



## STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

### PANEVĖŽIO KOLEGIJA VEIKLOS VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT PANEVĖŽYS COLLEGE

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## I. INTRODUCTION

- 1 The review of Panevėžys College (referred to below as “the College”) was organised by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), Lithuania, in its role as the Authorized Agency prescribed by Lithuanian law. The review was conducted by an expert team in accordance with the prescribed methodology according to the Procedure for the External Review in Higher Education approved by Government Resolution No 1317 of 22 September, 2010.
- 2 The expert team consisted of: team leader Professor Dr. Jürgen Kohler (Germany); team members Professor Dr. Peadar Cremin (Ireland), Dr. Nijolė Zinkevičienė (Lithuania), employer representative Audronė Vareikytė (Lithuania); student representative Natalija Mušinskaja (Lithuania); review secretary Tony Platt (United Kingdom).
- 3 The College submitted a Self Assessment Report (SAR) with Annexes, and further documentation was provided or requested by the review team. The documentation is set out in Appendix 1. The review team visited the College from 26 – 28 March 2013 and conducted several meetings with the College. Thirteen meetings were held and the list of meetings is set out in Appendix 2.
- 4 The College’s SAR was made available in translation for the review team who met members of the Self-evaluation Group. Members of the Group described how the document was developed and compiled, with draft sections produced by members of the group and then considered by discussion groups organised across the College and amongst social partners. It was clear that the discussions had taken place in an atmosphere of openness. Formal and informal discussions and workshops were held with staff and students. The team considered that the report was at times unduly descriptive stressing primarily conformity with legal requirements but that overall the report showed comprehensive self-evaluation and a considerable degree of critical self-reflection, and provided an appropriate starting point for the team’s considerations.
- 5 In addition to the SAR, its annexes and further documentation which had been provided in advance of the visit, additional documentation was made available during the course of the visit.
- 6 The expert review team explored the four principal areas of the College’s activity as set out in the ‘Methodology for Conducting an Institutional Review in Higher Education’ (referred to below as “the Methodology”): strategic planning, academic studies and life-long learning, research and/or art activities, and impact on regional and national development. Within each area of activity the review team made appropriate reference to the criteria set out in the Methodology and took due account of the lists of sub-criteria in reaching their decision.
- 7 The College had set up a special group to consider the recommendations of the previous institutional review held in 2006. Some recommendations had become less relevant but the College had considered them in the course of its further development and had made steps towards implementing them. The College has, in fact, succeeded in the majority of cases, albeit to a varying degree. This applies particularly to initiatives to promote adult education, to develop internationalisation and to establish the Career Centre, the latter as part of an EU project.
- 8 During the review visit, the review team was given a tour of the facilities at the College, including the new Learning Practice Centre and the Faculty of Medicine and Social Sciences which, as far as the facilities for medicine-related activities is concerned, is about

to undergo extensive refurbishment. A presentation was made to the review team on the new Quality Management System (see paragraph 50).

- 9 The Team Leader made a final oral and explicitly provisional presentation on behalf of the Review Team at the conclusion of the Institutional Review to an open meeting of College staff led by the Director and attended by 42 members of staff.

## II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

- 10 Panevėžys College, in the northern-central region of Lithuania, was established in September 2002 when Panevėžys Higher Technical School, Panevėžys Andrius Domaševičius Higher Medical School, and Rokiškis Higher Pedagogical School were amalgamated as one higher education state institution. Subsequently, in 2004, Panevėžys Conservatory Pedagogy department was incorporated into the College.
- 11 The College has 12 buildings in Panevėžys, including student accommodation, and three buildings in Rokiškis (100km east of Panevėžys) and it has three faculties: Medicine and Social Sciences, Business and Technology and the branch at Rokiškis. Currently, there are 27 accredited college study programmes leading to professional bachelor's degrees in the social, technological, biomedical and art study areas. The College also provides a variety of life-long learning and other study programmes and courses, some of which lead to professional certification (see paragraph 8).
- 12 The supreme governing body of the College is the College Council and it is responsible for strategic planning and finance. The Academic Council which is responsible for all academic matters reports to it. The Director reports to the College Council and the Directorate comprises, in addition to the Director, a Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, a Deputy Director for Infrastructure, the deans of the faculties, the manager of the Rokiškis branch and a student representative, together with the recently-appointed Chancellor, who is responsible for administrative matters, including the financial management of the College. When necessary, an "extended directorate" meeting is called at the request of the Director to discuss significant issues. Other senior staff include the Head of Quality and Research Department (who is also the "Management Representative for Quality" which we understood to be a requirement of the ISO standard), Vice Deans of the faculties and the heads of departments and centres. The current Director, Dr. E. Žukauskas, was appointed in 2011.
- 13 As at October 2012, 1995 students were enrolled and 162 teachers were employed by the College, including some who are seconded from other higher education institutions; 103 teachers work at the College as their main workplace. Approximately a quarter of the students who are enrolled are over the age of 25.
- 14 Panevėžys College is thus a relatively young higher education institution and the documentation provided offers ample evidence of the extent to which it has been building its institutional documentation (vision, mission, statutes, strategic action plan etc.) in recent times. The team noted that the College in its self-assessment document, recognised that until very recently, it "had no formalized strategic planning system, policies and methods have been planned just for 1-2 years" and that "monitoring and results reporting has not been sufficiently effective". However, the College had established an Integrated Development Strategy (see paragraph 33) shortly before the arrival of the current Director.

- 15 The College portrayed its vision as “A modern, flexible, continuously learning, actively participating in the country’s life and based on democratic traditions and activity quality management principles organisation, the establishment of higher education giving opportunities to the self-expression of each member of the academic society, having gained the regional, national and international recognition”.
- 16 The College’s Mission is “To prepare the specialists of social, technology, biomedicine and art study directions acquiring a professional bachelor’s qualification degree, meeting the needs of the labour market of the Upper Lithuania Region and national labour market, able to work in the conditions of the knowledge society, to implement the principle of life-long learning making conditions to continuous learning and educating of personal skills; to develop and maintain the infrastructure of the college and professional competences of the employees thereof”.
- 17 The team met members of the recently re-constituted College Council and noted that although many members were therefore recent appointees but with extensive experience in other fields, they recognised the challenges which the College faced, not only in the economic and demographic situation in the country and the region, but in structuring the activities of the College to meet the situation and its demands more effectively.
- 18 The review team reflected on the role of the College Council and agreed that it was able to provide a valuable contribution to the College on account of members’ relationships with municipalities, social partners and the region generally. It felt that their contribution could be further enhanced by the provision of human resource development on their roles in relation to strategic development within the College.
- 19 **The review team recommends that a series of human resource development events on higher education policy and strategy be held for members of the College Council.**
- 20 Overall the review team acknowledged the significant amount of development work – both within the College and in association with its social partners – which has been carried out in addressing the challenges of amalgamation and coherence of mission against a difficult economic and demographic background. This report attempts to highlight areas in which development might now be taken forward for the benefit of the College and the region which it serves as well as for the benefit of Lithuania as a whole.
- 21 The review team formed the view that the College would benefit, at this stage, from further clarification – and systematisation as appropriate – of its vision and mission and its impact on study programmes and research activity, aspects of the organisational structure and the relevant supporting structures and processes, the roles of senior staff and the input of social partners (see recommendations in paragraphs 30, 39, 49, 86, 109 and 124).

### III. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

- 22 The review team explored the strategic management of Panevėžys College with reference to the criteria set out in the Methodology and considered the fitness for purpose of the College’s strategic plans (see paragraphs 31-39), arrangements for their publicity and availability to stakeholders and the public at large, guarantees for implementation, and management effectiveness. This included the reasonableness and comprehensiveness of the quantitative and qualitative indicators used in the development and monitoring of its strategic activities. It also considered the effectiveness of its quality assurance

arrangements, organisational structure and the management of its human and material resources and their funding.

- 23 The College's SAR provided an analysis of its strategic management. The review team studied this document in detail, together with materials which explained how the College introduced, implemented and monitored its strategic plans.
- 24 According to the self-evaluation report, all ten priorities for the European Higher Education Area development strategies are taken into account by developing and implementing study programmes including employability of graduates, mobility of students and teachers and student-centred learning. The team felt that this was an appropriate approach in the development of College's activities but that, taking into account the scarcity of resources and the difficult economic situation of the country, the College should define, implement and monitor very clear objectives in order to follow, in practical terms, all these well-defined priorities and subsequently to assess its achievement of these objectives. In addition, the College should consider more strongly that there are significant educational objectives beyond ensuring graduates' employability which, following statements of the Council of Europe, are part of the Bologna Process (cf. the London Communiqué 2007), cover issues such as personal development and education for democratic citizenship, not to mention maintaining and widening a broad knowledge base through research and research-based education.
- 25 In its Integrated Development Strategy (see paragraph 33) the College explains its vision in terms of being "*directed towards the elements and objectives important to Panevėžys College: flexibility, activeness, quality. The vision of the College emphasises the establishment's activities not only on the regional level, but also the attempts thereof on the national and international levels maintaining the democracy in consideration of the needs of the academic community*".
- 26 It describes the College's mission as highlighting "*the certain methodology and means of the establishment pursuing the priority areas of the vision. Panevėžys College emphasises the necessity of the interaction of practical and theoretical training, the significance of liability for the prepared specialists, the need to develop the educational, public role of the College. The mission specifies, which resources are subject to optimising and development in order to make a basis for smooth and even activities of the College and pursuing of the mission – these are the vocational competences of employees, the infrastructure of the college*".
- 27 The Review Team felt that both the vision and the mission are expressed in fairly broad terms and noted that the SAR did not specify how the College interprets these, in particular in relation to its study formats and the expected learning outcomes. From the documentation and from discussions with members of the College Council, staff of the College and representatives from the College's Social Partners, the review team noted the significant range of study programmes and research and other activities in the different departments and faculties which, in many cases, responded to individual specific concerns, interests, and needs.
- 28 However, the review team noted that this did not arise from a comprehensive over-arching strategy which brought together the various elements, e.g. the vision and mission leading to a group of study programmes whose learning outcomes reflected the role of the study programmes in the strategy in providing relevant skills and competences, supported by research and other activities related to and informing the study programmes.

- 29 The review team formed the view that the College would benefit from a review of its vision and mission and, in particular, linking together activities in the various faculties and departments as part of a comprehensive, coherent offer of study programmes which not only relate to the needs of the town and surrounding region but which, taken together, would also provide an attractive “niche” offer, both in terms of programmes and applied research, which could be marketed nationally and internationally.
- 30 **The review team recommends that the College reviews its vision and mission and, in particular, their implementation with a view to establishing a more coherent overarching focus for its study programmes and applied research which can then be marketed locally, nationally and internationally as its unique selling point.**
- 31 Panevėžys College is a relatively young higher education institution and the documentation provided offers ample evidence of the extent to which it has been building its institutional documentation (vision, mission, statutes, strategic action plan etc.) in recent times. The team noted that the College in its self-assessment document, recognised that until very recently, the College “had no formalized strategic planning system, policies and methods have been planned just for 1-2 years” and that “monitoring and results reporting has not been sufficiently effective”. However, the College had established an Integrated Development Strategy shortly before the arrival of the current Director. The review team commends both this element of self-critical appraisal and the College’s decisive steps taken to address this issue.
- 32 The SAR described the components of the College’s strategic planning: the Integrated Development Strategy (IDS), three year rolling strategic action plans and one year “strategic action plans” which are also described as activity plans and being essentially about implementation.
- 33 The IDS had been developed as a result of a joint project with other North Lithuanian State Colleges which had, as its brief “integrated strategies preparation, increasing public accountability and improving management systems” and that the project had involved a deep external and internal environment analysis and the development of strategic goals and objectives formed”. Arising from the project, a comprehensive Report was prepared and in April 2011, the College Council approved an “Integrated Development Strategy for 2011-2020”. The review team learned that the IDS had also been linked to the Municipality Strategic Plan and its proposals took into account proposed developments at the neighbouring Kaunas Technological Institute situated in Panevėžys. It also fed into the regional plan which was currently being developed.
- 34 The College already had in place a Strategic Plan (SP) for the period 2007-2011 and following the approval of the IDS, a so-called Strategic Action Plan (SAP) was prepared for 2012-2014 (following on from earlier short-term plans developed as part of the planning process since 2006). This was developed by a working group appointed by order of the Director in September 2011 and was approved by the College Council in February 2012. The team learned from discussions that the SAP was subsequently updated for the period 2013-2015 and that it was proposed to revise the SAP each year. The SP 2007-2011 and the SAP for 2012-2014 were made available to the team during the visit, together with a summary of the IDP. The team was also made aware of annual “implementation” plans which outlined the action to be taken in each year and saw copies of such plans for 2011 and 2012.

- 35 The review team noted that, apart from presenting a summary of the IDS, the SAR had made little reference to this document and had concentrated on the SP 2007-2011 and the SAP for 2012-2014. The team also felt that there was a lack of clarity in regard to the differences between the various components of strategic planning and it explored the relationship between these components with the Directorate and other senior staff. In particular, there should be stronger differentiation between strategic planning, which is largely concerned with identifying long-term objectives based on analyses of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on the one hand and definition of mission, vision and partners on the other hand, and developing meaningful action plans, which requires more specific description of concrete implementation processes, including definition not only of responsibilities but also of input factors, of communication structures, of timelines including setting of milestones to mark specific stages of accomplishment within change processes, and of outcomes which are measurable, if possible.
- 36 The team noted that the “Strategic Action Plan 2012-2014” originated with a Working Group formed by the Director, was discussed at a “Directorate’s expanded meeting” and was then brought before both the Academic Council and the College Council. It was not clear however to what extent an open democratic consultation process with the entirety of the academic community, with student representative bodies and with external stakeholders including funders and the public at large had taken place and also to what extent this approach had been followed in respect of the IDS and its relationship to the three-year and annual plans. The review team was conscious that it can take time to embed processes in the culture of an institution and that they are most unlikely to be achieved by diktat.
- 37 The role of the Department of Quality and Research in strategic planning was discussed. Although the College relied on monitoring by the Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA) to ensure that threshold standards in relation to capacity in terms of staff and material resources were achieved, increasing use was being made of the Department of Quality and Research to provide data from its monitoring of both study programmes and applied research.
- 38 The Review Team noted that there were measures to acquaint the community with the annual plans. The College annual report is discussed in the Academic Council and the College Council meetings and made public on the College’s website. Departmental annual activity reports are presented in meetings including student meetings. At least twice a year general college academic community meetings are organized during which performance analysis and the annual activity report are presented and evaluated performance of the College Strategic Action Plan implementation. The social partners are aware of the College Strategic Action Plan implementation in a variety of forms: preparing presentations to partner organizations (e.g. in 2012 activities of the College were presented to the members of Panevėžys of Industry, Trade and Crafts Chamber, Panevėžys General Education Schools Principals Association members), preparing partners’ meetings in College, organizing a round table discussion with education, business and industry representatives, providing information in the College's website.
- 39 In relation to the relevance of the procedures for monitoring the strategic plan implementation, the review team noted from the SAR that a systematic approach to the planning process, including monitoring and evaluation processes, had been approved by order of the Director in November 2012, although there is currently a heavy dependence on assessment through budgetary inputs (especially in relation to quantitative items) whilst some evaluation is conducted through sociological research. Tracking of progress on indicators of the Strategic Action Plans so far does not appear to be systematic, and the

team could not see how progress on some of the indicators could be followed through from year to year.

- 40 **The team recommends that the College considers**
- **making more explicit the relationship between the Integrated Development Strategy (IDS), the rolling three year strategic action plans and the one-year implementation plans, while making sure that action lines are defined in a sufficiently concrete mode;**
  - **the appropriateness of the nomenclature to format and describe (i) the three year plans as “strategic plans” and (ii) the one-year plans as “action plans” showing clearly at the beginning of the year the actions, responsibilities and targets for the year, and at the end of the year indicating the progress achieved against these targets;**
  - **enhancing the means of communicating the results of annual action plans and their effects on both the rolling plans and the IDS to the College body as well as to funders and stakeholders.**
- 41 With regard to guarantees for implementation of strategic planning, the team was mindful that the situation in higher education in Lithuania is changing rapidly and of the economic and demographic factors affecting the country and the region in particular and the team believed that the College was only too aware that it needed to be flexible in its planning and responsive to environmental changes. The development of an overall strategy rather than only responding to specific requests would help in this regard.
- 42 The review team found that Panevėžys College is relatively new to the process of Strategic Planning, has embarked on objective and timescale setting only in recent years and is in the process of setting indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, against which the plan may be assessed and the College is encouraged to further develop (evaluative items) and the procedures for monitoring the strategic plan implementation.
- 43 Nevertheless overall, in view of the fact that the College faces specific difficulties in its regional environment and that the College is a relatively young institution, the team felt that, in its meetings with staff and social partners and in reading the documentation, and subject to the recommendations being made by the team, there is considerable evidence that Panevėžys College is taking due account, in its strategic planning process, of the contextual factors that will impact on its strategic direction and that it is setting appropriate purposes, objectives and strategies to mitigate the negative impacts and to grasp the opportunities that are open to it while at the same time taking into account the resources, human and otherwise, necessary for achievement of its plan. The team is particularly impressed by the pace and ambition which the College has shown in recent years to address its institutional capacity and its preparedness for enhancing strategic planning, and the team views the progress made and the capacity to proceed in this field positively in principle, despite certain space for improvement at present, as indicated above.
- 44 In regard to the appropriateness of the changes in the organisational structure, the review team noted, from the SAR, that the College’s organisational structure has been changed three times (in 2007, 2009 and again in 2012) and the College has now identified its three core processes as addressing “studies, research activity and non-formal education”.
- 45 As noted above (paragraph 12), the senior management structure currently consists of a Directorate comprising the Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, the Deputy Director for

Infrastructure, the heads of the two faculties and Rokiškis branch, the newly-appointed Chancellor and a student representative.

- 46 The review team was mindful of the need to develop further the strategy and delivery of applied research in the College (see paragraph 109); the team heard that the Study Quality Department had recently been renamed the Quality and Research Department to reflect its extended remit and that the Head of Quality and Research reported directly to the Director.
- 47 In the course of the meetings, the team learned that the new post of Chancellor had been created and that the appointee was responsible for finance management and the optimisation of the financial resources, the management of the document flow as well as being the senior administrative responsible for all support activity. Management of the financial arrangements of the College had previously been the responsibility of the Chief Accountant who will report to the Chancellor.
- 48 The second Deputy Director was currently responsible for Infrastructure covering such areas as the IT Center, the hostel, the departments of Economy and Procurement and the Practical Training Centre. The team felt that the College might wish to take the opportunity to consider possible alternative structures, for example the creation of an administrative structure which would bring together these areas and the financial and administrative responsibilities of the Chancellor and Chief Accountant, together with personnel matters thus providing a coherent administrative structure for all the support roles and enabling the academic (i.e., teaching and learning), research and partnership responsibilities to be shared across the two deputy directorship posts.
- 49 **The review team recommends that the College reviews the current distribution of responsibilities between the two Deputy Directors and the Chancellor. This entails addressing the adequacy of role-share between academic and administrative functions within the College, which could in effect also provide space for redefining the roles of the academic Deputy Directors.**
- 50 The SAR provided details of the College's new Quality Management System (QMS) which has been developed as the result of a project funded by the European Social Fund and brought before and confirmed by the Academic Council of the College on 6 December 2012. The Director had experience of a similar QMS in a manufacturing context and was able to bring this experience to bear on the system being introduced in the College. This new document was provided to the team as an annex to the SAR and it seeks to ensure full compliance with the European higher education provisions and guidelines for internal quality assurance in higher education, the principles of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and ISO 9001 standard requirements for higher education. The SAR also provided details of existing arrangements for quality assurance including measurable goals and indicators which are set each year by Academic Council, analysed by the Department of Quality and Research and considered by the Quality Council which reports its findings to the Academic Council.
- 51 The review team discussed quality management in great detail with the Director and staff of the Quality and Research Department. It was clear that support for the QMS project had helped considerably in developing an understanding of how quality assurance systems can be improved although it appeared that the newly-introduced Quality Management System as presented was essentially a codification and bringing together of existing processes as well as further development. Documentation was being put on Moodle and this would help academic staff to become acquainted with the system. The review team welcomed this

development although it cautioned against developing an over-elaborate structure and relying too heavily on the implementation of ISO standards to the exclusion of more general principles of quality management.

- 52 The energy, particularly of the Director and staff of Quality and Research Department, in driving forward a quality agenda was commended but the review team stressed the importance of disseminating a quality culture which was acknowledged throughout the institution and creating a structure which enabled senior management to be confident that appropriate monitoring led to enhancement throughout the College. Strengthening the role of the Quality and Research Department would enable it to work alongside staff in a mentoring capacity *ex ante* rather than it being restricted to an *ex post* interventionist checking role. Moreover, while the team appreciates the effort and skill shown and invested into the development of a quality assurance concept along the lines of ISO, the team also recommends the College to avoid unduly cumbersome and bureaucratic approaches which may put a burden on all those involved which may be out of proportion to the quality effects thus to be gained. Instead, the College might consider a quality concept which follows more closely a plan-do-check-act structure.
- 53 **The review team recommends that the College considers strengthening the role of the Quality and Research Department’s role in developing, disseminating and monitoring a quality culture throughout the College. While the review team comments positively on the conceptual efforts of the College as regards the establishment of an ambitious quality and quality assurance concept in principle, it recommends that the College considers the fitness for purpose of its approach as regards due balance between overburdening quality processes in line with ISO and expected quality effects.**
- 54 With regard to the conformity of the qualifications to the national and European Qualifications Framework, the SAR indicated that study programmes accord with Level 6 of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework as well as with Level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework and that appropriate certification is issued both through the Professional bachelor’s diploma and the Diploma Supplement.
- 55 Additionally, the College has, relatively recently (in 2011), and despite some initial reservations, successfully introduced the ECTS credit system. Members of the review team suggested that the opportunities of ECTS could be further exploited through developing a modular approach and integrating as far as possible some of the other courses provided for individual employers and life-long learning (see paragraph 84). They were also aware that currently teachers do not always liaise with other teachers to arrange integrated projects which would optimise student workloads; this would be facilitated following the adoption of ECTS.
- 56 The SAR highlights some of the measures which will help the enhancement of the quality of study programmes and student performance such as the introduction of student-oriented learning principles, the reformulation of study objectives – which should be set in the form of learning objectives together with more harmonized modes of evaluation and a new workloads model for staff which take due cognizance of time dedicated to students’ consultation. The team noted that modes of evaluating student performance were being improved and the new workload model should also lead to an improvement of the teaching staff competence as it gives recognition to time dedicated to “autonomous work tutoring, professional activity practices, learning-teaching tools and tasks’ preparation and renovation, participation in applied science activities, qualification improvement and other similar activities”.

- 57 The review team noted the role of the Quality Council, a permanent working group with representation from the faculties and from students, which submitted reports to Academic Council; its main role was to prepare and review annually the main quality indicators for consideration by Academic Council which is itself responsible for the management of quality. The review team felt that, in view of the importance of its work, Quality Council should have a formal role and position within the committee structure, preferably as a sub-institution of the Academic Council.
- 58 In discussions with the Quality and Research Department staff, the review team learned of the department's role in monitoring performance in study programmes and their fitness for purpose (see also paragraph 79), including the use of an external quality expert to assure proper application of ECTS. Data was processed by the Quality and Research Department and made available to the Academic Council on a regular basis. The review team learned that the department did not have a direct role in study programme design although it was available to advise when requested and would check proposals to ensure that programme design met the necessary requirements. The review team felt that the role of the department could be strengthened in this area as its staff would be in a position to advise on the application of quality principles and quality assurance measures in the design process and would be in a position to take a holistic view across the institution in these matters.
- 59 **The review team recommends that the College considers including a member of Quality and Research Department staff in each study programme team to support academic staff in the design, implementation and monitoring of the programmes.**
- 60 The SAR noted that “on 1 October, 2012 the College had 261 employees, including 103 teachers working in the College as a main working place, 59 employees – in a part time position and 99 employees working in administration, study assistance organization and applied research activity, economy Department staff”.
- 61 The SAR provided an appraisal of human resource (HR) challenges at the College, listing problems such as an aging staff, lack of commitment to research activity, publishing and other activities, except during the staff members' attestation period. It also notes that the wage structure does not adequately drive incentives for the attraction of funds or for improved research performance. Elsewhere the SAR notes, as a threat to the institution, the “limited opportunities to dismiss or replace poor workers”. There had been little evidence of staff engagement in international activities and partnerships, although there was now increasing applied research and consultation activity of College teachers and more publications in the reviewed databases, periodicals and applied research publications, albeit at various – not necessarily increasing – levels over time.
- 62 In the “Strategic Action Plan 2012-2014” reference was made to the decrease in the number of teaching positions in the period 2009 to 2011, explaining that this “was caused by three reasons: the decrease in the number of students, changes in contact and autonomous working hours' ratio in study programs, and increased number of joint lectures”.
- 63 The Director stated that he was responsible for HR policy and that he was supported by a Head of Personnel and an administrative specialist. A number of steps have been taken to address the perceived weaknesses in the management of human resources, including further staff development and the provision of English language courses; so far approximately 50 per cent of the staff had participated in these courses. Regulations had been agreed for a

teachers' incentive programme. Staff were encouraged to undertake doctorate work and currently 10 per cent of the staff held doctorates, however the amount of time available to staff for such activity was in practice restricted to no more than 20 per cent and this issue needed to be addressed. Incentives were in place to encourage staff to undertake applied research (see paragraph 101). The College Council is currently reviewing policies relating to administrative staff; the intention was to reach uniform policies across the College.

- 64 Full-time staff were supplemented by part-time staff, some of whom worked for other higher education institutions or for private businesses and public administration. Staff who met the review team spoke of the need to attract younger staff, to consider and train their students to be future teachers and train them and to continue to look for staff in social partners institutions who could be trained to teach. There was an indication that external partners who teach should be introduced more systematically into the entirety of the teaching process, including the methodology of fair assessment of students (see paragraph 78). Students said that they appreciated the experience of older teachers but also found that younger teachers were more enterprising and competent in the use of new technology.
- 65 The Review Team saw evidence from the documentation and discussions with staff that action was being taken to match human resources to needs as far as possible, within the financial constraints, particularly in relation to the introduction of new study programmes and the discontinuing of others.
- 66 The review team noted a strong emphasis on a financial engineering approach setting out the confirmed financial appropriations for 2011 and the expectations for later years up to and including 2014 as well as a projection for 2020, and the way in which higher levels of funding are being directed to the most desired outcomes.
- 67 The main sources of College funds are state budget funds, providing about three-quarters of all income, and college revenue mainly in the form of tuition fee income received for services provided but also for research projects. While the state budget funds have decreased in 2008-2010, revenues from other sources, including EU programmes, grew during the same period. In recent years, the College has been able to accumulate some funds which suggests that the financial targets set are realistic and achievable and the allocation of resources is being used to achieve the outcomes prioritized by management. At the same time, it was clear that senior staff were aware of the underlying question in regard to the security of the institution's financial resources.
- 68 The SAR gave a comprehensive overview of the process and the procedures involved in the management of resources and the review team felt that there is a good correlation between budgetary inputs and desired outcomes.
- 69 The review team was impressed by the measures being taken to upgrade learning and teaching facilities, in particular the new learning practice centre and proposed refurbishments in the medical building. PCs and online access to books and journals were available in the Library and students expressed satisfaction with the opening hours, although the review team felt that the number of books available in general and of international publications, in particular, should be increased significantly, which may, however, be difficult to accomplish in view of the funding available to the College.
- 70 The Academic Council had set up an Academic Code of Ethics in February 2011, addressing areas such as assessment transparency, fairness in examinations, cheating, plagiarism etc, while a general meeting of staff, convened in December 2011, approved a

College Code of Ethics. In April 2011, the College signed up to the United Nations Global Compact Network, implementing a “Fair High School Declaration”, becoming the first higher education institution in Lithuania to do so.

- 71 In April 2011, the Director established an Ethics Commission, which includes two student representatives, while a set of procedures for this body was agreed on in February 2012. Subsequently in November 2012, a general meeting of staff endorsed the College values: responsibility, respect, honesty, fairness, sense of community and creativity. Whilst the commission had met on a number of occasions, it was clear that currently there were no serious ethical issues. The review team noted however the absence of an advisor – an ‘ombudsperson’ – independent of the process to whom potential complainants could go to discuss their grievances and suggested that such a post should be established. Whilst it is undoubtedly laudable that there is a high degree of trust between students and staff in the College which, to date, seems to have resolved matters in practice, from an institutional perspective of policy, relying on students approaching individual staff members whom they confide in, is not sufficient.
- 72 Whilst the institution now has an Academic Ethics Code and a College Code of Ethics, there is no evidence to show that staff sign up to either, nor is there clarity on what would happen if the Code were transgressed. Overall the documentation demonstrated that there is considerable awareness at the College of the necessity for high ethical values in all its dealings, both internally and externally, with staff, students and others.
- 73 It is clear that the management processes at Panevėžys College have been subjected to very extensive and comprehensive review in order to ensure a greater orientation to strategic goals and outcomes. Although much of this process is recent, and so it is not possible to confidently conclude that the outcomes are being successfully delivered upon, the review team felt that a sound basis had been established and the recommendations noted above are offered to encourage the College to further enhance its performance in this area.

**The team’s judgement on the area of Strategic Management is a positive evaluation.**

#### IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- 74 The review team explored academic studies and life-long learning at Panevėžys College with reference to the criteria set out in the Methodology and considered their compliance with the requirements for Lithuanian higher education and harmonisation with the principles of the European Higher Education Area. The team took into account the compliance of the qualifications offered with the College’s mission and strategic documents and with national and regional needs and social and cultural development of the region. It also considered the variety of methods of life-long learning, the system for monitoring the employment of graduates as well as the role played by the College’s social and business partners and their impact on the study programmes.
- 75 The team noted that the study programmes and life-long learning provision offered were compliant with the College’s mission and strategy “to increase the competitiveness of the College implementing the studies that meet the needs of Lithuanian state, society and economy and correspond to scientific and modern technological level”.

- 76 The SAR states that it believes the College meets these needs by the provision of study programmes which enhance students' practical and entrepreneurship skills and that it is seeking to develop the pedagogical and subject competence of teachers and introducing innovative teaching methods and forms and that it is preparing study programmes which corresponding to labour market needs. In its SWOT analysis, the College regards this provision as a strength and it funds the provision of study programmes through a variety of means: state budget funds, self-earned funds projects, and sponsorship funding.
- 77 As referred to above (paragraph 11), at the time of writing, the College was offering 27 study programmes for the first stage professional bachelor degree; ten of these have similar or identical titles to study programmes offered at Šiauliai College or North Lithuania College (70km away) including Oral Hygiene, Physiotherapy, General Practice Nursing, Environmental Protection, Construction and Social Work as well as Accounting, Business Management and Law and seven similar programmes are offered at Utena College. Many study programmes were offered on both a full-time and part-time basis where the part-time arrangement was simply a replication of the full-time provision over a longer period; members of the review team suggested that a more flexible approach could be adopted towards part-time studies.
- 78 The review team learned that assessment criteria were clearly defined and that social partners contributed to the assessment of placement activity and project. They were assured that appropriate training was given and that in many cases the social partners were themselves also teachers at the College, but the team felt that such training could be more systematised, most especially in regard to assessment and the standardisation of grades.
- 79 Evidence was provided on the role of study programme committees and of the Quality and Research Department in developing, monitoring and reviewing (and, where necessary, discontinuing) study programmes (and see recommendation in paragraph 59). There was evidence of quality tracking processes, regular feedback on study programmes and assessments of staff performance, including feedback from social partners and surveys at graduation, although there appeared, as yet, to be no systematic long-term longitudinal feedback. Graduates were able to give examples of changes to study programmes, including the structuring of projects which had taken place as a result of their feedback. However, the review team believes that there needs to be a more systematic approach overall to the use of questionnaires and, on a broader base, with – for example – a standardized questionnaire being used which can also include specific subject-related questions and which offers questions both on individual performance and on structural issues of courses, and including, for example, surveys of employment in the region over a 5-10 year period. Moreover, statistical data should be integrated more coherently into developmental processes.
- 80 The College is about to introduce a formal system for the accreditation of prior learning; currently this is carried out on an ad hoc basis. The College considers work carried out at other institutions following written application by the students accompanied by subject descriptions; these are reviewed by a specialist; a similar process takes place in respect of work experience. The review team understood that training in the assessment of prior learning had just been completed and it encouraged the College to proceed quickly to a formal system of accreditation.
- 81 The College also provides a variety of methods of life-long learning for a variety of age groups, including “qualification improvement events” for groups of specialists, particularly

within the work settings of its social partners – these being non-credit-bearing courses tailored to the needs of individual employers or on behalf of other agencies, for which professional or attendance certificates are issued – as well as non-formal adult education programmes in study areas and programmes specifically for senior adults (see paragraph 117); some of the programmes are offered as part of an EU project, in addition the College runs a programme of general educational events for the community, which is well-attended.

- 82 A significant example of a project in informal education, believed to be unique in Lithuania, was brought to the attention of the review team, whereby the College trains graduates in additional competences to help them adapt to the changing environment; currently 51 employers have expressed interest and so far there are 1100 participants; the College expects to develop 26 new informal programmes in consultation with the employers that will be involved in the preparation. The hope was expressed that knowledge and expertise gained in preparing these programmes will be also of value in re-designing or developing new study programmes.
- 83 The College does not, at present, have a formal distance-learning structure, but it does make some provision for part-time students who were able to access lectures on-line but who need to attend for supervision.
- 84 **The review team recommends that the opportunities arising from the implementation of ECTS could be further exploited through developing a modular approach and integrating as far as possible some of the other courses provided for individual employers as well as proposals for future life-long learning developments.**
- 85 Overall the review team advised that learning outcomes should be more explicitly identified and demonstrated through the learning outcomes of individual study programmes; within this process the relevance and appropriateness of learning objectives to particular programmes should be demonstrated and validated; quality objectives, as defined through the deliberations of the Quality Council and Academic Council and operationalised by the Quality and Research Department, should be translated into study programmes being fit for purpose (and integrated where appropriate with an applied research strategy (see paragraph 109) and in the process of monitoring and improvement.
- 86 **The review team recommends that the College develops a more explicit description of (i) the coherence between studies and research, and (ii) the coherence of learning outcomes and their alignment with study and assessment methods, and the needs of the labour market while not neglecting further educational objectives (see paragraph 24) and (iii) the role of students and social partners in quality assurance in study programme and applied research developments and, following from that more specifically, (iv) the type, features, collection, and use of documentation and in particular data – both statistical and through student, graduate and employer questionnaires and other surveys – which may deliver information on the teaching and learning process and on desirable improvement.**
- 87 Students who met with the review team generally spoke highly of the placement arrangements. However, whilst placements are closely monitored, in a few cases, care must be taken to ensure that students were not being exploited and carrying out duties which should properly be assigned to staff of the institutions. Each faculty has an overall supervisor for practical teaching; written guidance is provided for supervisors in the workplace, many of whom are themselves teachers and therefore have experience of both

the academic theory and the practical application. Social partners were playing an increasing role in the organization of professional activity practice and in the assessment of students' skills, and in relating students' final projects to regional organizations' needs.

- 88 Social partners themselves spoke of the value of placements not only because of the expertise which the students develop and bring to the workplace and because, through placements, students are introduced to the requirements of partners and partners understand better the contributions students can make both at the time and as potential future employees. The involvement of students in placements also brought new perspectives on the work of partners which led to greater self-evaluation by the partners themselves (see also paragraph 118).
- 89 Students who met with the review team said that they were given full information by their teachers on the content of study programmes, assignments and their assessment and study programme descriptions were posted on the website and displayed around the College. Students knew from their teachers where they had to go if they needed help. Whilst the review team was confident that support would be provided, where requested, on an ad hoc basis, they felt that student support arrangements overall should be systematised so that these were fair and equitable across the College. This would be particularly relevant as the College enrolled more part-time and distance learning students. There would be implications for staff and the newly-introduced workload arrangements.
- 90 **The review team recommends that the College considers developing a comprehensive structure for students' academic and personal support.**
- 91 A Careers Centre had been established following the recommendations of the institutional review in 2006 and this was valued by students. The Alumni Club was also valued, although it was too early to monitor its long-term effectiveness. The review team learned that there was a high level of employment (80%) following graduation; in a number of cases students were employed by the social partners for whom they had carried out projects.
- 92 The College acknowledged that progress on internationalisation had been slower than had been hoped; some staff felt inhibited by their lack of English language skills. Attempts had been made to rectify this by the provision of English language courses (see paragraph 63) but more needed to be done to encourage staff and give them confidence. There was a relatively low take-up by students on Erasmus programmes abroad, also to some degree because of lack of confidence in their English language skills but also because there were relatively few study programmes which corresponded with the study programmes which they were following at the College.
- 93 Strengthening the College's profile at the international level was one of the College's strategic goals. The International Officer saw her role as promoting this and encouraging all staff to be involved; she felt that staff in departments were beginning to understand this. Courses and study programmes in the medium of English (and, to some extent, Russian) are planned for the coming year and these would include Erasmus programmes in English which it was hoped would attract more international students. It was hoped to make some Erasmus course, taught through the medium of English, available to the College's own students and that these would be attractive in better equipping them for future international exchanges and work prospects.

- 94 Staff who met with the review team felt that nevertheless considerable progress was already being made; the number of College students who can present in English was said to be rapidly rising. Using both College money and EU funding, students in the Biomedical field were visiting both Germany and France to gain international experience; the use of English language resources was being encouraged, for example, in the field of management; the provision of further texts in the Library (see paragraph 69) would be helpful in this regard. Students who met with the review team said that they would welcome more courses and study programmes through the medium of English and other measures to increase their confidence in the use of English.
- 95 The review team was aware of proposals for a European project to promote co-operation between the College and institutions in five of the adjacent Russian-speaking countries which would provide an additional dimension to the College's internationalisation agenda. Following this line may be a rewarding strategy for the College.
- 96 **The review team recommends that the College intensifies its efforts to develop an internationalisation strategy.**
- 97 The team commends the College on the nature of its student learning experience, subject to the development of more structured student support arrangements and sees the potential for further enhancement notably in the area of internationalisation.

**The team's judgement on the area of Academic Studies and Life-Long Learning is a positive evaluation.**

## V. RESEARCH AND ART

- 98 The review team explored research and art activities in the College with reference to the criteria set out in the Methodology and considered the relevance, international links and harmonisation of research/art activities in the College with the provisions of the European Research Area. It also explored the relevance of the College's research activities to its mission and strategy. This included the relevance of the research and art activities to the priorities of national and regional economic, cultural and social development and the impact of the College's social partners on research and art activities. It also considered the College's participation in international research and art projects and researchers international mobility.
- 99 As a College, its focus is on applied research and art. Even so, currently approximately 10% of the staff have doctorates and as a result of initiatives following the recommendations of the Institutional review in 2006, an increasing number of staff are defending doctorates;. The College holds two conferences every year and, since 2008, a periodical journal has been published on a regular basis.
- 100 The development of Applied Research is co-ordinated by the Deputy Director for Academic Affairs and plans are produced each year, together with a report on research carried out; seven aims and indicators as approved by Academic Council are used in the assessment of applied research and these take account of certified contract research with reports presented nationally and internationally, published in databases and scientific publications.

- 101 Over and above the requirements for attestation, every five years (see paragraph 61) where there are different criteria for arts and science, in the case of artists for example this can include an assessment of value to the region and the cultural activity that can be developed. Examples were given, including concerts in the region, educational programmes in cooperation with schools, seminars, and the involvement of staff as judges in regional competitions and international festivals. Staff are offered incentives in the form of free publication and attending conferences, local and international, and are supported with financial help where available. Staff estimated that approximately 5 per cent of research is published internationally, with the balance evenly divided between regionally and nationally published research.
- 102 Applied Research and arts activity takes a variety of forms, including educational programmes with schools, the use of data bases in learning systems, safety in schools and kindergartens, programmes for art teaching in schools as well as the development, promotion and management of concerts and art exhibitions; in many instances there is no conflict between the personal research interests of a member of staff and the institutional requirements and priorities. Scientists, for example, can discuss their main areas of research and link this to the requirements of the social partners. Other staff spoke of the need to maintain techniques and skills in an area of the country which sees much migration to Vilnius as well as emigration.
- 103 There is considerable local support for both arts and science activity. There are two student galleries in the city library and in the chamber of law where students can exhibit; so far 35 exhibitions have been staged. Each year, students organise conferences at which they present their research topics and they are able to publish collections of articles, with the help of their teachers at these conferences. The review team was able to clarify that this activity does not carry credit but is driven by a motivation to engage in applied research.
- 104 Whilst there was evidence of the interconnectedness and interoperability of the strategic plan components overall, currently these are looser than would be desirable, thus taking from the strength and validity of the plan. In particular, with respect to the fitness for purpose of the overall strategy, the review team found that the College's "Strategic Action Plan 2012-2014" references the College's mission and strategic documents on national policy and legislative requirements, and more generally, the principles of the European Higher Education Area. Whilst, basic research is not a requirement under the methodology for colleges, Panevėžys College does make reference to basic research within its mission. The review team therefore felt that it would be useful to note that there is no explicit reference here to national policy on research or to how the Institution might carry out a research brief. The relevant European Union documents, communiqués and guidelines, are listed identifying the area to which each one relates, but the SAR did not give any tangible evidence or example of how any one of these documents has actually impacted on Panevėžys College.
- 105 It is in line with these observations that the College itself, in its SAR, recognises the level and focus of applied research as a weakness. The College links this feature with a decrease in the level of commissioned research, due to the economic slowdown. Therefore, this suggests an area of the College's activity which should be strengthened.
- 106 However, the review team acknowledges the considerable efforts being made by the College to develop applied research and, where possible, to link this directly to the College's study programmes, although so far, much of the activity tends to be reactive rather than the result of an integrated strategy. Moreover, as for linking research activities

even more strongly to regional needs, the Director stressed that the college must be, but also can and will in future be, even more open to the interests of their social partners' business interests and those of the municipality because the College staff have the knowledge to carry out applied research; the College's close links through its staff with, for example, the chamber of commerce should provide a good basis to develop applied research but preferably as part of a strategic overview (see paragraph 40).

- 107 In line with this, there was evidence in the SAR of some progress being made, including the Strategy of Applied Science and Art Activity 2010-2012, the College's aspirations to implement integrated science and art activities, to meet the cultural and social development priorities for the country and the region, in particular, and the benefits which would then accrue for the College's social partners. The review team felt that these aspirations and resulting developments are reflected in the College's overall planning processes, though this should be done more coherently and holistically.
- 108 The review team observed that the full cost of applied research is not taken into account when considering projects which might be undertaken and felt that this was therefore hiding the true cost of its activities; it would be helpful to take these into account when designing and implementing an overall strategy. However, as a matter of national policy, Lithuania may not consider a full-cost approach to the research activities of higher education institutions as essential.
- 109 **The review team recommends that the College**
- (i) develops an applied research strategy as an integral part of an overall strategy which takes into account the coherence between studies and research;**
  - (ii) assesses applied research projects on a full-cost basis.**

**The team's judgement on the area Research and Art is a positive evaluation.**

## VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 110 The review team explored the College's impact on regional and national development with reference to the criteria set out in the Methodology and considered the effectiveness and relevance of its contribution and impact on the economic, cultural, social and environmental development. This included the measures of impact and the effectiveness of their implementation and recognition of the participation of teaching and administrative staff in voluntary service activities.
- 111 The College mission and goals state the need to actively seek cooperation with social partners, develop applied research, advise local government, non-governmental organisations and other entities, and get involved in to the education of the general public, social actions and other activities, which are beneficial for the region.
- 112 The review team learned that, as Panevėžys College is the only independent higher education institution in the region, apart from a branch of Kaunas Technological Institute, it was natural and inevitable for the College to be invited to participate in the development of regional policies. Involvement is not only procured on a strategic level but through the activities of teachers and students and through participating in projects. The college currently has contracts with 6 municipalities including Rokiškis and 150 agreements with

Social Partners. Students can carry out their practice and research activities at these institutions and feedback is used to improve the programmes (see paragraph 79).

- 113 Conversely members of the College Council are prominent in the region; they represent various areas of development and are able to bring their ideas and proposals to the College, and vice versa. Senior staff in the College are members of the Chamber of Commerce, five teachers are members of city council; three teachers are members of Rotary Clubs and are involved in Rotary clubs; generally members, both individually and on behalf of the College, take part in cultural activities and are members of regional cultural organisations. The regional plan (2014-2020) is currently being developed and the College is represented on its committees.
- 114 There is evidence of genuine engagement with the community, particularly through the social partners. College staff spoke of the close communication with the business community, which made it easier to understand their needs and the needs of the region and they quoted examples of programmes which had been introduced in answer to declared research needs of the region.
- 115 The review team met a number of social partners including representatives from companies, municipalities, special schools, care homes, the tourism office, Panevėžys Business Advisory Centre and the current President of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts. They all gave examples of ways in which the College co-operates with social partners. In general, they spoke of the high quality of the students and graduates from the College.
- 116 Social partners also confirmed their role in study programme development, assessment and examination (see paragraph 78) and, in particular, the ways in which they are able to influence the development of programmes through feedback and the contributions which the students make as they carry out projects.
- 117 Examples were also given of teachers, who are experts in art and technology, being invited to participate in projects on a national level, and locally, for example, in the preparation of study programmes for art teaching in schools. Further examples of engagement with the community included student concert activities and artwork exhibitions, music and art teachers' consultancy and experts' work contributing to the development of regional cultural life. The College has been involved in projects for regeneration in Rokiškis and the development of cultural activities, including an international organ festival; research has been carried out on the impact of this activity jointly with the Latvian Cultural Corporation. A joint conference with a Latvian university is planned to consider projects for business, social and technological development. Reference was also made to courses which are provided for the elderly – “Third Age” programmes which currently have over 500 participants.
- 118 As indicated above (paragraph 88), many students of the College carry out practical placements with social partners throughout the region, and the list of final thesis applied research topics includes projects undertaken for municipalities, companies and small businesses; the team met a number of social partners and became aware of the strong relationships which have been built up and of the way in which the region is brought into the educational landscape, in line with the College's mission.
- 119 The team was impressed by the range of projects which not only enhanced the educational experience but were of added value to the social partners, whereby students prepare final

papers, internship reports and research articles under the supervision of faculty members and take into account also the needs and interests of the social partners; social partners provide feedback to the College and provide opportunities for students to experience the workplace directly. Students who met the review team said that they valued these experiences very highly and social partners stressed the value of internships as students often brought new perspectives on partners' work which led to further reflection by the social partners themselves.

- 120 Examples were provided of students whose projects with a social partner related directly to their own experience within their own families. Staff who have research experience at the other institutions where they work are able to bring their knowledge and expertise and also produce research papers. As a result of social partners' experience with students, providing, in effect, a degree of consultancy, the College can expect partners to offer employment to more students in the future, thus adding to the future employability of the students to mutual advantage. Subsequently, some graduates of the College have started their own businesses. Courses are available on writing business plans and entrepreneurship. Whilst the College itself does not have a business incubator provision, it works with the local science and technology park to provide that facility there, in association with the College's Career Centre.
- 121 The review team commended the College on the level and depth of involvement with local communities and the region generally. It noted the level and nature of monitoring of these activities which took place including surveys and recording the number of events, contract orders, projects, number of participants and loyalty indicators, such as how many partners return with more contracts; monitored every year; reference was also made to financial indicators.
- 122 The participation of social partners in programme development (see paragraph 79) and the level of internships secured with partners was also an indicator of the College's involvement. In many cases, the students then became employees of the institutions concerned. Members of staff emphasised that co-operation could be initiated at a variety of levels. The SAR presented several types of cooperation with academic partners, such as participation in joint projects in contractors' or project partner's status; study programme development, programme content renewal and adaptation, coordination with changing legislation acts requirements and labour market needs; organizing of student competitions and applied research conferences; the overall use of resources.
- 123 The review team felt that the good interaction between the College and its social partners could be further enhanced by bringing together all parties in the region into an advisory forum which could help in the development of a regional strategy which would then be reflected in the College's own integrated strategy bringing together studies and applied research for the benefit of the community.
- 124 **The review team recommends that the College considers the establishment of a forum of social partners and other appropriate institutions and agencies to advise the College on its role within, and contribution to, an overall regional strategy.**
- 125 Overall social partners and students alike appreciated the value of the College as a regional institution and there was evidence of considerable, on-going local interaction with the community, in line with the College's mission. The College, both in Panevėžys and in Rokiškis, plays a major role in vitalizing the region by providing both a learning opportunity for those who cannot afford moving away from their home region as well as

for improving professional competence throughout life, and for research input to businesses and the public sector. Therefore, the regional significance of the College cannot be overestimated as a major player to bring young people and business to the region and retain them in the region.

**The team's judgement on the area Impact on Regional and National Development is a positive evaluation.**

## VII. GOOD PRACTICE AND ENHANCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

*May also include part of recommendations for authorities (Ministry, etc.) for improvement*

### **Good practice**

- the commitment to quality, as seen in quality concept development, establishing a Quality Office; and the development of a comprehensive quality management system;
- a willingness to embrace change;
- the level of engagement with social partners, the local community and the region (the “added value” for the region);
- the College's responsiveness to the local labour market;
- the commitment of College staff to the region, and of staff in regional institutions to the College;
- the provision of a Learning Practice centre and other modern facilities;
- the nature, location and management of student placement arrangements;
- life-long learning activities providing further qualification for the local population;
- the cultural benefits accruing to Panevėžys and Rokiškis from the college's activities;
- the support both by students for the College and by the College for its students.

### **Enhancement Recommendations**

#### *- Principal recommendations*

- The review team recommends that the College reviews its vision and mission and, in particular, their implementation with a view to establishing a more coherent overarching focus for its study programmes and applied research which can then be marketed locally, nationally and internationally as its unique selling point (paragraph 30).
- The team recommends that the College considers
  - making more explicit the relationship between the Integrated Development Strategy (IDS), the rolling three year strategic action plans and the one-year implementation plans, while making sure that action lines are defined in a sufficiently concrete mode;
  - the appropriateness of the nomenclature to format and describe (i) the three year plans as “strategic plans” and (ii) the one-year plans as “action plans” showing clearly at the beginning of the year the actions, responsibilities and targets for the year, and at the end of the year indicating the progress achieved against these targets;
  - enhancing the means of communicating the results of annual action plans and their effects on both the rolling plans and the IDS to the College body as well as to funders and stakeholders (paragraph 40).
- The review team recommends that the College reviews the current distribution of responsibilities between the two Deputy Directors and the Chancellor. This entails

addressing the adequacy of role-share between academic and administrative functions within the College, which could in effect also provide space for redefining the roles of the academic Deputy Directors (paragraph 49).

- The review team recommends that the College develops a more explicit description of
    - the coherence between studies and research;
    - the coherence of learning outcomes and their alignment with study and assessment methods, and the needs of the labour market whilst not neglecting further educational objectives (see paragraph 24);
    - the role of students and social partners in quality assurance in study programme and applied research developments, and following from that, more specifically;
    - the type, features, collection, and use of documentation and, in particular, data – both statistical and through student, graduate and employer questionnaires and other surveys – which may deliver information on the teaching and learning process and on desirable improvement (paragraph 86).
  - The review team recommends that the College
    - develops an applied research strategy as an integral part of an overall strategy which takes into account the coherence between studies and research;
    - assesses applied research projects on a full-cost basis (paragraph 109).
  - The review team recommends that the College considers the establishment of a forum of social partners and other appropriate institutions and agencies to advise the College on its role within, and contribution to, an overall regional strategy.(paragraph 124)
- *Other recommendations*
- The review team recommends that a series of human resource development events on higher education policy and strategy be held for members of the College Council (paragraph 19).
  - The review team recommends that the College considers strengthening the role of the Quality and Research Department's role in developing, disseminating and monitoring a quality culture throughout the College. While the review team comments positively on the conceptual efforts of the College as regards the establishment of an ambitious quality and quality assurance concept, in principle, it recommends the College to consider the fitness for purpose of its approach as regards due balance between overburdening quality processes in line with ISO and expected quality effects (paragraph 53).
  - The review team recommends that the College considers including a member of Quality and Research Department staff in each study programme team to support academic staff in the design, implementation and monitoring of the programmes (paragraph 59).
  - The review team recommends that the opportunities arising from the implementation of ECTS could be further exploited through developing a modular approach and integrating as far as possible some of the other courses provided for individual employers as well as proposals for future life-long learning developments (paragraph 84).
  - The review team recommends that the College considers developing a comprehensive structure for students' academic and personal support (paragraph 90).
  - The review team recommends that the College intensifies its efforts to develop an internationalisation strategy (paragraph 96).

## VIII. JUDGEMENT

**Panevėžys College is given positive evaluation.**

Grupės vadovas:  
Team leader: Prof. Dr. Jurgen Kohler

Grupės nariai:  
Team members: Prof. Dr. Peadar Cremin  
Dr. Nijolė Zinkevičienė  
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Vertinimo sekretorius:  
Review secretary: Richard Anthony Platt

## ANNEX 1

### Annexes to the SAR

1. Panevėžys College Statute
2. Panevėžys College Organization Structure
3. Integrated Development Strategy (summary)
4. Panevėžys College Strategic Action Plan 2012-2014
5. Description of Quality Management System at Panevėžys College
6. Panevėžys College income and expenses
7. List of study programmes
8. Number of students in study programmes
9. Teaching posts, academic degrees and position in Panevėžys College
10. List of the most significant applied sciences research, projects and other activities related to regional development
11. Panevėžys College SWOT analysis
12. Annual Report 2011
13. Panevėžys College applied science and artistic activity strategy

### Additional documentation

1. Reports of activity of the College for the last three years
2. The documents of internal quality assurance process (protocols, reports decisions)
3. Examples of social partners, employers, graduates and students feedback
4. Examples of descriptions of study subjects/modules
5. A list of final thesis (2011-12)
6. Examples of protocols and reports of College Council, Academic Council meetings
7. Strategic plans of Panevėžys College
8. Integrated Development Strategy of Panevėžys College (2011-2020)
9. Reports of various researches and surveys (Survey of study transparency, Survey of needs of teaching staff qualification improvement, Evaluation of practice places, Evaluation of study quality, Report of citizens public opinion about police activity in Panevėžys, Students employability in Panevėžys)
10. Periodic publications (Applied research in studies and practice, Publications from various conferences)
11. Contracts for College applied research projects
12. Various projects (regulations, process, participants)

## ANNEX 2

### List of meetings held by the review team

1. Director
2. Members of the College Council
3. Members of the Academic Council
4. Members of the self-evaluation group and the Quality and Research Department
5. Graduates
6. Social Partners
7. Strategic Management
8. Research and art activities
9. Impact on regional and national development
10. Students
11. Learning Resources and Quality
12. Academic Studies and Life-long learning
13. Final meeting with Director and Quality and Research Department staff

### ANNEX 3. PANEVĖŽYS COLLEGE RESPONSE TO REVIEW REPORT

Paragraph		Remarks
23	The review team studied this document in detail, together with materials which explained how the <del>University</del> College introduced, implemented and monitored its strategic plans.	
37	The role of the Quality and Research Office in strategic planning was discussed. Although the College relied on monitoring by the Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA) to ensure that threshold standards in relation to capacity in terms of staff and material resources were achieved, increasing use was being made of the Quality and Research Office to provide data from its monitoring of both study programmes and applied research.	Confirmed title “Department of Quality and Research“ in the structure of the College.
46	The review team was mindful of the need to develop further the strategy and delivery of applied research in the College (see paragraph 109); the team heard that the Study Quality Department had recently been renamed the Quality and Research Department to reflect its extended remit and that the <del>Director</del> <i>Head of Quality and Research now reported to one of the Deputy Directors (for Academic Affairs) rather than directly to the Director.</i>	According to the structure of the College the Head of Quality and Research is directly responsible to Director
75	The team noted that the study programmes and life-long learning provision offered were compliant with the <del>University's</del> College's mission and strategy “to increase the competitiveness of the College implementing the studies that meet the needs of Lithuanian state, society and economy and correspond to scientific and modern technological level”.	