



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**

**STUDY FIELD of MARKETING**

at ISM University of Management and Economics

**Expert panel:**

1. **Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson (panel chairperson)**, *academic*;
2. **Prof. dr. Đurđana Ozretić Došen**, *academic*;
3. **Dr. Ákos Varga**, *academic*;
4. **Dr. Tomáš Kincl**, *academic*;
5. **Ms. Daiva Staneikaite-Naldal**, *representative of social partners*;
6. **Ms. Alicia Presencio Herrero**, *students' representative*.

**Evaluation coordinator – Mr. Domantas Markevičius**

Report language – English

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## Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<b><i>International Marketing and Management</i></b>
State code	6211LX006
Type of studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (2 years)
Credit volume	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Master of Business Management
Language of instruction	English
Minimum education required	Bachelor or equivalent
Registration date of the study programme	21 March 2007

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on 5 May, 2021. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the site visit was conducted online using video conferencing tools (Zoom).

**Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson (panel chairperson)**, Head of Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu, Estonia;

**Prof. dr. Đurđana Ozretić Došen**, Full Professor at the Department of Marketing, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Croatia;

**Dr. Ákos Varga**, Associate Professor at the Institute of Marketing, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary;

**Dr. Tomáš Kincl**, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Management, Prague University of Economics and Business, The Czech Republic;

**Ms. Daiva Staneikaite-Naldal**, CEO of DSTN Ventures, Denmark;

**Ms. Alicia Presencio Herrero**, 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD student of Audiovisual Communication, Advertising and Public Relations, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain.

### 1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Virtual presentation of learning facilities used by marketing field students at ISM.
2.	Journal list recommended to the teaching staff for publication
3.	A list of top-level international conferences recommended to the teaching staff for attendance

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

ISM University of Management and Economics (hereafter – ISM, also – the University) was established in 1999 by BI Norwegian Business School and Innovation. It is the first private for-profit state accredited business university in Lithuania. ISM has 112 faculty members, 1669 students and ca 6000 graduates (data from the end of 2020). MSc *International Marketing and Management* study programme is one of the three MSc programmes offered at ISM but the only programme in the field of marketing. The Programme fits into ISM study programmes portfolio as complementing programme to the undergraduate programme in Management and Marketing at an advanced level. The programme also provides a foundation for further studies at a doctoral level at ISM. MSc *International Marketing and Management* study programme has double diploma agreements with other international business schools: BI Norwegian Business School; KEDGE Business School; TIAS School for Business and Society; Tilburg University and INSEEC U.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Marketing* study field and **second cycle** at ISM University of Management and Economics is given **positive** evaluation.

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

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	5
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	5
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	5
7.	Study quality management and public information	5
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>32</b>

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

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

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

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

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

## III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

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

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

*3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market*

According to the SER (p. 12), the *International Marketing and Management* program aims to educate and develop socially responsible specialists with relevant and contemporary marketing knowledge and skills, competent to perform the research needed for innovative and successful problem solutions in the practice of international marketing and management, and whose competencies will be applied in Lithuanian and international markets.

The program is well-aligned with the contemporary needs of the growing market economy and needs for marketing experts with necessary entrepreneurial, managerial, and leadership competencies grounded on the acquired skills of critical analysis, data processing, solutions offering, and business communication. The program corresponds to the “Lithuania 2030” State Progress Strategy and the international trends for the marketing profession described in the documents of the World Economic Forum. It has an international focus, is taught in English, involves teaching staff from foreign institutions, offers a possibility of the double degree diploma with one of the ISM’s partners, has a good combination of acquiring knowledge and skills, engages professional specialists in teaching and invites guest speakers from practice (private and public organizations). During the sessions with the Senior administration, SER group, and teaching staff, the expert committee witnessed a unanimous commitment to embed the international marketing perspective and experience to the local Lithuanian market through the teaching process and strong connection to the business society. This, as stated, enables future professionals to compete for responsible and leading marketing positions in multinational and global companies operating in Lithuania and abroad.

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

ISM's mission, vision, and strategy for the period 2020-2025 focus on the development of competent and responsible professionals aware of the needs of lifelong learning to successfully overcome business challenges in the contexts of different jobs, the environment in which they are performed, as well as the necessary social inclusion and sustainability (SER, p. 14). A strategic commitment to the comprehensive program internationalization and acquiring a learning experience based on modern teaching methods is crucial in this endeavor.

The field and cycle study program aims and outcomes align with ISM's mission, objectives of activities, and strategic priorities. The expert committee finds that the program structure emphasizes developing professionals fully equipped with knowledge and skills adequate for conducting responsible, sustainable, entrepreneurial and ethical business activities. The instant

application of the content learned was emphasized since the majority of students combine study and work. This shows that competencies to be acquired are well integrated into the learning outcomes; they are regularly verified with corporate partners. The international perspective is present in terms of students and teaching staff from different countries, using up-to-date teaching and learning materials and methods, mobility of students and staff, and the option for a double degree diploma.

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

The structure of the study program is based on the legal documents on higher education in the Republic of Lithuania. International documents on higher education and quality assurance and requirements are also considered: ECTS User's Guide 2015, AACSB Business Standards, and "The European Marketing Certification and Qualification (EMCQ) Framework" (SER, p. 15).

The program follows the legal requirements. The full-time study program's volume is 3240 hours, i.e., 120 ECTS. It has a modular structure (5 modules per semester). The volume of the study field subjects is 66 ECTS. The final thesis amounts to 30 ECTS. The program is run in two academic years (2 semesters each, 4 in total). The ratio between the volume of contact hours and self-study hours is 25%:75%. The workload per ECTS is 27 hours (contact and self-study hours). The individual approach to student's needs was stressed as a program's strength during the online site visit. Therefore, the ISM adjusts the time for completing the program according to the student's specific situation (more than two years if needed).

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

The compatibility is achieved by fulfilling the requirements of the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Five categories of aims and learning outcomes at the program level are defined: Knowledge and its application, Research skills, Special abilities, Social abilities, Personal abilities. Each category has specific learning objectives stipulated by following Bloom Taxonomy. Since it is a master level program, the learning objectives of each category are defined in terms of acquiring higher-order skills (SER, pp. 15-16).

The expert committee finds that the learning objectives used to describe each category of aims and learning outcomes properly reflect essential elements of knowledge, skills, and abilities expected from the graduates of the master-level study. They are well balanced. Interactive teaching/learning methods prevail, based on case studies, projects, group, and individual assignments. These methods are also used in exams, as the students' assessment approach.

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

The program is composed of 15 modules belonging to the three interrelated pillars: marketing (42 ECTS), management (24 ECTS), and methodology (18 ECTS). Integration of knowledge and skills acquired through the courses of these interrelated pillars is fostered through the Research proposal (6 ECTS) and Master thesis (30 ECTS). The Marketing pillar and the Management pillar are strongly connected to the core of the program's scope (international marketing management, i.e., the need to prepare graduates to work in the international (global), interdisciplinary business settings). The methodology pillar enables students to acquire the necessary skills for conducting independent academic research (SER, p. 17).

The program's scope and structure provide students with the theoretical background, research skills and practical skills. The program is structured according to the similar master programs of the Northern and Western European higher education institutions, including ISM's founder and strategic partner BI Norwegian School of Management. The curriculum is well balanced to the needs of specialized professionals in the international marketing management arena. The module descriptions show that necessary competencies are to be developed by studying the contemporary and actual issues from the marketing and management field in the complex and rapidly growing international (global) environment. Three modules dedicated to the methodology field enable gaining professionals' competitive advantages through acquired research skills, needed both in the academic environment and complex contemporary business practice. Learning objectives of all modules are defined and complement the learning outcomes on the overall program level. From the expert committee's point of view, the sequence of the modules along the three semesters is tenable, although it shows some inconsistencies. For example, Advanced Topics in International Management is taught during the first semester and International Consumer Behavior in the second. However, from the marketing standpoint, it would be much more appropriate to attend International Consumer Behavior, along with Marketing Research, already during the first semester because both modules represent the foundations of the marketing discipline. Also, the Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability module is taught early in the first semester, while Microeconomics of Competitiveness is in the third - reverse order would be more appropriate since microeconomics topics represent a fundamental discipline for business economics study.

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

In the second year, instead of the New Product Development and Service Innovation module, students have a choice of two electives: 1) People, Organization and Innovation and 2) Artificial Intelligence Principles and Applications (SER, p. 22). The expert committee considers two elective modules as a modest alternative for personalizing the program's structure. Therefore, the offer should be expanded. During the meeting with students, they expressed a desire for more marketing electives enriched with the digital perspective. Examples include pricing, B2B marketing, neuromarketing. According to the information given by the Program Director and teaching staff, there are formal and institutional barriers that complicate the changes. Most of them are related to the requirements for the double degree diploma with the partner institutions. However, alumni were rather critical about the experiences with some of the

partner institutions in the frame of the double degree options (low quality, not comparable to ISM). Therefore, the expert committee recommends thoroughly revising and improving these critical aspects for personalizing the program's structure.

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

The procedure that regulates the final thesis covers all necessary aspects (guidelines for the topic selection, writing issues, ethical conduct, mentoring process, defense, and grading criteria). The last semester is dedicated to master thesis writing and defense. Students have guidance and support from their advisors, assigned to them during the Research proposal module. Also, students attend seminars on master thesis writing. Students whose master theses were of sufficient merit are encouraged to attend conferences and publish (SER, p. 21).

Master theses are of a high standard. Topics and titles focus on contemporary marketing and management issues in the international environment context and, as such, comply with the study field and requirements. Master theses are written in English. Insights into content and references list of selected examples show that authors have, from good to excellent (according to the grades), command of skills necessary to conduct an individual research task. However, during the session with students, it was revealed they would appreciate more detailed written information about the procedure and thesis.

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

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

1. The programme has a strong overall focus on internationalization - regarding students, teaching staff, curriculum development, teaching and assessment methods, double diploma possibilities, mobility, etc.
2. The study program is comparable with those offered by foreign HEI in North and West Europe.

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

1. The sequence of modules might not be optimal.
2. There are only two elective courses offered to the students.
3. There is a concern regarding the level of quality in partner institutions concerning the double degree programs.

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

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

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

The ISM carried out high research quality: they published several publications in Financial Times top 50 journals. The research activities are supported by the institute in forms of incentives: according to the site visit, they offer 10.000eur for at least Q2 and 4000eur for Q3 level publications. They also established a research grant, the academic staff can apply for it 2 times a year. They can spend on editorial activities, data collection, translation, etc.

Regarding publications, the site visit confirmed the cooperative approach of ISM: the academic staff confirmed that in terms of research, they must collaborate with other universities. Thus, the usual research teams are composed of teachers from multiple institutes.

Besides journal articles, the marketing teaching staff also publish book chapters and participate in international scientific conferences. The cooperation enabled to create and maintain a good network of teachers and external partners. In terms of cooperation, besides academics there is also a strong connection to business. According to the site visit, the integration of business partners is up to the individual professors.

The faculty organised its research activities in research groups. The marketing related ones are Marketing and Consumer Behaviour subgroup, International Markets and Consumer Behaviour subgroup, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Strategy subgroups. Several research funds were secured during the examined period.

The expert committee acknowledges the evaluation results about ISM, conducted by Lithuanian Research Council and The Government Strategic Analysis Center, rated as strong. The clear requirements of promotion are admitted, however, it should be more balanced, providing the opportunity for career development for those who are more teaching than research oriented. The expert committee acknowledges the structure of research groups, as providers of high quality research outputs. The strong focus on the different research topics ensures the opportunity for better co-operations both nationwide and internationally. The expert committee acknowledges both the quality and quantity of the secured funds, and finds it exceptional.

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

According to the site visit, the teaching staff confirmed that publishing and research are complementary. During the different assignments like case studies, research projects or any other collaborations, the teaching staff provides an opportunity for students to get familiar with the latest research findings. As it is stated in the self evaluation report and as it was confirmed during the site visit, most of the lecturers use their own cases reflecting current market problems, or their own research results as examples. Besides the full professors, the visiting professors also contribute to the usage of latest developments in marketing.

The expert committee acknowledges the efforts by ISM to utilize the research results in teaching activities. Moreover, the cooperation with external partners provides further development in this area. It is also welcomed that the program director assures the quality in teaching, giving the objectives of the program to provide both theoretical and methodological foundation.

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

According to the site visit, the students confirmed the possibility to take part in research activities. It was elaborated that high knowledge on the global market is secured by the high number of incoming professors. Gaining experience in research is encouraged by professors, usually towards thesis writing.

The thesis works provide solid evidence for strong cooperation between students and teachers in terms of research activities. The students' aspiration for working in an international environment is supported by the professors and by the institute through providing a vivid, international environment.

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

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

1. The marketing related research output is good both quantitatively and qualitatively.
2. The research and study activities in the field of marketing are coherent.

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

1. The requirements for promotion are blurry, it should be more balanced, providing the opportunity for career development for those who are more teaching than research oriented.
2. The students' participation in academic conferences is rather low.

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

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

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

Communication with prospective ISM students is held throughout the year by the Admissions managers. All the information is public on the ISM website, where there is a clear document to guide the process. Admission managers usually work in conjunction with the Study and Quality manager who assist applicants in planning their academic path. In addition to the standard criteria for accessing the master's degree, ISM attaches great importance to the level of English and a motivation letter from the student. All this is reviewed by the Admission Commission. Also, a candidate undergoes a motivational interview (held online in the case of foreign students). Enrollments have grown considerably, especially in 2020 when 47 students were enrolled. The international student rate fluctuates between 10 and 21%, with that of 2020 being 15%, somewhat lower than that of the previous year, which was 21% (SER, table 10, p. 35).

Expert committee sees the admission pack as really useful for the student. In it, all the information is complete. For example, it explains how to write the motivation letter, what to do if you do not have an English certificate, how to pay the admission fees or how to certify the degrees if you are a foreigner. A meticulous care when applying the admission criteria allows choosing the students most aligned with the program.

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

ISM has regulations for the recognition of non-formal and in-formal competences. The ISM Quality manager checks if the institution is officially accredited and passes documents to the Study department for recognition based on the level of study, field of study, and compatibility of the learning outcomes to ISM programme/module learning outcomes. Other diplomas have to be submitted for recognition to the Study Services department.

ISM has not received requests to validate non-formal or in-formal education yet, but they already do recognize the prior studies of applicants from international educational institutions. SER data shows that only a few applications for credit validation are accepted for international stays. For example, in 2020, 50 applications for recognition were done, however, only 12 were accepted. This shows the thoroughness with which ISM works when reviewing documents submitted by students, something that is positively valued. It is recommended that the explanation about the recognition of credits for non-formal education be strengthened, since students are often unaware of the procedure and it might be the reason there is no recognition yet.

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

Students can participate in mobility programmes starting the second semester of studies. Two options are available to students: exchange within the Erasmus programme or exchange on the basis of bilateral agreements. The programme has 14 Erasmus agreements, 1 bilateral agreement, and 5 double diploma options - BI Norwegian Business School, KEDGE Business School, Tilburg University, INSEEC U, TIAS School for Business&Society. Every year the International Studies Office informs students about the mobility possibilities by sending an invitation to apply and the list of the institutions students can apply to. Also, the information is placed on the Moodle and on the ISM webpage.

International department organizes information events where students share their mobility experience with their colleagues who are planning to apply for the mobility period. Throughout these years, the program has had numerous incoming students. To a lesser extent, it had outgoing students, but each year there has been a number of departures that show that the efforts to promote internationalization of students are paying off.

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

Students receive detailed information about their program of study, assessment criteria, teaching methods and other relevant information from their Programme Director and through a student handbook, a standard guide to the procedures of University. The Programme Director is a reference figure if students want to go abroad or make a double degree. Also, ISM provides psychological counselling services to students. Communication is completed by e-mail/MS TEAMS rather than approaching the professors face to face. Scholarships are granted during admission by the ISM Admission Committee. According to the SER (table 13, p. 38), 72 state scholarships were given from 2017 to 2021, and 55 ISM discounts were awarded.

There is a series of financial aid available for students who are in need or for students who obtain excellence in their merits. Communication between teachers and students is fluid and constant, and highly valued by the latter. Students also have access to psychological aids, however, the integration of psychological help into the program is not specified, nor how it

affects the curriculum. Actions to prevent or detect psychological problems in students are recommended.

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

Students get assistance in choosing a topic for their research as well as clarifying aspects that arise in the process of paper writing. Study Regulations, Code of Ethics, Requirements to the Written Paper, and any other regulations related to University life are uploaded on Moodle. There is no information about the Student Council in the SER. In the meeting with the students, it was also not clear whether they knew in depth their existence and their activities, and how to take advantage of them. This committee recommends promoting the Student Council, as well as its communication and publicity, since this Master programme is two years long, and students have time to get involved.

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

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

1. The information on the ISM website is very clear, comprehensive, interactive, accessible and eye-catching.
2. High quality ISM website is a reference center for incoming students, something that promotes internationalization very well.

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

1. Improve, expand or bring to the students information on the recognition of non-formal education credits.
2. Strengthen and empower the Student Council.

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

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

ISM benefits from the AACSB accreditation process, which pays a lot of attention to the assurance of the learning process. Study forms and methods are various types (i.e., lectures, seminars, specialized video presentations, case studies, guest lectures, interactive discussions, and critical analysis of additional readings), allowing to foster personal, professional, or research skills and competencies – and, more importantly, to reach various LOs as defined on the program level. The feedback on study progress is not limited just to the teacher; fellow students often participate in the process as well. The institution emphasizes modern and interactive forms of learning rather than frontal teaching. Guest speakers are often invited to the lectures, complementing the theoretical lessons. Various learning approaches are described in detail, providing sufficient information about the organization of students' individual work and evaluation. During the session with students and alumni, both groups confirmed the strong commitment of ISM to the learning process that enables students - taking into account their individual requirements - to achieve the learning outcomes.

As the evaluated program is a 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle program, the graduates can continue on to a doctoral level on any HEI that provides such education. The continuation is not limited to Lithuanian HEIs but to any HEI in any country which recognizes the degree. The strong ISM orientation on internationalization further supports students continuing their studies abroad (and many do).

The institution benefits from undergoing AACSB accreditation. The overall framework enables reaching the intended learning goals and is well-established and described in detail. All internal stakeholders of the learning process show strong commitment towards students' support in achieving the intended learning outcomes; students recognize and appreciate this support.

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

Students with various impairments have special access to most of the facilities and study materials. In addition, students may apply for an individual study plan that would reflect their specific needs and may be supported by a scholarship (performance conditions apply). There is a well-established system to support excellent students who may not afford to pay the scholarship. ISM has established a foundation to help outstanding students to finance their studies. The institution shows strong commitment toward the learning process, including support for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.

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

Monitoring of student study progress is conducted on two major levels – program level and module level. The institution benefits from the AACSB accreditation process, which pays a lot of attention to the assurance of the learning process. The institutional system is complex and mutually intertwined; module outcomes are clearly associated with the particular learning outcomes on the program level. The Study Committee evaluates assessment rubrics, and all interested groups are involved in the process. The assessment components do reflect learning objectives that are subjects of measures (potential weak points might be assessing leadership skill through teamwork – as there is usually just one leader in the team who can thus demonstrate leadership skills). Monitoring is continuous and periodical; the institution has formulated targeted outputs.

The institutional directive requires all students to provide feedback after each assessment. As the institution is undergoing the AACSB evaluation process, the overall feedback framework seems to reflect the main trends in today's business education. Various stakeholders on multiple institutional levels participate in the process.

The institution has a complex system monitoring student study progress. As a result, students receive adequate feedback on their study progress which promotes self-assessment. Such a monitoring system seems to be more than sufficient to reach the intended outcomes.

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

ISM established a career centre which is (among other duties) responsible for alumni surveys. The presented results are impressive; only just a few graduates are unemployed, a significant share of the graduates are top- or middle-level managers in their field of expertise, and their income is far beyond the national average. Many graduates work for international companies or abroad.

The institution has strong links with the business community, which includes finding places for graduates. Many companies sponsor their employees and support them in their studies at ISM. Employability of graduates is on an excellent level, and the institution pays a lot of attention to graduate career development and tracking.

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

Code of Ethics is formulated on an institutional level to ensure principles of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are communicated among all members of ISM academic community. Ethical framework is introduced to all students during the induction week at the beginning of their studies. The Ethics Committee considers potential violations of the Code; the committee consists of faculty and student representatives and is approved by the Rector for the two-year period. Anti-plagiarism software is used regularly for (seemingly all) submitted works and theses. Together with the Methodology Pillar, which is a core component of the program curriculum, such a framework is adequate to ensure that all academic community members are aware of principles of the academic code of conduct. The institution has effective tools to deal with cases of potential academic dishonesty. The institutional framework is robust and well-balanced.

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

The institution has a formal framework based on the internal directive and has established the Appeals Committee (no information about the members, though). The Appeals Committee cooperates with the Ethics Committee when needed. The reported cases of violation are solely from 2018. There are no cases from previous or subsequent years, which calls for further investigation. The sessions confirmed that students are aware of the institutional procedures regarding submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process. The procedures for submitting and examining appeals and complaints regarding the study process seem adequate and reflect common practice in academia.

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

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

1. There is a strong commitment of all - faculty members, management, and supportive staff - towards the students and their learning progress.
2. There are plenty of opportunities to individualize the learning process to reflect student-specific needs.
3. Cooperation with alumni, social partners and employers is active and engaging.
4. There is a well-established system of assurance of learning that benefits from the undergoing AACSB accreditation.
5. Employability of the graduates is high.

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

1. Double degree partners should be selected more carefully, as the assessment frameworks and the level as well as quality of teaching are not always fully compatible.

### 3.5. TEACHING STAFF

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

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

The program is taught by 25 teaching staff; 19 of them represent ISM full-time faculty. The Ph.D. degree has 46,7% of the staff members in the marketing study field. Besides Lithuanian faculty members, there are seven international faculty members in the program, and 2 of them are employed at ISM on a full-time basis. The average age of the teaching staff is 44 (SER, p. 44). The number of staff is stable for the analyzed period, internal changes of limited scope were made, related to promotion to higher positions and to changing status from part-time to full time. The reported proportion between the number of teaching staff and students is stable. Besides the teaching staff who are fully qualified to perform academic and pedagogical activities, industry experts are invited to enhance the learning process by real-life business experiences. According to the Faculty Workload Regulations, the teaching staff workload is determined and differs between academic-track and research-track faculty. The workload plan for the semester represents the basis for planning the proportion of teaching activities and research needed to produce the required quantity and quality of publications. The teaching staff is involved in different activities related to staff's service expectations. The range is broad and includes different ways of serving the institution in achieving its educational mission.

The teaching staff fulfills all necessary didactic and professional requirements and enables the achievement of the study program's aims and learning outcomes. Their scientific research engagements are demonstrated through active participation in international conferences and research projects and through the number of publications in the refereed journals. The age composition is good: younger professors who prevail (4 from the age group of 25-34 years and 10 from 35-44 years old), and more experienced professors (SER, p. 44). The presence and expertise of the foreign full-time and visiting professors represent an added value and complement the expertise of the local teaching staff. The presence of industry experts also enriches the program value and learning experience. The institution has precise and developed internal formal procedures and regulations that help determine the faculty workload, which is planned on a semester basis and is adapted individually according to the teaching and research activities, administrative functions held by teaching staff, and service expectations. The future developmental needs are discussed during the annual meeting of the teaching staff. During the meeting with the expert committee, teachers stressed their satisfaction with the excellent working conditions regarding the teaching process, clear and systematic approach to their promotion, support for the collaborative research activities, and motivation to include students in research. In their view, the teaching process is quality-driven; they are oriented toward interactive teaching methods and encouraged to share experiences during meetings and

brown-bag seminars. In addition, teachers highly appreciate the institutional flexibility and quick response, i.e., perfect, the overnight adaptation of the institution to the pandemic working conditions.

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

ISM offers different opportunities for academic outgoing and incoming mobility through ERASMUS+ and NordPlus exchange programs, and other bilateral exchange agreements as well. Teaching staff is strongly encouraged to participate since participation in academic mobility is subject to evaluation and recognition during the assessment of faculty member performance.

The take-up for academic mobility among the Study Program teachers is good. Every year of the analyzed period, around 20% of the total full-time teaching staff took up academic mobility activities. There is a good balance between outgoing and incoming mobility. Outgoing mobility differs a little yearly while the incoming mobility is stable – 5 members of the teaching staff throughout the years of the analyzed period (SER, Table 19, p. 46). The advantage of the incoming mobility is that the foreign professors deliver whole modules, enriching the students' learning experiences with international perspectives while maintaining high teaching standards of the case method. In the outgoing academic mobility frame, the teaching staff, besides lecturing, perform different activities that enhance internationalization, such as delivering workshops and seminars, sharing best practices, discussing possible project collaborations and double diploma possibilities. The international network of partner institutions for academic mobility is broad and includes prestigious universities from Europe, USA, Asia – Japan. During the session with the expert committee, teachers have confirmed that both outgoing and incoming mobility enhance professors' international perspectives, highly rated by the ISM students.

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

ISM is committed to accomplishing the goals of academic, and especially research excellence. Therefore, different initiatives, procedures, and programs were formally established, aiming to enhance and motivate teaching staff and doctoral students to strive for extraordinary results. The ISM journal list and the list of top-level international conferences are developed. ISM Winter and Summer Research and Teaching Academies are organized, dedicated to the themes that were agreed upon as needed for the teaching staff. Funding and rewarding rules and procedures are established in Conference Financing Regulations and Financial Reward for Academic Publications. Three awards include The Scholar of the Year Award, Social-Economic Impact of ISM Research Implementation Award, and ISM Communicator Award.

The profile descriptions and the list of publications of the teaching staff show that besides teaching, they attend conferences, participate in editorial boards of scientific journals, leadership or membership in professional and scientific associations and collaborate with the business practice to a certain extent. Individual development needs for teaching staff members are regularly identified in collaboration with the department heads, usually once a year. To accomplish a goal of research excellence, teaching staff may receive financial support for attending relevant conferences, publishing in high-level scientific journals, conducting internal research projects, for data collection, and alike. ISM provides the necessary training for developing academic writing and publishing skills, supports participation in research seminars of different topics related to research methods and design, brown bag seminars, and provides individual consultations if needed. Since the quality and number of publications matter from

the program's and institution's perspective, teachers expressed satisfaction with a broad range of supporting activities regarding improving research competencies.

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

***(1) Strengths:***

1. ISM has internationally experienced teaching staff. They are competent and skilled to work in the multicultural academic environment, with diploma degrees obtained at established international institutions.
2. Staff development activities are systematically established, organized, promoted, and funded (including special recognition and rewards for excellence in publishing and significant research achievements).

2.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Opportunities to encourage internationalization through collaboration in research, writing, and publishing scientific papers authored by ISM marketing teachers with visiting marketing professors from abroad have not been sufficiently exploited.
2. Although teachers publish in respectable, peer-reviewed scientific journals, the number of papers published in journals within the field of marketing is small.

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

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

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

From the self-evaluation-report and from the video material provided, it is evident that ISM is a modern and well equipped educational facility, with suitable spaces for teaching and learning including various sizes of on-campus auditoriums, smaller size teaching premises and special computer classes. Students can also use open spaces as well as auditoriums for individual or project work, where printing facilities and wifi access is available across all areas.

ISM informs that students with special needs can get individual assessment and study format and material can be adjusted for their special requirements. Students and teachers have access to psychologists.

ISM facilities for Marketing Management and Economics studies have the relevant IT solutions and software for students to access study materials online (such as the Moodle learning platform). University also has cloud storage capacities for students' material, and a digital communication network for internal information exchange ([Live@edu](#) platform). Video footage provided by ISM and the SER indicate that all auditoriums are equipped with cameras connected to the computers providing capabilities for remote teaching and streaming - especially relevant for pandemic COVID situations during 2020-2021. University has currently installed a fast internet connection (10G).

The ISM operates an autonomous library at the University premises, with a relevant stock of books for Marketing and Management study programmes (about 900 titles and 1612 copies for marketing disciplines). Physical books and publications are available to book/lend for students through an online catalogue. Besides physical libraries and printed books, readers have access to various online databases and access to journals and repository catalogues through open sources.

On campus library has flexible work hours and the staff is ready to teach information search tools. Librarians work closely with teaching staff to acquire relevant teaching material and use their feedback as well as feedback from all library users to update the stock of needed literature.

ISM has a very individual and personal approach to student needs and the onboarding to available IT tools and search programs are conducted on an individual basis. Besides that, an overall introduction and training courses for information-search literacy are conducted yearly.

ISM informs that all onsite classrooms are equipped with relevant internet connections and technology needed for remote studies or hybrid-format studies, providing good flexibility to both the teaching staff and the students.

ISM has a career center that operates in close collaboration with business and social partners, providing opportunities for students and partners to meet for events and social activities. University has a good network and collaboration with business partners, where students can take internships, and use the partners for case studies related to their learning.

ISM facilities are modern and well equipped for onsite teaching of Marketing and Management studies, and both physical, technology and informational resources are adequate for Master studies in Marketing and Management and achieving the desired outcomes of the studies. Overall, ISM has very good support resources available both for students and teachers, taking an individual approach to their needs.

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

An overview of financial investments into IT and physical infrastructure is presented by ISM for 2015-2021 in the SER, showcasing their considerations for different resource types. The annual resource planning process is clear and takes into consideration inputs and feedback from both the teaching staff and students. There is no special process for planning resources for students with special needs, but those are well accommodated through the individual approach. Expert panel finds the overall resource planning process to be well considered and adequate to the needs of the Marketing field studies.

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

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

1. ISM has a well functioning support and resource planning system that has an individual approach to the needs of both students and teaching staff.

2. ISM applies well organised networks and processes for linking social and business partners, providing opportunities for relevant internships and case studies.

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

1. Such a demanding individual approach can hinder scalability of the program in the future and a more efficient system might be needed.

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

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

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

As part of the quality management process, the ISM is remodeling their website to support high quality services and information flow. Most of the quality management processes are done by individual approaches towards students. Amongst many activities, there are midterm meetings with students. There are regular surveys, the results of the surveys are being used as necessary input to the quality management system. The quality management responsible persons also ask program directors about the actions they take regarding feedback. During the site visit, it was confirmed that they constantly check their courses, considering the feedback from students.

On the institutional level, it can be stated that there were some structural changes. There are more participants in the quality management process, including external partners. For ISM it is a good opportunity to invite international experts into their quality management process. The expert committee admits the existence of the Quality Manual, providing information about quality assurance procedures.

The expert committee acknowledges that ISM would like to have more people to supervise their quality management processes. It is strongly advised to have more international members too, preparing for possible further international accreditations in the future. The expert committee also admits the efforts taken into surveys: according to the site visit, 50%+ is the minimum ratio of active students, which ensures a good quality standard.

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

ISM involves social partners, mostly focusing on lectures and seminar projects. Looking at the internship experiences, the quality of leadership and management skills is secured by the good quality connections.

Regarding the students, after every module they get a survey to assess the professors and their courses not just quantitatively but qualitatively too. The students acknowledged the possibility to meet the program director to assess courses and professors at the end of every semester.

The expert committee finds the approaches taken by ISM towards involving main stakeholders satisfying. The hard and soft skills (proactivity, taking ownership, analytical skills, argument, having the ability to connect theory to real life situations) of students were praised by the social partners. This proves the results of a functioning quality management.

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

As it can be seen in the self-evaluation report, the data department of ISM is responsible for managing all information regarding studies and study programs. All information is available online. The expert committee acknowledges the efforts of ISM in information management. All necessary information is available in both Lithuanian and English. The latter should not lose its importance, considering the aspiration for stronger internationalization.

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

There are defined systems for collecting satisfaction information from the University. Specific information on the work of the Student Council is not included. After the meeting held with the students, the expert committee considers that the University should reinforce its culture of quality, reporting the results of the satisfaction surveys to the interest groups, as well as the improvement plan. It is also recommended to give more visibility and power to the Student Council and its activities.

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

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

1. ISM is responding quickly to the students' needs and is willing to make ongoing changes.
2. ISM acquires a huge amount of qualitative data at the end of semester, and analyses it in structured form.

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

1. ISM should involve more graduates in all kinds of activities. Alumni prefer a more systematic approach towards them from the University.
2. To organize the gained knowledge even more, some knowledge management approaches would be useful for students, giving an opportunity for even higher quality standards.

## IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Student admission and support is working excellently at ISM. The information on the website is very clear, comprehensive, interactive, accessible and eye-catching. *Admission package* for the new students is very useful. A meticulous care when applying the admission criteria allows choosing the students most aligned with the program. This shows the thoroughness with which ISM works when reviewing documents submitted by students. There is a series of financial aid available for students who are in need or for students who obtain excellence in their merits. Students are actively participating in mobility programmes starting the second semester of studies.

Teaching and learning is organized in an exceptional way. Study forms and methods are various types, allowing to foster personal, professional, or research skills and competencies – and more importantly to reach various LOs as defined on the program level. The feedback on study progress is not limited just to the teacher; fellow students often participate in the process as well. Various learning approaches are described in detail, providing sufficient information about the organization of students' individual work and evaluation. The strong ISM orientation on internationalization further supports students continuing their studies abroad. The institution has a complex system monitoring student study progress. As a result, students receive adequate feedback on their study progress which promotes self-assessment. Employability of graduates is on an excellent level, and the institution pays a lot of attention to graduate career development and tracking. There is a strong commitment of all - faculty members, management, and supportive staff - towards the students and their learning progress.

ISM has a modern and well equipped learning facility, with suitable spaces for teaching and learning including various sizes of on-campus auditoriums, smaller size teaching premises and special computer classes. Students can also use open spaces as well as auditoriums for individual or project work, where printing facilities and wifi access is available across all areas. University also has cloud storage capacities for students' material, and a digital communication network for internal information exchange. ISM has a well functioning support and resource planning system that has an individual approach to the needs of both students and teaching staff.

Study quality management is working exceptionally well at ISM. ISM acquires a huge amount of qualitative data at the end of semester, and analyses it in structured form. The hard and soft skills (proactivity, taking ownership, analytical skills, argument, having the ability to connect theory to real life situations) of students are praised by the social partners. This proves the results of a functioning quality management. ISM does a lot in information management.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The sequence of modules during the program should be improved to reflect more logic.</li> <li>2. The inclusion of new elective courses that are of particular interest to the international marketing field and students should be considered.</li> <li>3. A thorough revision of the partner institutions and their programs for the double-degree diploma option is recommended.</li> </ol>
Links between science (art) and studies	<p>The requirements for promotion should be developed in a more balanced manner, creating equal opportunities for teaching and research oriented staff as well.</p> <p>The students' participation in academic conferences should be encouraged.</p>
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve, expand or bring to the students the information on the recognition of non-formal education credits.</li> <li>2. Strengthen and empower the Student Council.</li> </ol>
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Double degree partners should be selected more carefully, as the assessment frameworks at cooperation institutions are not always fully compatible with the ISM assessment framework.</li> </ol>
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The cooperation of marketing teachers at ISM with foreign visiting professors on joint research, preparing papers for conferences, and publishing in journals would enhance the international aspect of the research output.</li> <li>2. Further expansion of the international contacts to publish more in marketing-related peer-reviewed journals is desirable.</li> </ol>
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With the available resources and tech tools, please consider the potential of hybrid mode studies (i.e. in-class, combined with virtual streaming and virtual group work), as that will provide an opportunity to scale and further develop the study and attract even more international students.</li> </ol>
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ISM should involve more graduates in its quality management activities, developing formal procedures.</li> <li>2. Some knowledge management approaches should be developed for students, creating the opportunity for even higher quality standards.</li> </ol>

## VI. SUMMARY

The programme *International Marketing and Management* is well balanced and it has a strong overall focus on internationalization regarding students, teaching staff, curriculum development, teaching and assessments methods, double diploma possibilities, mobility, etc. The study program is comparable with those offered by foreign HEIs in North and West Europe. At the same time, the sequence of modules might not be optimal and there are only two elective courses offered to the students. There is also a concern regarding the level of quality in partner institutions concerning the double degree programme.

The ISM carries out high research quality: they publish several publications in Financial Times top 50 journals. During the different assignments like case studies, research projects or any other collaborations, the teaching staff provides an opportunity for students to get familiar with the latest research findings. At the same time, opportunities to encourage internationalization through collaboration in research, writing, and publishing scientific papers authored by ISM marketing teachers with visiting marketing professors from abroad have not been sufficiently exploited. Although teachers publish in respectable, peer-reviewed scientific journals, the number of papers published in journals within the field of marketing is small.

Student admission and support is working excellently at ISM. The information on the website is very clear, comprehensive, interactive, accessible and eye-catching. *Admission package* for the new students is very useful. A meticulous care when applying the admission criteria allows choosing the students most aligned with the program. This shows the thoroughness with which ISM works when reviewing documents submitted by students.

Teaching and learning is organized very well. Study forms and methods are various types, allowing to foster personal, professional, or research skills and competencies – and more importantly to reach various LOs as defined on the program level. Various learning approaches are described in detail, providing sufficient information about the organization of students' individual work and evaluation. The institution has a complex system monitoring student study progress. Employability of graduates is on an excellent level, and the institution pays a lot of attention to graduate career development and tracking.

The teaching staff fulfills all necessary didactic and professional requirements and enables the achievement of the study program's aims and learning outcomes. Their scientific research engagements are demonstrated through active participation in international conferences and research projects and through the number of publications in the refereed journals. ISM has internationally experienced teaching staff. They are competent and skilled to work in the multicultural academic environment, with diploma degrees obtained at established international institutions.

ISM has a modern and well equipped learning facility, with suitable spaces for teaching and learning including various sizes of on-campus auditoriums, smaller size teaching premises and special computer classes. Students can also use open spaces as well as auditoriums for

individual or project work. ISM has a well functioning support and resource planning system that has an individual approach to the needs of both students and teaching staff.

Study quality management is working exceptionally well at ISM. ISM acquires a huge amount of qualitative data at the end of semester, and analyses it in structured form. The hard and soft skills (proactivity, taking ownership, analytical skills, argument, having the ability to connect theory to real life situations) of students are praised by the social partners. This proves the results of a functioning quality management. ISM does a lot in information management.

**Expert panel signatures:**

1. **Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson (panel chairperson)**, *academic*
2. **Prof. dr. Đurđana Ozretić Došen**, *academic*
3. **Dr. Ákos Varga**, *academic*
4. **Dr. Tomáš Kincl**, *academic*
5. **Ms. Daiva Staneikaite-Naldal**, *representative of social partners*
6. **Ms. Alicia Presencio Herrero**, *students' representative*