



CENTER FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDY FIELD OVERVIEW REPORT

Rehabilitation

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the external quality evaluation of the *Rehabilitation* study field in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): *Alytus College/University of Applied Sciences, Kaunas University of Applied Sciences, Kaunas Lithuanian Sports University; Kaunas Lithuanian University of Health Sciences; Klaipėdos valstybinė kolegija/State University of Applied Sciences; Klaipėda University, Panevėžio kolegija/University of Applied Sciences, Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija/State University of Applied Sciences, Utenos kolegija/University of Applied Sciences, Vilnius University of Applied Sciences, and Vilnius University.* (Seven colleges/Universities of Applied Sciences and four Universities. s)The external evaluation was organised by the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC).

Comprehensive external evaluation reports including strengths and weaknesses with recommendations were prepared for the Rehabilitation study field in each evaluated HEI (separately for first and second cycle) and evaluation marks were presented. This overview focuses on the main findings of the external evaluation of the Rehabilitation study field.

Based on the findings of the Rehabilitation study field evaluation, the three expert panels have come to a decision to give positive evaluation to all 11 evaluated HEIs.

II. STUDY FIELD OVERVIEW BY EVALUATION AREAS

Overall observations by the expert panel regarding the most positive aspects of the study field of Rehabilitation in Lithuanian HEIs, as well as areas in need of improvement.

The Lithuanian HEIs offering study programmes in the rehabilitation study field are appropriate and meet the statutory requirements required for such institutions to cover teaching, learning, research, and transfer of skills and acquisition of competences. The HEIs provide student-centred learning activities with students having opportunities to communicate well for learning theory and practice, and to collaborate on research with their teachers. Nevertheless, there are differences between Colleges/Universities across the regions in Lithuania, in terms of their focus areas of rehabilitation, and resources - human, building infrastructure, research facilities, library facilities and sports facilities. Some institutions have managed to attract more funding than others. Lithuania being a small country, it is therefore recommended that there are inter-institutional collaborations in learning, practical placements, research and use of facilities that would enable students in the rehabilitation study field to acquire competences in an interdisciplinary way of working which would benefit them in their professional practice.

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

Curriculum design complies with the Lithuanian laws, statutory requirements and professional guidelines for the rehabilitation study field programmes. They refer to and comply with the national and European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) regulations and guidelines of the level of the learning outcomes, (Bachelor EQF6 and Master EQF7), content and volume in academic and internship studies. Assessment of the achievements of intended learning outcomes are in general aligned. Learning activities, teaching and assessment are diverse facilitating the learning of heterogeneous student cohorts.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

In general, the study programmes evaluated as part of the rehabilitation study field demonstrated links between science (art) and studies. Universities in particular are increasingly engaging in research activities that are resulting in publication in international peer reviewed impact factor journals in rehabilitation. The translation of research into practice, in particular the experimental designs, needs to be strengthened. The involvement of students in research projects with their tutors is evident - and this augurs well for research activities having a meaningful impact on the curriculum of programmes in the field of rehabilitation. It has been noted that some institutions, more than others, have invested heavily on building the infrastructure for teaching, learning and research. Our recommendation is for more collaboration opportunities to exist between the Colleges and Universities across Lithuania, as well as with other European Universities also in research activities in the rehabilitation study field.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

In general, all students are admitted to the programmes according to the standard procedures developed by the state and these are clear to follow. Colleges tend to lower the admission score (competition score) for study in state non-funded places that is lower than the state recommended admission score. Our recommendation is that this is closely monitored to ensure a good balance between upholding values of equity, diversity and inclusion with quality. The evaluation of the procedures of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning is sufficient. The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the academic mobility of students, and this was expected. Hopefully the situation will improve and we recommend that efforts be made to ensure that opportunities for mobility continue to exist and be encouraged.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

In general, the teaching and learning processes are sufficient to meet the needs of the students and the employers. We recommend that innovative and interactive teaching methods should be incorporated across the board, especially in the Colleges, to enable enhanced theoretical and practical application. In general, access to students with disabilities and/or from vulnerable groups is good. Finally, whilst graduates appear to find employment, it is important that they are employed in their field of qualification.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Number of teaching staff is generally high, many employed as part time teachers. Education, experience and speciality of the teachers is of good standard, most having at least a master degree in the subject area or education. Large portion of the teaching staff cohort being part time and the programme leaders being outside the profession may pose difficulties in developing the subject specific theory, research, profession and the programme. We recommend that the programme leaders of each programme are experts in the profession preferably with a doctoral degree and more full-time profession specific teachers are employed as far as possible.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

The Colleges and Universities that offer study programmes in the rehabilitation field have over the years invested considerable resources in teaching and learning facilities, as well as in research laboratories. Some institutions have also invested in state-of-the art library facilities - which through inter-University collaborations could be shared across the country.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Overall, we find that the internal quality assurance systems are effective, and involve the stakeholders (students and social partners) at all levels. In general feedback is recognised and suggestions for improvement are taken up.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

MAIN STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT IN REHABILITATION STUDY FIELD

1. Strategic recommendations at institutional level (for Higher Education Institutions):

1. Programmes should be led by profession specific teachers in order to develop the science, theory and practice in each professional area. This needs more support for teachers' continuing development and encouragement to continue doctoral studies and explore development outside Lithuania.
2. Collaboration between the rehabilitation field and other relevant programmes and professions inside the institution and between programmes in Lithuania should be strengthened and supported by the institution, to benefit and develop the professions and the whole rehabilitation field in Lithuania. Active involvement of the teachers in professional bodies and in the European and International association should be encouraged. The point 1 above would allow this in a more sustainable manner.
3. There should be more distinction in levels of learning outcomes, focus of study content, progression on independent and active learning from 1st to 2nd cycle (from EQF L6 to EQF L7).

2. Strategic recommendations at national level (for the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport):

1. The regulations are clear but perhaps too restrictive in determining the content of each study programme, more autonomy should be given to the HEI and the expert teacher cohort (see p 1.1.).
2. The dual system in Lithuania, Universities and Colleges could be clarified and utilised more for the benefit of the professions as well as other stakeholders. It became clear that the University programmes focus more on research and educate researchers in the rehabilitation field, as is the universities' mission globally. The Colleges focus more on the professional and practical aspects., which is also most important in the rehabilitation field.

The capital cities attract students from the whole country and the rural colleges are trying to attract students from their own region and for regional employment. Collaboration and exchange between the different colleges and universities would benefit all institutions by distributing and guiding the students' applications and also the students into the most suitable programme.

The above two points could be tuned even further for the purpose of each provider, and embraced for their slightly different missions. By working together and supporting each other in their specific missions, the programmes could be more attractive to their diverse student population, their diverse regions and thereby develop the professions in many wider areas than is possible, when all compete in the same market.

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