(1) Factual situation

For the first cycle and the second cycle the principles of final thesis preparation, commission formation and defence are governed by the Descriptor of the Procedure for Organisation of Assessment of Final Theses as stated in the SER on page 20.

The first cycle study programme is concluded by a practical creative project that replaces the written thesis and corresponds to the specialisation of the student.

The Academy granted access to several final projects spanning from 2015 to 2018.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Information is provided on which art activities are directly related to the field studies carried out and how they are integrated in the studies.

Evaluation of compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements was assessed by the explanation provided in the SER and by viewing the projects provided to the expert panel. The panel can confirm the high quality of the projects that demonstrate the achievement of study aims and competitions.

However, an accompanying short paper written with the basic compliance to academic writing and artistic research would be a beneficial addition to the final project. It can be included in the project documentation, e.g., the storyboard, synopsis, production plan etc. according to the student's specialisation.

Preparing production documentation in compliance with international professional standards is a crucial skill in order to be professionally competent at entering the field in any of the specialisations in this programme. These materials could accompany the final project and be accessed as a part of the final assessment and grade.

The cooperation of the HEI with external partners is limited to production institutions and companies that do facilitate artistic activity however only in a technical manner.

(1) Factual situation

In contrast to the first cycle the second cycle final theses consist of a final project (shared trait with the first cycle) and a "related research paper" (SER, p. 20).

The Academy granted access to several practical final projects spanning from 2015 to 2018. No "related research papers" were submitted for the evaluation of the expert panel.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

From the submitted documents the panel can assess only the practical part of the final master theses - the artistic projects. To fully evaluate the outcomes and compliance the panel would need to inspect the "related research paper".

The name "related research paper" suggests a work inferior in magnitude and depth than a master thesis that usually concludes a research degree and is more common for lower first cycle.

Likewise, the artistic practical projects do not necessarily demonstrate academic or artistic research and do not vastly differentiate from the projects in the first cycle. Their general quality is good and corresponds to the second cycle, however they often do not reach the research dimension expert panel already mentioned.

The cooperation of the HEI with external partners in carrying out activities in the fields related to the study field is described as a valuable concept that needs to be the foundation of the second cycle.

Compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements is partial, this judgement reflects the general shortcomings of this cycle in particular it's stopping short of a profound research component that would vastly differentiate the first cycle from the second cycle.

Strengths and weaknesses / areas for improvement of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
The First Cycle
1. *The specialisations of the programme are closely linked to the national professional film landscape.*
2. *There is good evidence of responsiveness to local professional needs.*
3. *There is a clear awareness of the Academy's mission and ambitious vision with an emphasis on European integrations.*
4. *The curriculum is rich and well structured.*
5. *Flexible and interactive approaches to learning and artistic mentorship that value the heritage of traditional art education are in place.*
6. *There is a very good clearly vertically and horizontally structured curriculum across all specialisations.*
7. *There are opportunities to focus on desired competencies and skills via a range of mandatory and selective courses.*
8. *There is an intense emphasis on practical skills and professional competencies.*
9. *The High quality and collaborative nature of the final projects is a strength.*
10. *The quality of the first cycle study programme is good, its structure and learning outcomes are clear appropriate and well understood by staff and students*

The Second Cycle

1. *There is good integration of the second cycle study programme into a vital and vibrant Academy.*
2. *There are close links across the departments of LMTA and other National HEI.*
3. *There is evidence of strong support and mentorship in the practical aspect of the second cycle study programme.*
4. *Support for cross entry from related programmes and schools e.g., Economics, are in place.*
5. *There are plans in place to internationalize the second cycle and expand international cooperation.*

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(2) Weaknesses / Areas for improvement:

In terms of areas of improvement, the panel found that clearly and individually defined subject specific and specialisation learning outcomes avoiding generic text would be a helpful and important addition to the understanding of the study. The provision of a comprehensive course catalogue would help make the structure of the curriculum clearer. Whilst the panel note that one of the strengths of the area is the opportunities for specialisations it noted that no specialisation is in place for computer generated imagery and advanced post production.

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

<u>*The First Cycle and the Second Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

Following the annual evaluation of art works by the Lithuanian Research Council (SER p. 22) the expert panel could see that the theatre and cinema art, declared by LMTA teachers, were evaluated very high (4,69 and 5,00). The score of LMTA film activities counted from 2016 used to be always higher than 3 points in the evaluation of five best works in the field, which ensures sufficient quality of artistic activities and compliance with the requirement for the delivery of first and second cycle studies.

According to the SER (p.23) LMTA teachers are actively involved in different film creation activities. There were produced over 10 Lithuanian and international films by teachers during the last four years. Films were shown in the international film festivals and achieved awards. There are teachers, who work in television projects, advertising production. This is directly integrated into the study process, teachers involve students into the process of their film creation and enable them to gain direct practical experience.

The Academy became a member of the Association of Film and Television Schools (hereafter referred to as CILECT) in 2016. This was as a result of a number of positive factors including the high qualifications and experience of teachers of the Department of Film and Television, compliance of LMTA infrastructure with film school standards, accreditation of study programmes and international projects. The Academy was also deemed to have good participation of social partners in the activities of the department, students and positive graduates' opinion about the studies. International visibility of students and teachers' works and criteria of gender equality or equal opportunities at LMTA were also mentioned in 2016.

According to the SER (p.26), teachers of the LMTA Department of Film and Television participate in international conferences and deliver presentations. Since 2015 there were three publications produced by LMTA film teachers. Since 2013 LMTA has run the annual scientific journal "Ars et praxic", (http://žurnalai.lmta.lt/lt/zurnalas/ars-et-praxis/). This is a periodical collection of scientific articles, which publish works in arts, pedagogy and other humanities and social sciences related to art science. Three teachers were producing their artistic research in the field of Film as doctoral art studies. "*Landscape in Lithuanian Authorial Documentaries*" - one of them, is especially perspective in the educational process of students.

The faculty of Film and Television follows the news of Lithuanian art and culture, and film workshops worldwide. The faculty keeps the students updated on matters that might be useful or interesting to them through a page on Facebook that was created in 2016. The page currently has 1024 followers. Cinema "Skalvija", which is a partner of the faculty, offers film and television students discounts, using which the students may use to go see films shown in that cinema.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Teachers, who are internationally recognized film artists, working at LMTA ensure the high quality of studies by means of their professional competence. Membership of CILECT allows students to get involved in filmmaking and research in the global network of schools.

Students' films that have been submitted for external evaluation reflect a satisfactory amount of art value. This is also apparent in the success in various awards in film festivals according to the list provided by LMTA in additional material: more than 35 films were selected and shown in more than 20 various international film festivals in between 2018-2020. However, panel members felt that these were not the most prestigious festivals and that the department might need to raise their ambition in this area.

Media library may especially help the second cycle students, because a lot of research is to be carried out in order to produce final theses. Panel members missed summaries in English of students' research the second cycle final theses, which were provided to the panel and it shows a lack of interest in presenting these works on an international scale.

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

<u>*The First Cycle and the Second Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER (p. 23, 24, 25) expert panel can see that most of the teachers of the first cycle and the second cycle are active artists, working in filmmaking in addition to teaching, so they are able to deliver up-to-date experiences to their students. LMTA supports teachers' creative projects by offering the possibility of creative leave. During the meeting with students one of the students informed the panel that he was impressed by a seminar about documentary pitching with a teacher who participates in international pitchings himself.

By working with numerous partners, LMTA offers students extracurricular activities, and provides opportunities to participate in various projects. For example, The British Council, in association with „Meno avilys", had hosted a media literacy project for schools in 2020, during which the second cycle students organized film workshops for secondary school students. A seminar "Šviesos atmosferos interjere" as well as four other practical seminars are being carried out with partners such as Prorent studio. Wanting to increase students' access to the newest film equipment, LMTA has made arrangements with film equipment rental companies

(Kinolab, Arclight) that offer their rental services to students for free or with a 90 percent discount. Students are welcome to use Audiovisual Arts Industry Incubator (AMII) facilities (sound mixing tools, foley studio) for final theses. Collaborations between LMTA students and partners of the Academy are managed through a reservation system, coordinated by "Mokomoji studija".

During the site visit senior management and faculty administration staff informed the panel that they were proud of the international thematic conference "Music and Sound Design in Film and Media", which was organized by them for the 3rd time within Baltic countries' film schools and already has good reviews on an international level.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The teachers in the first and second cycles LMTA Film study field are active in filmmaking, which is directly related to the content of the study programmes. LMTA has a wide range of partners including long term partners who support the first cycle and the second cycle film study programmes with practical and theoretical support and input. To conclude, there are links between the content of the programmes and recent developments in the film industry. The panel is of the view that there are more opportunities to place greater emphasis in the second cycle on student's theoretical knowledge and the quality of research final theses.

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

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

During the meetings with senior management and faculty administration staff, the panel learned that they are proud of their teamwork-oriented studies, which they fulfil with the addition of two new specializations in 2020. Now there are six film field specializations in the first cycle study programme and four – in the second cycle; so students can work and learn together. Also, students of Acting and Music faculties are based nearby for collaborations.

During the meeting with industry representatives the panel heard that the film industry is keen to employ students for professional film productions as assistants, so they can get more practical knowledge about work on film sets. There is an important contract signed between LMTA and The Lithuanian Film Centre concerning the funding of students' final diploma films.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds that LMTA's ethic that involves teaching several most important specializations in the film industry at the same time, as well as the practical work organization process by means of teamwork is important. Having known their colleagues since attending the Academy, specialists will form teams more efficiently, which in turn will result in more new projects in the future. The diploma film funding contract between LMTA and The Lithuanian Film Centre allows students to enter the film industry with a professional piece of art in their portfolio.

Strengths and weaknesses / Areas for improvement of this evaluation area:

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Strengths:
1. Executing of various film field specializations simultaneously provides students with more comprehensive knowledge of team building and teamwork opportunities during practical work.
2. A good range of partners is in place.
3. Students have good accessibility to equipment and to other student cohorts for collaborations.

(2) Weaknesses / Areas for improvement: None

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

<u>*The First Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

With regard to the first cycle study programme, the expert panel found from the documentation that the Academy uses a national system, called LAMA BPO. Although, for the study field of film, students must take an entry exam. There is enough clear information about the national regulations regarding student's eligibility requirements for this study field. On the Academy's website and social media platforms, managed by the Academy, there is plenty of information about the entry exam and what it consists of.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

With regard to the first cycle study programme it is clear that the admissions procedure is formed by national regulations and laws. Information about the study field and programmes is simple to understand, and is publicly available. The panel did find however that the evaluation of entry exam tasks is not stated. During the site visit, during the meeting with the first cycle students, the panel found that students did not know the criteria on which the entry exam tasks would be evaluated. The panel did not manage to get this information from the SER, the Academy's website, and other platforms it shares its information on to the public. The panel finds that better public information concerning the evaluation process of entry exam tasks would benefit both possible future students, and Academy itself. There is not enough information on how the entry examination jury is assembled, however during the site visit neither the first cycle students, nor the alumni's said that they had any doubt about the jury or the personnel of the Academy, they feel that the Academy is an institution in which the best national experts of the field are working. This suggests that there is trust in the Academy, but the panel finds that more public information about composition and process of jury members assembly would benefit both the students and the Academy.

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

For the second cycle study programme, the panel found from the documentation, e.g. SER p. 51, that the Academy is directly responsible for the admission of the second cycle students. The Academy provided clear information on the admission procedures in the SER, this was reinforced in the meeting with the administration representative, during the site visit. It is clear that the Academy uses a common practise, used by most art high education schools in Lithuania: it states the minimum requirements for admissions, and requirements for the first cycle finished study programme. The panel found that the second cycle study programmes have entry examination requirements. Information about admission to second cycle study programmes is clear and public – there is enough information on the Academy's website, and on its social media platforms.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Regarding the second cycle study programme, as was mentioned above, the Academy is responsible itself for the admission procedures for the second cycle study programmes. The panel understands from the SER p. 50 that the Academy uses a common practice that most high education art schools are using. The information about the study field and programmes is easy to understand and is publicly available. The panel did note however that there is a lack of information on entry exam tasks criteria and composition of the jury. The situation is similar to the first cycle study programme. During the site visit in the meeting with second cycle students the panel was informed that the admission process was well known to the students both from the first cycle study programmes from the Academy, and from other High education institutions. This suggests that the information is public enough, however the panel also found out that students did know the criteria on which the entry tasks will be evaluated. The panel finds that more public information about composition and process of jury members assembly would benefit both the students and the higher education institution.

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

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

For both the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes, the panel found clear information from the Academy about the procedure for foreign qualifications recognition, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application. The information is available in the Academy's website, there is a contact phone number and email given. The SER p. 36-37 also contains detailed information about the procedure of recognition.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During the site visit, in the meeting with the administration representatives, the panel heard a clear statement, that the evaluation of the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application is regulated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The procedures are available on the Academy website and the panel found that this procedure is clear, and that the information is publicly available. The procedures are similar both for the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes.

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

<u>The First Cycle and the Second Cycle</u>

(1) Factual situation

For the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes, the panel found that the Academy is keen to exploit and increase conditions for academic mobility for students. In the SER p. 36-37 it is stated that the Academy students have opportunities to participate in Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes. There are good opportunities for communication with artists from other countries and students have opportunities for internships abroad. Intensive projects, creative camps, excellence courses run by foreign teachers, and other activities are equally available for all students. International teacher and student mobility are a priority area of internationalisation of studies in the Field studies area. During the site visit in the meetings with first and second cycles students it was clear that they were clear and informed about the possibilities of academic mobility. The information is also being shared, as the panel were informed by staff and students during the site visit, by an inner system of email, on the Academy's social media platforms, and on the website.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel has enough evidence to state that there are conditions in place for the Film field studies area students to participate in academic mobility programmes. The panel, during the site visit meetings with management and the students and in the SER p. 35 state that there is a problematic aspect of academic mobility for students from abroad. The stated problematic aspect is that there is no option right now to participate in common Academy lectures that are being held in English, e.g., not all lectures can be held in English at the moment. The SER does state that there is an intention to offer more modules through a foreign language. During the meeting with the administration representatives, the panel heard that the Academy is aware of this problematic aspect, and they intend to solve this. The panel is of the view that while there are some possibilities for mobility programmes in place to increase in internationalization including better student mobility would be helpful and benefit the institution as would the development of a plan for English language development.

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.

<u>The First Cycle and the Second Cycle</u>

(1) Factual situation

The panel was able to acquire good information during the site visit, from the SER, website, social media platforms etc. about the support available to the students of the study field both for the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes. In the SER p. 39-40 there is detailed information on what financial and personal support is available and how information about support is being passed on to the students. During the meetings with staff and students the panel asked about an online student record system, for tracking progress etc. whilst the panel found that student progress was stalked by individual lecturers, the panel found that an overall formal system does not seem to be in place.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds that the Academy's range of financial and personal support is diverse and precise. It covers financial, academic, social, psychological and personal support. During the Site visit students from the first cycle and second cycle stated that there is a large variety of information and channels to get it. The panel also noted that academic support has some

problematic aspects – during the site visit students state that they keep informal communication with the lecturers about problems that occur on every day basis, but stated that they do not know how to fill a formal complaint and to whom. Whilst the panel noted the informal methods in place to solve student issues raised, the panel do recommend that a more formal system of student complaints is developed as this informal approach may prove difficult in more serious complaints. Also, the lack of on-line study process tracking system is an issue, but during the site visit, administration representatives stated that this problem is being addressed..

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling.

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

For the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes, in the SER p. 40-41 it is stated that students are being counselled in different ways. There are specific events for counselling, as well as study field coordinators, that work directly with the field students. Information to students is being passed on by formal and informal means of communication. During the site visit meetings with students from first and second cycles, also with ALUMNI's panel noted that there is a possibility to be counselled in the Academy on the subject of working in the industry.

There are common surveys being held by the Academy, in which students point out the problematic points of the study programmes. The Academy has a system of psychological and career counselling, and the information is public.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

For the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes the panel states that the counselling is formed correctly according to the Film study field, but the panel notes that informal means of communication and counselling can create problematic situations. Also, there is a problematic aspect – representation of students – during the site visit more than a half of students in the meeting did not know anything about Student Union, and the inner procedures of it and what it represents. The panel suggests a more strategic approach for more active participation of students in surveys and student representation systems would be helpful. The panel notes that the Academy has systematic and tested techniques of students counselling. The system itself is common, and it gives clear benefits for the students. The subjects of counselling are sufficient as it covers questions from personal students' problems to career based questions**.**

Strengths and weaknesses / Areas for improvement of this evaluation area:

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Strengths:
1. There is a good and effective range of financial and personal support for the students.
2. Admission procedures are well organized and easily comprehensible for prospective Academy's students.

(2) Weaknesses / Areas for improvement:
1. There is a lack of possibilities for students from abroad to study in the Academy.
2. There is also a lack of a fully developed formal on-line studying process tracking system which would help staff and students to track learners' individual progress.

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.

<u>The First Cycle</u>

(1) Factual situation

Evaluation of the teaching and learning processes are described in SER beginning on page 42. There is no detailed description of teaching and learning methods with regards to individual subjects.

The SER describes the area of evaluation in a narrative way. The organisation of students' individual work and evaluation are not clearly described according to individual subjects.

The Assessment of progress is laid out for the general cycle and not for individual subjects.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel can conclude from the meetings with the academic staff and students, that the first cycle study programme takes in account and adapts the teaching and learning process to the needs of the students especially in the practice-based subjects under individual mentorship.

The lack of description of individual subjects becomes more problematic when evaluating theoretical and courses that cannot be described by texts as: "When applying teaching/learning methods, teachers attempt to adapt to every student's personal ability (during individual classes) or the needs and potential of the students' group (during group classes). In this way, every student has a possibility to reveal their individual strengths and achieve learning outcomes." (SER, p. 42).

Organization of students' individual work and evaluation are described without any weighting or allocation of ETCS. Again, individual subject data would make evaluating the first cycle much easier and more certain.

The discussion with students however showed there is contentment and enthusiasm with how the learning and teaching methods are carried out and adapted to students' personal needs. Mostly this is assigned to the benevolence and care of the teaching staff that substitutes for many of the systemic shortcomings.

Whilst the panel understands that the school is the only one of its kind in Lithuania it is of the view that this monopolistic position of the school in the country and its popularity does not provide a rationale for neglecting more detailed curriculum descriptors.

Further opportunities for graduates to pursue studies are not formally described but are somewhat self-evident from the meetings with staff and students regarding the study programme and the second cycle at the LMTA and the Film field itself.

<u>The Second Cycle</u>

(1) Factual situation

Evaluation of the teaching and learning process are described in SER beginning on page 42. There is no detailed description of teaching and learning methods with regards to individual subjects.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As with the fist cycle the panel understands there is adaptability to students' needs via personal mentorship approach in practice-based subjects. However, there seems to be no data as to how this is managed with subjects.

In the meeting with students, the panel were alerted by one student about the allegedly limited liberty and ambition of research. Expert panel however has no means to confirm or discard this individual case. Nevertheless, inspecting the SER and the modest choices in the curriculum and small number of students panel believes LMTA may need to devote more resources and attention to this cycle of the study.

The second cycle is not described independently but linked to the first cycle and commented as "/.../ similar in the first and second cycles, however, the content of assignments, their complexity and expression of the student's independence are different".

The Assessment of progress is laid out for the general cycle and not for individual subjects.

Organization of students' individual work and evaluation are described together with the first cycle.

Further opportunities for graduates to pursue studies are not described which is problematic regarding the somewhat undefined identity of the cycle that may or may not prepare students for higher research levels of artistic or theoretical studies.

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

<u>*The First Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

The conditions and services ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs are described at page 45 of SER. Those largely cover the financial support available for prospective students which is outlined in detail.

Support for students with disabilities is not well documented and appears to be mostly describing writing supports. "Support for students with disability, i.e., the support for students who are established with 45 percent and lower working capacity".

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The HEI sufficiently supports and accommodates the financial needs of socially vulnerable groups which are especially important with the Lithuanian, somewhat unique, system of tuition. There are several possibilities, mostly offered by the State Studies Foundation.

There is little information about support and conditions for disabled or impaired students, beyond the statement: "The Academy participates in the project implemented by the State Studies Foundation for students with disability Increasing Accessibility of Studies as a partner".

While it is understandable that some disabilities could potentially be a barrier to enrolment in certain specialisations this does not apply to each disability / specialisation combination. In the meetings with the leadership of the HEI expert panel was informed about the problems of the old infrastructure which will be solved when obtaining the proposed new Academy building.

While this is understandable, the time of relocation is not fixed and the leadership needs to assess the current situation and do what is possible to remedy the current material limitations.

There is no reason why a mobility impaired person could not work as an editor or a writer, a hearing-impaired person as a cinematographer and so on.

LMTA is a small and a close-knit institution and the support for the occasional and disabled or impaired students might happen on a personal level due to the accommodation of academic and administrative staff. However, there needs to be a formal minimal system in place that will provide information to prospective students and allocate a responsible person for such matters.

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The conditions and services ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs for the second cycle are not evaluated separately and mirror the first cycle.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The situation in the second cycle fully mirrors the first cycle.

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.

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

Matters related to monitoring of student progress and feedback are laid out on page 46 of the SER. However the panel felt that this information is somewhat limited.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The area is described in descriptive language and does not refer to documents about formal procedures. The progress and grading are not formally structured nor weighted according to different learning methods and assignments.

Consequently, there is no electronic index or other easily accessible file that would allow the tracking of structured progress grades and feedback. There is no regulation about documenting the assessments, feedback and valuation.

The assessment evaluation is therefore explained anecdotally and shows no traces of formal systematic nature, planning or promotion of self-assessment.

In the meeting with the LMTA leadership expert panel was informed that a change in electronic student supports is taking place.

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

The First Cycle

(1) Factual situation

Information on employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field begins with page 46 of the SER.

It includes a table of the number of graduates for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019, however there is no data presented here about their consequential employment status.

The description in the SER links to the web page of the Employment Service, however only to their landing page not to a document with relevant data.

In the SER the following information is stated: "According to the Employment Service, in the reporting period, 14 graduates in the field of Film and Theatre were registered with the Employment Service, and 4 out of them were employed according to the acquired qualification level." (p. 47).

The SER mentions career tracking by LMTA Career and Competence Centre, however there is no data displaying this tracking results; the panel is of the view that this information is largely anecdotal and descriptive.

In the reporting period, no formal surveys of graduates and employers were carried out.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Information on employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the first cycle study field is not fully provided and largely anecdotal and descriptive.

Basic formal data is collected from the Employment Service and shows a largely typical precarious situation of the creative labour force.

In the reporting period, no formal surveys of graduates and employers were carried out.

The expert panel is aware of the nature of LMTA and industry in a small country such as Lithuania. It is common that many graduates and academies staff will stay deliberately or informally connected after the graduation and this appears to happen in the Film field studies area.

In the meeting with students, it is clear the students are very enthusiastic, motivated and show awareness about their employment prospects.

It would be very beneficial for LMTA to establish an own system with minimal bureaucratic load that would collect feedback and information about the employment of their graduates and allow them to adapt to future needs of the labour market.

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The factual situation of the second cycle is not evaluated separately and mirrors the first cycle.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

This area in the second cycle of the study is not assessed separately in the SER nor any other documents.

There is no data provided for the graduates of the second cycle. It is understandable the small number of students and the study programme does not require any statistics; however, an assessment of career opportunities would be especially valuable in the second cycle. Second cycle faces the challenge of finding its identity and therefore should include some kind of assessment about the employability of its graduates.

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

The First Cycle

(1) Factual situation

Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are documented on page 48 of SER. It refers to "Code of Academic Ethics" that is supposed to be "undertaken" by all members of the LMTA academic community and supervised by "Regulations of Activities of LMTA Ethics Committee."

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The principles and means to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are described in an anecdotal manner without providing any documents with exact procedures in place. Summarised anecdotal information on cases of violations is reported as 0.

Expert panel can only confirm none of the academic staff, not students of the first cycle, voiced any complaints. This however cannot substitute published documentation about formal procedures in place.

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The factual situation of the second cycle is not evaluated separately and mirrors the first cycle.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

This area in the second cycle of the study is not assessed separately in the SER nor any other documents.

The expert panel did receive a testimony about limited academic liberty and tolerance in the meeting with students of the second cycle. Such anonymous complaints to the expert panel emphasise the need for formal procedures, documentation and responsibilities. It appears the student did not feel solving this problem was possible inside the mechanisms provided by LMTA.

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

The First Cycle

(1) Factual situation

Procedures and rules for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies are described in SER (p. 49) and via a document "Descriptor of the Procedure for Submission and Consideration of Appeals Regarding Learning Outcomes at LMTA".

The document is supposed to be accessible at https://lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/LMTA_Procedure_of_the_submission_and_examining_of_appeals_against_learn_outc20151021.pdf however the link document has a different title "PROCEDURE OF THE SUBMISSION AND EXAMINING OF APPEALS AGAINST LEARNING OUTCOMES AT THE LITHUANIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE".

This document is not signed, dated nor stamped.

There is no evaluation of effectiveness of the procedure but an anecdotal testimony of a "teacher who did not work professionally enough was dismissed on the basis of students' complaint" was provided in the meeting with management.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is insufficient documentation and for the expert panel to fully assess the effectiveness of procedures that reports only one single complaint in the assessed period.

There is no documentation about this complaint. The validity of the document. "PROCEDURE OF THE SUBMISSION AND EXAMINING OF APPEALS AGAINST LEARNING OUTCOMES AT THE LITHUANIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE" is questionably as it is not dated, stamped and signed. Due to the small size of LMTA and apparent few complaints (1) the evaluation of the effectiveness is not systematically assessed. This dimension of the school allows many misunderstandings and conflicts to be arbitrated thus avoiding the need for further official escalation. However, as the assessment of the second cycle will demonstrate, this isn't good practice and cannot substitute for a clear, published and formal system of complaints and processes for their resolution.

The SER also states that appeals concerning the assessment of the final thesis are not allowed. This is not acceptable especially as the main practical creative projects substitutes the thesis. It amounts to not being able to appeal regarding the most important cycle of the study.

It might be unreasonable to expect a complex evaluation of the effectiveness in case of such a small institution and volume of complaints; however, basic accessible documents and procedures in place would greatly support students and the expert panel.

The Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

The factual situation of the second cycle is not evaluated separately and mirrors the first cycle.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

This area in the second cycle of the study is not assessed separately in the SER nor any other documents.

The expert panel did receive a complaint from one student during the session with the students of the second cycle. The student did not seem clear on how to make the complaint formal within LMTA. The panel did not feel it was appropriate to explore or deal with this students' issues, but is of the view that an effective system and procedure would lead to students having a better understanding of how to make a formal complaint in the case where it is felt an informal approach would not be the best route to take.

The leadership of LMTA should assess, formalize and publish these procedures.

Strengths and weaknesses / Areas for improvement of this evaluation area:

The First Cycle

(1) Strengths:
1. *Teaching and learning processes spontaneously adapt informally due to responsive academic staff and the small size of the institution.*
2. *Close ties in a small professional field allow for informal awareness of employability and career opportunities.*
3. *The size of the Academy allows arbitration and resolution of conflicts on a personal level avoiding the need for formal procedures.*

4. *Students testify to the agility and cooperation of academic staff to customize and adapt the processes which reduces the need for formal applications and procedures.*

The Second Cycle

Teaching and learning processes spontaneously adapt informally due to responsive academic staff and small size of the institution.

(2) Weaknesses / Areas for improvement: *None*

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

<u>*The First Cycle and the Second Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

In the Film Study field SER p. 25 teachers were listed in the list of teaching staff. The ratio between the number of students and the teaching staff in the study field varies between 6,15 and 9,31 in the years 2017 and 2019 respectively. In the year 2019, altogether 51 teachers were involved in teaching in the first and second cycles.

There are 23 and 17 teachers listed in the SER annex (n. 7) to teach on the first and second cycle respectively. 4 of teachers of each cycle are having a doctoral degree in science. 11 of the teachers of the first cycle and 10 of the second cycle are established artists according to the SER annex 7.

Only 4 teachers on the first cycle and 1 on the second cycle are having 3 years or less pedagogical experience, the rest are more experienced, some even more than 20 years, according to the SER Annex 7. The scale of the teaching experience according to the SER is: 22,7% are having 1-10 years of experience, 31,8% 11-20 years and 45,5% 30 years or more. The turnover of the teachers is guaranteed by evaluating their work in the Academy, and if the level is not sufficient they leave the Academy, according to the SER.

77 % of the teachers have 11 years or more practical experience. 57,89 % of the first and 87,5 % of the second cycle scope of the study field subjects are taught by the teachers who are established artists or researchers.

On the first and second cycle in 2019 27 of the teachers delivering the study field subjects for at least 3 years out of the 51 total were teaching at least 0,5 FTE. 47% of the study field subjects are taught by the teacher for less than 0,5 FTE, part-time teachers.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The number and qualification of the Film study field teachers meet the legal requirements. 50 % of the scope of the first cycle study field subjects and 80 % of the second cycle must be taught by scientists/researchers or established artists. Both requirements are met. The requirement for the second cycle of no less than 20 % of the study field subjects to be taught by professors is filled, the number being 40 in the study field. Most of the study field teachers are highly recognized artists in Lithuania and abroad. The quality of the teaching staff was very good with good representation of industry professionals who are highly regarded in Lithuania and abroad.

All the first and second cycle study field teachers are having practical work experience of more than 3 years, some having 40 years and more which is considered to be very good.

The teaching staff at the Film study field often teaches on both the first and second cycle. In the meeting with teaching staff the expert panel concluded that the teachers are highly motivated and deeply passionate in helping the students to find their own way to become artists. The communication between teachers and students is informal and close, and during the pandemic it was carried out through personal emails and even messenger chats.

The 27 teachers out of 51 teach 0,5 FTE, equaling almost 53%, which is sufficient. The number of part-time teachers enables the Academy to ensure the teaching to be in line with the contemporary working culture in industry.

The turnover of the teachers is on a solid, controlled level.

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

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

LMTA is a member of CILECT, the International Association of Film and Television Schools. The first and second cycle teachers participate in seminars and workshops provided by CILECT. In the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 the number of outgoing study field teachers were 13, 8 and 14. In the same years the incoming teachers' numbers were 14, 6 and 5 respectively.

The study field teachers are active in participating in CILECT courses and workshops for film school teachers. In the years 2016-2020 altogether 28 study field teachers took part in the workshops and seminars provided by CILECT or GEECT (The European branch in CILECT).

Teachers of LMTA Department of Film and Television participate in international conferences and deliver presentations, prepare publications as described in the SER (p. 26). Seven presentations were given by Film and Television department teachers in five various international conferences between 2015-2020.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Many CILECT and GEECT workshops deal with teaching issues. During the meeting with teachers the panel heard that many of the teaching staff actively participate in these forums and workshops.

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

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

In LMTA there is a possibility for teachers to take a "creative holiday" to update their competences in the Film field. In the years 2018-2019 four teachers have used this opportunity. The duration of their holidays varies from 6 up to 344 days. Teachers can prevail at workshops, events and conferences related to their teaching e.g. through the participation in those organised by CILECT of which the Department of Film and Television (hereafter referred to as Department) is a member. The panel was informed in the meetings with management and teaching staff that some training had been provided to staff during the pandemic, in the area of technical support and psychological support for the students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are some opportunities available for staff to upgrade their teaching competences particularly related to their artistic practice. However, none of the teachers appeared to be engaging with wider pedagogical training in order to improve their teaching. Some training had been provided for staff during the pandemic but this appeared to be technical training and advice on how to support students' psychological needs. LMTA recognizes this lack of inhouse teacher training as an area for improvement in SER (p. 57). The panel would recommend that LMTA arranges comprehensive art pedagogic packages for teachers to attend, together with other higher art education institutes.

Most of the teachers are active artists in industry, many of them teach only part time. Four teachers the panel met had used the opportunity to update their competences in the Film study field. In the meeting with the staff the panel was convinced that the teachers are very competent in their areas of specialities, and well connected to the production cultures in Lithuania and abroad, many were active in film production. The examples the teachers brought up of their methods and the for example the equipments they taught the students to use in their profession ensured the panel of the good connection between the Department and the contemporary industry in the Film study field.

Strengths and weaknesses / Areas for improvement of this evaluation area:

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Strengths:
1. *Highly motivated and qualified teachers, many of whom are recognised artists;*
2. *The number of teachers and the variation of the competences of the teaching staff, as well as the level artistic competences among the teachers in the Film study field subjects are high enough to ensure the very good level of learning.*

(2) Weaknesses / Areas for improvement: 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

<u>*The First Cycle and the Second Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

LMTA has a range of physical resources in place to support learning in the Film field study area. The main buildings for the study field operations are on T. Kosciuskos str. in Vilnius. In these premises there are rooms for video and sound editing, a small shooting pavilion, a photo studio, a cinema, a colour correction classroom and a preview hall; Sobles Film Club.

The Department is participating in the project *Increasing Accessibility of Studies*, which improves the accessibility of studies for persons with disability and special needs. LMTA is having a mobile starlift and a braille printer in use in case of a need.

There is some filming equipment available in the department. Red Scarlet and Panasonic EVA1 are the cameras (one each), and one Sony PMW-300K1. Sound device equipment is used for on sets recording. Arrilites and KinoFlows are available among others in the lightning

equipment. For the production equipment of the films the department also uses a lot of rental houses (Arclights, Cinevera, Cinskope rental, Kinolab, Prorent) and other facilities provided by the external partners like AMII Inkubatorius. Also, professional casting agencies are used.

Some post production facilities are available in the Department. For use of the colour correction there are DaVinci Resolve software licences as well as BlackMagic DaVinci Resolve advanced colour correction panel. Avid media composer is also used for editing.

The Department has a procedure which ensures the safe use of equipment. For the rented equipment, the rental house provides the regulations according to which the students are allowed to use the equipment and students are trained in the use of this equipment. Sometimes (e.g., with cranes) additional professional staff are utilised to assist students.

For the coordination of the production of films produced in the Department, the Department has created a structure, or a subdivision, named the Film and Television Studio. In the meeting with the teaching staff the panel was told that it consists of two persons working in the Department. This Studio coordinates the use and the availability of the facilities and equipment and contacts the external facility providers for booking.

In the additional papers (Additional material_2021 04 21.pdf) the Department delivered to the panel, the Department states that the funding from the government to the first and second cycle study programmes is limited due to the lower tuition fee compared to the other Academy departments. The Film student's tuition fee is EUR 4664, which is significantly lower than for example Music studies fee EUR 7608. According to the SER and additional information this has a significant impact on the resources.

LMTA has concluded an agreement with Lithuanian Film Centre (LFC), accordingly LFC supports the production of the students' graduation films. For graduation films LFC allocates a maximum EUR 5.000 each, according to the budgets and LMTA's own financing. In 2020 the total financing for the graduation films from LFC was EUR 84.431.

The library in the LMTA contains over 1100 books related to film and media and around 1000 DVDs. Also, more than 1000 student films are available. The LMTA has access to 19 licenced electronic databases. According to the meeting with the student they were aware of the access.

All the facilities and equipment are used for both first cycle and second cycle studies.

The panel was told in the meeting with the staff in department regarding the facilities and resources that the department has an arrangement in place with a cinema theatre in Vilnius, which allows the student to see films with a greatly reduced price.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The suitability and adequacy of the physical resources is good. According to the SER the equipment in the Department is of good quality. The arrangement with rental houses is particularly good, and during the site visit the panel was told by the teachers and the stakeholders that the availability of the rented equipment is on a good level. The renting also reduces the need for storage room at the Department and the requirement staff to manage the letting and returning of the equipment as well as maintenance.

The small preview hall; Sobles Film Club and small shooting pavilion are of modest quality.

Exceptionally good is the arrangement with LFC, which obviously raises the quality of the graduation films. This has an enormous impact on the future internationalization of the graduates.

The panel was told in the site visit in the meeting regarding the facilities and resources that the teaching of tv-productions (multi camera etc) is done in connection with the national broadcaster (Lithuanian Television). This arrangement is good, and it enables the Department to ensure that the teaching is meeting the needs of the television. However, in the case of a change in the policy in the television there may be a risk. The modern tv-studio equipment is expensive and thus in most of the national film schools in the world there is the same kind of arrangement for teaching the tv-production, if any.

The LMTA library collection of films, DVDs and videos is fairly limited in quantity. During the site visit in the meeting regarding the facilities the expert panel was told that the National Film Archive in Lithuania does not actively let students view their collections, if available. Most of the film copies from the Soviet era are still in Moscow, and thus part of the national history is missing.

This may diminish the opportunities for students to utilise a wide range of historical material, however this is out of control of the Department who is aware of the issue.

The expert panel recommends that the Department continues to seek collaborations with partners such as the National Film Archive. This would enhance the possibilities for the students, the teachers, and the researchers to view and use the films as part of teaching and research.

The intake of the first cycle students has risen in the recent year. In 2017 the intake was 8, 2018 18 and 2019 26 new students. This has led to the situation that the number of the students in some of the facilities, for example the small viewing hall and the photographic studio outnumbered the capacity of the facilities. If the intake will stay on the recent level a solution for this issue is suggested to be found. The –second cycle students confirmed that due to the lower number of students in the second cycle they gain more attention from the teachers compared to the first cycle.

The premises on the T. Kosciuskos str. are on multi-storey levels, and there is no elevator. The lack of access to those with mobility issues was identified as an area for improvement by the academy in the SER p.63 and the panel noted these limitations.

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

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

LMTA allocated resources for the departments for upgrading the facilities. According to the additional material the Department delivered to the panel the allocated funds for the Department in the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 were EUR 4.980, 30.140 and 21.380 respectively. These funds were used for acquisition of fixed tangible and intangible assets as well as current assets.

LMTA has acquired new premises for teaching in the "Former War Museum" building on Olandu str. 21. The new campus will improve the teaching facilities significantly. The Department already has access to these old premises and uses those as additional spaces for study tasks. In general, these buildings are not widely used at the current time. The buildings are to be renovated. The Department has participated closely in the design of the new premises.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The range and quality of the premises available are generally good.

The Department had a plan for updating the facilities, but this seemed to be more in the manner of an informal knowledge among Department staff than a clear and written strategy.

It is suggested that a clear strategy for the equipment and facilities in the Department is drafted, and communicated to the stakeholders, to better correlate their investment strategies to the Department.

The renting of the equipment enables the staff to use the latest technology and updated equipment in their teaching without investing in it themselves.

If the research activities in the Department increase, the Department may consider establishing a research strategy, upon which the possible updating of the facilities can be synchronized.

If the deployment of the new facilities will be delayed a plan for upgrading the facilities to include access for people with mobility challenges is suggested to be developed.

Strengths and weaknesses / Areas for improvement of this evaluation area:

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Strengths:
1. *The arrangement with the Lithuanian Film Centre is exceptionally good.*
2. *A close and working relationship with the rental houses and external facility providers is in place and supports learning.*
3. *The rental strategy of the department helps to avoid the need for maintenance and staff time in managing equipment.*

(1) Weaknesses / Areas for improvement: None

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

<u>*The First and the Second Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

LMTA defines quality assurance as the ability to meet expectations associated with the Academy, as well as individual and public needs (Quality Manual p. 4). The Academy also states that the LMTA management is committed to implementing an internal quality assurance system which is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, as well as to continuous improvement of its effectiveness (Quality Manual p. 4). The procedure for regular monitoring and periodic review of the first and second cycle study programmes delivered by the Academy is governed by the LMTA Regulation on Studies, and the LMTA Regulations on Study Programme Committees (Quality Manual p. 21).

The internal and external assessment system of quality within the programmes is described in a number of quality policy documents e.g. Regulation of Study programmes and in the Quality Manual, both of which are published and available on the LMTA website. There is a set of policies available on the website which describes the admissions processes, recognition of prior learning and recognition of qualifications and assessment appeals processes.

With regard to ownership of internal quality processes related to studies, documentation identified that the overall responsibility for quality lies with the Vice Rector for Studies and that this responsibility includes the organisation of the cyclical quality review of the study programmes delivered (Table 1 Quality Manual). The panel was also informed by the management that self-evaluation of the study fields, study cycles, the production of self-evaluation reports of the Academy, visits by external review experts are all coordinated by the Quality Management Office. Responsibility for the Internal Quality Assurance System and its Elements lies with the Head of the Quality Management Office who is responsible for the preparation, review, update and publication of the Quality Manual (SER p. 112).

Depending on their position, members of the Academy community are in charge of continuous improvement of the internal system for quality assurance in art, research activity and higher education and the overall development of quality culture in the Academy (SER p. 6). In meetings with management and teaching staff and in the Quality Manual the panel was informed that teachers are responsible for the quality of their own study programme (Quality Manual p. 5). According to the Quality Manual study programmes are evaluated every two years and changes are approved and implemented by the Study Programme Committees and ultimately the Senate.

In relation to the internal quality assurance committees and bodies the Quality Manual states that Study Programme Committees are in place and are responsible for the quality assurance of the content of study programmes, the compliance of the content of study programmes with the needs of students and labour/art market, as well as with the provisions of the policy of studies of the Academy.

The processes of design and approval of study programmes at LMTA are described in the Regulations of Study Programmes which are available on the LMTA website.

With regard to the quality of teaching staff there are clear regulations in place for the qualifications of staff appointed. Teachers are appointed for 5 years and accredited after five years following a review (Quality Manual p 17). Staff development is provided for staff which is said to include opportunities to improve research, creative or pedagogical qualifications (SER p. 56). The panel was informed by management and staff that opportunities for study visits abroad are offered to staff.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on the analysis the panel found that LMTA has many aspects of a good system of internal quality assurance in place. Students and external stakeholders were of the view that the quality of the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes and the teaching staff is very good. Students and alumni commented on the calibre of staff and their strong reputation in the Lithuanian film industry.

In terms of internal quality assurance procedures, policy documents and processes are in place and are published on the LMTA website including a comprehensive Quality Manual. There are clear procedures around new study programme development and review of study programmes. Some staff that the panel met did understand the quality system and the role of individuals and offices within it; others appeared less sure of who had responsibility for which areas. In some cases, the informal approach appears to be more in use by teaching staff, e.g. the students tell us what they like or don't like and we change it. Staff were aware of the production of a yearly improvement plan but could not articulate the connection of this to the SER. Staff the panel met had not been involved in writing or consultation on the SER but had received it for review a week prior to the panel visit. The panel found a disconnection between the SER and the normal range of quality assurance documents e.g. the yearly plan.

Staff did not seem to see a connection between the two documents. The panel was informed that the SER would be widely available and distributed.

In terms of staff development to improve quality across the programmes many of the teaching staff the panel met had undergone some training in their subject areas, some through sessions organised by CILECT of which LMTA is a member. These had proven very useful to staff but the panel found little evidence of a formal system of pedagogical training to improve the quality of teaching. The meeting with teachers did confirm that over the pandemic period, staff had been given technical training and training on psychological aspects to support students and this training was well regarded.

With regard to quality benchmarking LMTA is the only film school in Lithuania and the panel supported its aspirations to become more international and to improve its mobility (SER p. 60). The panel asked the management and teachers about formal benchmarking with other national film schools in order to identify and share good practice but were not given any evidence that this is in place other than on an ad hoc informal basis.

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

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

According to the meetings with management and the SER team, the panel was informed that the Academy involves students and external stakeholders e.g. industry professionals, in quality assurance in a number of areas, including informal and formal. The Academy aims to ensure that participation of students in the quality enhancement process is not limited to formal decision-making but a range of informal processes. In terms of informal processes, students can approach individual staff and programme management with their concerns or suggestions for improvement. The panel was also informed in meetings with students and teaching staff that there is an anonymous suggestions box where students can make suggestions for improvements or changes. Student surveys are carried out across the programme including opportunities to submit surveys anonymously.

The panel discussed the formal mechanisms for involving students in internal quality assurance in the meetings with management, staff students and alumni. Students are involved in Study Programme Committees according to the documentation. In terms of formal systems, the panel heard from the management and teaching staff and from the LMTA Quality Study Centre manager that several student involvement mechanisms exist. There is student representation on the Study Programme Committees and the Senate and the panel were informed that students had been involved in the SER working group.

The SER also stated and this was confirmed by management that the academy is considering becoming involved in the National Student Survey.

In terms of external industry stakeholder involvement, the panel was informed that again informal and formal mechanisms for feedback exist. Informal mechanisms include industry being encouraged to contact staff or management to give their opinions; the view was that the industry is small and most people are known to each other. Some industry staff are also teaching on the programmes and can give their feedback to Study Programme Committees of coordinators. The panel was told by the industry representatives that some of them also take graduates from the Film study field and can give informal feedback on their skills and on their progress and on necessary changes to the programmes. This was stated as being due to the fact that the film community in Lithuania is small.

In terms of formal industry feedback, the panel was informed that industry was represented on the SER working group although the panel did not meet any of these stakeholders during the visit. The SER also mentions a survey of LMTA graduates and their employers which is governed by the Descriptor of the Procedure for LMTA Survey Organisation. However, in the period covered in the SER report, (SER p. 77) it is stated that no formal surveys of graduates and employers were carried out. Representatives of the film industry are invited to take part in the previews of students' final projects and express their opinion.

In the meetings with students the panel asked about the processes for making a complaint. The panel were informed that there was a formal policy in place for assessment appeals, other complaints appeared to be dealt with on an informal basis. A search of the LMTA policy documents and website did not find a formal complaints procedure other than the one on assessment appeals.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are a range of informal and formal mechanisms for student and industry feedback in place. The informal ones appear to work well. Students that the panel met appeared comfortable talking to their teachers and making suggestions for changes. In terms of informal the panel heard in the meetings with teachers, alumni and the current students that students can and do approach individual staff or with their concerns or suggestions for improvements. This is partly due to the small size of the student cohort across the programmes and also to the positive relationship students told the panel they have with staff.

The panel was given examples by the first cycle students of changes that had been made as a result of their suggestions, one of these involved a change to the content of a study programme, the other related to the need for psychological support services to be made available to students. The second cycle students the panel met also cited a change to the plans of the studios and a new Scriptwriting exercise as a result of their suggestions.

The panel asked students about their involvement in, or consultation regarding the SER. The student who was named as being on the SER working group told the panel that she only received the report a week prior to the panel visit and was not involved in writing any of it. She had, however, reviewed it and felt it was a good reflection of the Department.

The panel asked students about their involvement in Study Programme Committees or Senate. None of the students that the panel met were members of the Study Programme Committee. Only two of the first cycle students the panel met knew who their representatives on that committee were and none of the second cycle students.

The panel asked students about the process for making complaints, processes related to complaints related to assessment are on the website and students were aware of these, there appeared to be no formal processes in place for making formal complaints e.g. regarding the quality or behaviour of teachers. A search of the LMTA website also brought up no complaint procedures; it was not clear that students knew how to make informal complaints and the panel was told that most complaints could be dealt with informally but the panel felt this may be problematic in the case of difficult or serious complaints or issues.

With regard to industry involvement in quality assurance, the panel found that again some informal and formal processes are in place. In terms of stakeholders involvement in the SER, the panel did not meet the stakeholders as cited as being in the SER group so could not verify the extent of their involvement.

Informal meetings and feedback were mentioned in the SER but again the industry representatives then panel met only had the report one week in advance. Some

representatives taught at the Academy and were able to give feedback and were able to give examples of changes.

Some of the Alumni the panel met had informal contacts with the Department and again were able to give feedback but there is a lack of a more formal method of communication with alumni.

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

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Factual situation

Information on the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes in the Film study field area is available on the Academy website, there are a range of policy documents and material available about the study programmes. Some of the important material is published in Lithuanian and English. The Quality Manual and information on the Quality Centre and a range of quality policies and processes is available on the website. There is information available on how study programmes are evaluated and quality assured. LMTA collects and/or makes publicly available data on the delivery of the studies in the field concerned including The Descriptor of the Programme Profile containing information about admission requirements, learning outcomes, qualifications acquired, etc.

There is a good range of information on studies for international students including advice on accommodation and qualifications. Current students wishing to undertake exchanges or Erasmus programmes can also find the information on the LMTA website. Information on scholarships and possible funding sources is available for students and is informative. With regard to alumni the study programmes monitor graduates' employment through the Career and Competence Centre.

There is limited information available on the website with regard to the range of student supports available. There is little information for prospective students with disabilities or learning difficulties e.g. Dyslexia. The SER notes that not many students with disabilities are interested in the Film studies area but this may be that there is little information published on the website as to what supports, accommodations or facilities could be available. The SER p. 80 does raise the issue of access for students with reduced mobility as an issue to be addressed.

The SER states that student surveys are organised in accordance with the Descriptor of the Procedure for Organisation of Surveys at LMTA.

Successes of the study programme are celebrated on the website with information on staff and student works and exhibitions.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel found that a good range of information on the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes is available and published on the website on a range of topics from entry requirements to funding, this is helpful to prospective and existing students. There is some information available on supports for students but this is limited e.g. there is no information for a prospective student who is disabled or has a learning difficulty. This information would enable them to make an informed choice about the facilities available prior to applying to the Department.

There is some evidence of student surveys in place and being carried out although as the Academy notes in its SER they would benefit from more students participating in the surveys.

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.

<u>*The First Cycle and the Second Cycle*</u>

(1) Factual situation

LMTA states that students are the main participants of the study process and those most interested in the quality of studies. They are the first ones who help identify problems in the quality of studies and contribute to the search for solutions in cooperation with the teachers and LMTA administration. Student surveys are used as a means of gathering opinions. Students are notified about the surveys being carried out by email containing a link to the questionnaire of the survey. The panel was provided with the results of an LMTA overall survey and the results of the first cycle and the second cycle Film field study programmes. In general, however, the informal approach was cited as the one most used by the students. Students also have the opportunity to express their opinion about study programmes outside of the formal survey period and provide observations about the processes taking place in the Academy by means of a questionnaire available at the LMTA website.

The SER gives an example of where student feedback had recently been responded to with regard to the Covid 19 pandemic. In Spring 2020 students provided their observations and suggestions to the LMTA Senate with regard to the final assessment. Having considered students' opinion, among other things, the Senate approved several resolutions on the organisation of the final assessment and made a number of documented changes.

Students were aware of the student surveys and some had completed them but some had not. In general, the informal approach was cited as the one most used by the students. The panel note that the Department has identified better use of student surveys and improvements in this area as an area for improvement (SER p. 119).

The panel notes the Department's and the Academy's intention to become involved in the National Student Survey and would support this as a way of potentially involving more student's participation on a formal level.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Student surveys are used although as stated above the students the panel met were of the view that they mostly used informal feedback directly to their staff. This is a result of the good relationships students said they had with staff. This may prove problematic however if student numbers grow, or for individual students who may not have the confidence to approach the staff member with sensitive issues or negative feedback.

The panel noted that the Department has identified better use of student surveys and improvements in this area as an area for improvement. (SER p.119) The panel notes the Department and the Academy's intention to become involved in the National Student Survey and would support this as a way of potentially involving more students' participation on a formal level.

There is evidence of changes made in response to the feedback from students and a specific example with regard to Covid 19 and assessment (SER p.118). The student survey data the panel was provided with shows that students on the first cycle and the second cycle Film field study programmes have positive feedback, e.g. 76 % of them rated their study programme as "Good" or "Very Good" with only 3 % saying they were dissatisfied. When asked if they would recommend the study programme to a friend 81 % said "yes" and only 3 % said "no", 14 % had no answer. The figures are good and compare favourably with other study programmes across LMTA according to the data the panel received during the site visit.

Strengths and weaknesses / Areas for improvement of this evaluation area:

The First Cycle and the Second Cycle

(1) Strengths:
There is a comprehensive set of quality policies and procedures in place and these are readily available e.g. on the website.

(2) Weaknesses /Areas for improvement: None

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS*

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	**The First Cycle** • Subject specific and specialisation learning outcomes would benefit from a clearly and individually defined comprehensive course catalogue and avoidance of generic definitions. • A specialisation dedicated to computer generated imagery and advanced post production methods would benefit the completeness of the study programme. • A clear action plan with regard to internationalisation and strategic future development would enable a better understanding of the HEI vision. • The specification of assessment methods, teaching mode and grade weighting by subject would enable a better understanding of the study for prospective students and experts. • A minimum artistic research and reflection accompanying the practical projects would greatly enhance the students understanding of their own artistic decisions and enforce the possibility for further academic research. **The Second Cycle** • Documentation of subject-specific learning outcomes would greatly aid the understanding of the programme. • The relationship and connection between practice and research could be better outlined. • Introducing additional formal and structured opportunities for personalisation of the programme is a fundamental opportunity for improvement. • Research, particularly in relation to the MA, would greatly benefit from a clearer focus, more distinctive strategy and planning and support.
Links between science (art) and studies	**The First Cycle and The Second Cycle** • More support is recommended for students' diploma films to enable them to enter major international film festivals. **The Second Cycle** • More encouragement and practical support for the second cycle students' final research theses should be provided including developing opportunities to publish the works on databases.

Student admission and support	**The First Cycle and The Second Cycle** • The provision of more possibilities and supports to enable students from abroad to study in the Academy would help to increase student mobility. • Whilst student progress is tracked by lecturers on a modular basis and students are informed of this, a more formal on-line student progress tracking system to track overall progress would be useful. • It would be helpful to provide more information for prospective students on the entry examination tasks criteria.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	**The First Cycle and The Second Cycle** • Documentation in place regarding assistance and accommodation available for disabled or impaired students would be helpful. • A more systematic and published formal procedure for the submission of formal complaints would support students in the case of sensitive or difficult issues. • Precise subjects' catalogue will greatly enhance the understanding of the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes.
Teaching staff	**The First Cycle and The Second Cycle** • Development of a formal system of pedagogical training for staff in order to improve teaching quality would be helpful. • A plan to improve the international mobility of teachers after the pandemic would help grow international mobility.
Learning facilities and resources	**The First Cycle and The Second Cycle** • The video library is modest and an investment in more materials is suggested. • The situation regarding limited access to the national archive is challenging and is suggested to be addressed. • A clear updating strategy for facilities and equipment is suggested to be developed. • Some of the premises e.g., the Multi-floor premises on T. Kosciuskos str. are not accessible to students with mobility problems, a short-term plan to improve these buildings pending new premises completion is recommended to be developed.
Study quality management and public information	**The First Cycle and The Second Cycle** • Further and deeper involvement of students in any future SER exercises rather than being involved late in the process would benefit the institution in future evaluations. • While some student participation in formal surveys does take place, this area would benefit from consideration of ways to encourage more students to undertake the surveys. • Industry stakeholders and alumni are involved in QA processes and planning on a largely informal basis. LMTA

	would benefit from a more formal system of stakeholder engagement being in place.
	• The field studies area would benefit from the development of a more formal system of benchmarking internationally with identified best practice institutions.

*If the study field is going to be given negative evaluation (non-accreditation) instead of RECOMMENDATIONS main **arguments for negative evaluation** (non-accreditation) must be provided together with a **list of "must do" actions** in order to assure that students admitted before study field's non-accreditation will gain knowledge and skills at least on minimum level.

V. SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the findings of the expert panel based on the Self-Evaluation Reports (SER) and the interviews with the Academy administration (senior management and faculty administration staff), staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff and stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, social partners). The evaluation team gives a positive evaluation to the implementation of study field Film the First Cycle and the Second Cycle at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre with all areas of evaluation assessed as satisfactory, good or very good.

INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

The panel found that there is a clear awareness of the Academy's mission and ambitious vision within the Film field studies area. The panel found that the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes across the Film field studies area are strong and are closely linked to the national professional film landscape. The curriculum is well structured and clear. There is a very good clearly vertically and horizontally structured curriculum across all specialisations and there is very good responsiveness to industry needs both locally and nationally. There is a very good emphasis on practical skills and professional competencies which were highly valued by students and alumni. The high quality and collaborative nature of the final projects is commendable. Flexible and interactive approaches to learning and artistic mentorship that value the heritage of traditional art education are in place There are close links across the departments of LMTA and other national Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

Whilst the panel noted that the Film field studies area has good intentions and some good practice around internationalisation, this is often informal and based on personal and other contacts. A clear action plan or formal analysis with regard to the vision of internationalisation would enable the field studies area to develop more coherently. Within the second cycle study programme the panel found that there were less opportunities for personalisation of the curriculum than exists at the first cycle. The panel found that research needs to be further developed in the Film field studies area and that the relationship of practice and research is not well established and connected.

LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

The Film field studies area has a range of partners in place to enable good links between Art and studies. The panel found that there are good opportunities for students to make links with major events and festivals although some of these need to be more international and more big name festivals. More support is needed for students' the first cycle and the second cycle diploma films to enable them to enter major international film festivals. Students have good accessibility to equipment and to other student cohorts for collaborations and are supported by staff in this area.

STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

The panel found that there are some good supports in place for students. Admissions processes are generally clear and are well organized and easily comprehensible for prospective Academy's students. Although the panel did note that there is a lack of information on entry examination tasks criteria. There is a good and effective range of financial and personal support in place for the students. Staff provides good support and advice and offer links and contacts to students to enable them to complete their studies.

In terms of areas for improvement the panel did note that there is a lack of possibilities for students from abroad to study in the Academy. There is also a lack of a formal on-line

studying process tracking system which would help staff and students to track learners' individual progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

There is good evidence of strong teaching and learning in the field studies area. Teaching and learning processes are generally good and adapt informally due to the very responsive academic staff and the small size of the institution. Good financial assistance and support for socially deprivileged groups is in place.

Close ties in a small professional field allow for informal awareness of employability and career opportunities. Students commented favourable on the agility and cooperation of academic staff to customize and adapt the processes which reduces the need for over bureaucratic formal applications and procedures

The panel noted some areas of improvement in relation to the need for a course catalogue and some missing documentation, e.g., around support for disabled students to enable prospective students to better understand the Film field studies are and the supports available.

Whilst the panel noted that students' views were sought and students' issues dealt with on a largely informal basis the panel felt that there was room for improvement in relation to procedures for students to make formal complaints which would be helpful in more serious or sensitive cases.

TEACHING STAFF

The quality qualifications, enthusiasm and commitment of the teaching staff is very good. There are highly motivated and qualified teachers, many of whom are recognised artists; Staff provides good support to students and is genuinely helpful in enabling them to make contact professionally. Processes are in place for the recruitment of staff.

Whilst the staff have benefited from staff development related to their subject area and many have benefited from training and other events offered through membership of Association of Film and Television Schools (CILECT) the panel notes that most staff have not had training in pedagogical studies to improve their teaching.

The international mobility of teachers is somewhat limited and this is an area that is noted for improvement.

LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

The Film field studies area has a good range of learning facilities and resources in place to support learning. A close and working relationship with the rental houses and external facility providers is in place and supports learning and the arrangement with the Lithuanian Film Centre is exceptionally good. The rental strategy of the department helps to avoid the need for maintenance and staff time in managing equipment. Training in the use of equipment is good.

Students have good access to equipment and to technical support and seemed genuinely happy with the resources available. In terms of areas for improvement the video library is modest and needs investment in more materials. The situation with the national archive is challenging and needs to be addressed although this problem is not completely within the capabilities of the academy to solve. Premises are generally good although a clear updating strategy for facilities and equipment would be helpful.

Whilst there is a clear plan for the refurbishment of a new building which will add significantly to the footprint some of the premises e.g. the multi-floor premises on T. Kosciuskos str. are not accessible to students with mobility problems.

STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Film field studies area has some good quality assurance systems and procedures in place. A Quality management Centre that coordinates quality across the programmes is in place and seems to work well. There is a comprehensive set of quality policies and procedures in place and these are readily available e.g. on the website. The quality of the teaching staff was very good with good representation of industry professionals who are highly regarded in Lithuania and abroad. The quality of the first cycle study programme is good, its structure and learning outcomes are clear appropriate and well understood by staff and students.

In terms of the SER document there were some areas for improvement e.g., the Quality section in the report referred the reader to a set of policies and documents rather than outlining, albeit briefly, the quality processes in place in the Department.

Student and stakeholder involvement in the SER working group appeared to be limited to reading and commenting on a finished draft rather than being actively involved in the process. Whilst there were some examples of student surveys and feedback mechanisms, student participation in formal surveys would benefit from more encouragement for students to complete surveys. There are some good international links including membership of CILECT but then Film field studies area would benefit from the development of a more formal system of benchmarking internationally with identified best practice institutions.

The panel notes that students have good relationships with individual staff and can approach them with complaints and issues. However, this has limitations and the panel recommend that a more formal system of student complaints would be helpful as this informal approach may prove difficult in the case of more serious complaints. Whilst there are good opportunities for individual staff to partake in international conferences and events there is a lack of in-house pedagogical training and a development plan for staff would help improve the quality of the first cycle and the second cycle study programmes.

Expert panel signature:

Dr. Annie Doona (panel chairperson)