CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of MARKETING

at Kazimieras Simonavičius University

Expert panel:

1. **Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson (panel chairperson),** academic;

2. **Dr. Dario Miočević,** academic;

3. **Dr. Ákos Varga,** academic;

4. **Dr. Giedrius Romeika,** academic;

5. **Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis,** representative of social partners;

6. **Ms. Alicia Presencio Herrero,** students' representative.

Evaluation coordinator – Mr. Domantas Markevičius

Vilnius
2021

Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	***Marketing and Advertising***
State code	6121LX034
Type of studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3,5 years)
Credit volume	210
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	English, Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	2013-01-25

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

On the basis of this external evaluation report of the study field SKVC takes a decision to accredit 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 *26 April, 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;*
Dr. Dario Miočević, *Associate Professor of Marketing at the Faculty of Enocomics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, Croatia;*
Dr. Ákos Varga, *Associate Professor at the Institute of Marketing, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary;*
Dr. Giedrius Romeika, *Director of the Institute of Social Sciences and Applied Informatics at Kaunas Faculty, Vilnius University, Lithuania;*
Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis, *Communication project manager, "Topo Centras", part of EURONICS alliance, Lithuania;*
Ms. Alicia Presencio Herrero, *1st 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 and during the site visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	Virtual presentation (slides) of learning facilities used by Marketing and Advertising students at Kazimieras Simonavičius University.
2.	List of research and commercialisation projects related to the marketing study field

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

Kazimieras Simonavičius University (hereafter – KSU, also – the University) is a non-state university established in 2003. Studies at KSU are delivered in Vilnius (main headquarters) and in Klaipėda. KSU has three units having the faculty status: Law Faculty, Creative Society and Economy Institute and Business School (hereafter – BS). BS operates at KSU from 2013 and is located in Vilnius. Four first cycle and three second cycle study programmes are offered at the Business School in the fields of business, management, marketing and public administration. The analysed first cycle study programme of Marketing and Advertising was launched in 2013 and is the only University's study programme implemented in the field of marketing.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Marketing study field and **first cycle** at Kazimieras Simonavičius University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	2
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	**21**

*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

The self-evaluation report (hereafter – SER) presented recent data on employability of marketing professionals as the basis to justify the societal needs for its study programme (SER, p. 7-11). The exhaustive data also includes salaries, general demand for professionals in marketing and advertising and even provides international evidence and data from reputable consulting firms (e.g., McKinsey & Company) as a relevant benchmark. At the end, the aims and LOs of the study programme are provided.

The general goals of all study programmes are essentially in line with the needs of the labour market. It is well supported by the presented data and reads well. Rationale for introducing one rounded programme (Marketing and Advertising) is thus justified since it covers a wide array of employment opportunities in the marketing profession and especially in the digital environment. The justification is further emphasized through study programme's aims and LOs which are substantiated and tie well with the qualification. Additionally, during the meeting with KSU management and employers, the expert committee found that the fit between business practice and study programme is at the core of the school's DNA. Evidently, the sessions with both teachers and students as well as social partners indicate that informal feedback on the quality of study programme exists. In this regard, they all praise the school's efforts to respond to stakeholder's needs. However, these seem to happen "ad hoc", and there is a lack of formalized and periodical system that would ensure that the study programme is constantly upgraded and up to the most recent requirements of the labour market.

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

The general goals of the study programme are essentially in line with the mission and strategic goals, although the strategic goals are not clearly defined and transparent so the assessment of conformity can be assessed rather indirectly through "keywords" (SER, p. 13). During the sessions with KSU management and staff it became evident that internationalization is still emerging and plans exist on how to increase the international component in the study programme.

Although the aims of the study programme are in line with the core mission of the KSU, there is a lack of formalized strategic planning in general and especially in relation with management of the study programme. This becomes evident in the lack of balance between the study programme's name and aims it tries to achieve. Although the management team indicated that the change of the name is in progress, there is a struggle on how to position the study programme in relation to competitors.

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

The SER report presents all the formal data on the study programme's structure and organization (credit structure according in-class hours and student's independent work), and provides evidence on its alignment with the responding legislative framework (SER, p. 13-14). The courses in the programme carry in between 3 and 6 ECTS, the programme lasts for three and a half years. Also, the KSU provides the detailed study plan for its study programme which enables clear assessment of the compliance of its content with a goal of ensuring the relevance of LOs and justifying the qualification.

While the presented data shows diligently how the study programme fits the legal requirements and enables the achievement of outcomes, there is a lack of evidence on how KSU approaches study programme revision and updates in a more structured and formalized way. This would include more critical reappraisal of study programme's aims and LOs with a direct and formal intervention from both students and social partners.

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

Based on the information from the SER (SER, p.14-15) and meetings with the teaching staff and students, the expert committee determined that the KSU uses a wide array of teaching methods. Incorporated teaching methods, such as project assignments, case study analyses, simulations debate, fieldwork, guest lectures, etc., encourage creative and critical thinking and develop problem-solving skills. Also, there is a tendency to increase the practical component in teaching. The KSU presents the study programme's aims and outcomes in a clear way and provides the constructive alignment matrix between study programme and course LOs in a clear and logical manner (Annex table 6).

The showcased evidence indicates that the used teaching and assessment methods are robust, in line with specific courses taught and contribute to the achievement of the study programme's aims. The teachers seem to have good connections with the corporate world either through prior work experience or engagement through business consulting and successfully pass this perspective onto students in the classroom. According to the viewpoint of KSU students expressed during the session, they are generally satisfied with how teachers approach and engage them in class.

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

SER provisioned by KSU provides relevance on how the study programme courses contribute to development of students' digital marketing competencies in key important areas outlined by relevant industry reports (SER, p.16). Also, the study programme outlines the areas where students develop key competencies gradually, namely: personal growth, entrepreneurship, sales & digital services and content creation. The explicated study programme structure also ensures the logical upgrades in students' competencies as they progress through next academic year (SER, p. 18-19). Academic depth is secured through various methodological courses such as Principles of Research and Academic Writing. During the meeting with teaching staff it became clear that they align their courses with overall study programme's aims by trying to emphasize the keywords such as "digitalization", "marketing/advertising" and "creativity". Social partners seem to be satisfied with the graduates from this programme and they especially praise the creativity and entrepreneurial mindset of the students. However, during the session with students it became evident that there is a lack of academic

depth since they rarely engage with various sources (methods, databases and literature) that would extend their academic horizons. There is also evidence of the internationalization efforts which enables students to attend some courses in English, participate in joint assignments with incoming foreign students as well as offering to students to master their knowledge of other languages.

According to the expert committee's assessment, the study programme shows a balanced focus on analytical, creative and practical skills. Also, the additional strength of the study programme is seen in the reliance on the complementary departments in the school (e.g., big data and communication). The inclusion of "Project work" enables a more coherent connection between the academic and practical aspects of studying. However, given the growing trend of internationalization in both business practice and academia in Lithuania (e.g., growing number of foreign students and workers), the expert committee unanimously agrees that KSU should put more effort in increasing the international component of its study programme. According to students' feedback, some courses (e.g., Economics and Happiness Economics) increase the overall workload excessively but without sound justification.

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 SER, KSU provides evidence of undertaken efforts to ensure that the study programme fits well with personalized needs of a student (SER, p. 19-20). These include: provision of elective courses, extracurricular activities, projects, strategic alliance with other institutions in delivering courses, active involvement in revising and updating the study programme's curriculum among others.

According to the expert committee's assessment of evidence from the SER and from meetings with management, staff and students, there is an agreement that KSU offers enough options for students to personalize their studies. Additional strength of the programme is the possibility for students to engage in extracurricular activities which contribute to their professional development. However, according to the expert committee's judgement, more elective courses should be provided in order to increase personalization of study programme according to the needs of the students. This was clearly identified as a weakness in the SER (SER, p. 22) and the expert committee commends this and suggests that KSU undertakes the concrete revisions to study programme's plan to ensure this.

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

The final thesis represents the final step before a student's graduation. There are regulations and guidelines to inform both students and supervisors of the steps in this process. In this regard, the SER provides sufficient evidence on procedures and guidelines how the process administratively evolves (SER, p. 20-21). Also, there is evidence on how KSU assures the objectivity of the assessment before and during the formal defence. The study programme also provides a number of courses that are relevant for students to effectively go through the process of preparation, writing and defence of the final thesis.

According to the expert committee's assessment, the study programme final theses are well aligned with the aims, focus and content of the study programme. However, during the meetings with students' representatives, the expert committee identified some shortcomings in this process. First, there is a lack of logistical support for students in terms of using library resources, databases and anti plagiarism requirements. Also, and as identified by the KSU,

there is a growing opportunity to better align final theses with the actual needs of social partners thus contributing more to better connections with the corporate world.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Characteristics of the programme are well aligned with business practice and its requirements.
2. The teaching methods are very innovative and tied to business practice.
3. Strong ties with social partners enables a coherent communication channel that can further help in making the study programme more relevant.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Strategic planning needs to be more concrete, especially in developing a strategy on how to differentiate KSU and its study programme from other competitors.
2. The academic depth seems to be lacking in students' engagement during studies.
3. Internationalization awareness is still emerging and KSU should increase efforts to internationalize its study programme in many areas.
4. More formalized approach to study programme management is needed.

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

During the online site visit at KSU the expert committee identified strong focus on practical knowledge as an outstanding strength, among several other features: open and engaging communication between teachers and students, innovative activities in teaching (projects from external participants) which ensures useful knowledge and skills for students in their future career.

However, the expert committee must mention a very concerning shortcoming, namely the overall missing importance of academic science. This impression was further strengthened by the student insight during the site visit where they showed little to no theoretical knowledge of academic literature, theories, models, concepts or even defining names in marketing. This strong emphasis on practical knowledge and skills (without providing sufficient theoretical basis) could eventually be an obstacle later in career development. This process poses a serious threat: too specific knowledge could narrow down the job opportunities of your alumni, which could erode the reputation of KSU. Another concern is the seemingly undermotivated teaching staff, in terms of willingness to conduct research and implementing the results in education practices. There was also a deficiency in focusing on program-specific topics (e.g., digital advertising) in research: the presented research body is too broad and vaguely connected to the actual teaching content.

Another shortcoming is the lack of internationalization. Less emphasis on academic relevance could lead to disadvantage on an international level – taking under consideration of

international students, KSU might want to reconsider the current importance of scientific research.

The expert committee must also state that there is an opportunity in the increasing number of Ph.D. studies, which could eventually lead to more relevant research activities and higher quality publications.

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

The study programme relies on both full time and part time professors as well as international academic staff. The latest developments of research projects involve areas of services innovations and marketing, impact of gamification on services and products marketing, modern ICT technologies (virtual reality), application to services and products marketing and sale process, and analysis of new business ideas sale processes. The expert committee took under consideration the main profile of KSU, finding these approaches sufficient.

The expert committee acknowledges that the aforementioned areas are aligned with the content of studies. The study subjects and the content of the site visit confirms the connection between the current developments and study materials and methods. The expert committee must express its concern regarding the missing academic approaches. Relying heavily on applied aspects narrows down the future career opportunities of KSU graduates.

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

On the basis of information provided in the SER (p. 26) and the interviews with Students and Teaching Staff, it can be concluded that the vast majority of student scientific activities is oriented exclusively to practical-applied nature (Case Analysis; Case Problem Solving; sharing of Best Practice with well known business and administration professionals). This is to be welcomed, but cannot be the dominant activity. Having in mind that an assessed University is not a University of Applied Sciences, it is recommended to strengthen the scientific activities of students through organization of research activities, preparation of scientific publications (preferably together with Teaching Staff), and participation in scientific conferences.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:
(1) Strengths:
1. The practical training for students is well organized.
2. New scientific trends are introduced in the study content.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. The results of scientific research do not reach the expected standards.
2. The internationalization approach does not match the articulated aspirations – significantly more efforts need to be invested into academic research.
3. The students are not involved enough in scientific activities.

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

There are no special requirements for the enrolment to the bachelor programme of Marketing and Advertising. Applicants must have a high school graduation certificate and fulfill the conditions for admission to the University. Applicants participate in the motivation interview with the Admission Committee. During the last year, the criteria have been hardened to attract highly motivated students to study the Degree and thus avoid dropping out. The academic staff of KSU go to high schools, where they present studies and give lectures on marketing realities, innovations, and research results of the University. All the information appears on the University website (www.ksu.lt), as well as on social networks (Facebook and Instagram).

Admission to the Marketing and Advertising study programme is carried out in two ways: through the LAMA BPO general admission system and by direct enrolment to the University. The information is clear, accessible and complete, the admission requirements are well-founded. The Admission Commission attaches great importance to the motivation presented by the student to carry out their studies. The students consulted in the meeting stated that they knew the process well and did not point out any weaknesses when it came to enrolling in the Degree in Marketing.

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

During the analysed period, the crediting of partial study results went smoothly and was performed for 4 students. The recognition of credits is assured. During the period 2017/2018 – 2019/2020, individual study plans were drawn up 4 times for the students of the Marketing and Advertising study programme. In the same period, there were no students or applicants to the Marketing and Advertising study programme who would apply for recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies, and previous non-formal and informal learning results, but these opportunities are provided and all conditions are created for their provision. Processes are planned and based on the orders and validated descriptors of the Minister of Education and Science.

Due to the absence of students in these circumstances, it was only possible to evaluate the articulation of the mechanism, which is prepared to guarantee the validation of studies. The part-time studies were done successfully and without incident. However, students seem to be often unaware of the credit recognition mechanism. Although this information is found on the web, it is recommended that University deals personally with each student who wishes to enroll.

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

As stated in the SER (p. 31), KSU provides all the relevant information about international mobility for their students. At the beginning of each academic year, first-year students meet with the staff of the International Relations Department and are introduced to general information about international mobility opportunities. In 2018/2019, 20% went to partner

universities under international mobility programmes, and in 2019/2020 – 8.3% of students of the Marketing and Advertising study programme used this opportunity. As stated in the SER (p. 32), the aim is to create conditions that ensure the stable share of outgoing students amounting to 8-10% of all students in the programme.

Speaking about incoming foreign students, various pieces of evidence were found related to the provision of information and encouragement of students to participate in mobility programs, visiting the KSU for one semester. The high participation rates indicate that it is an attractive program that attracts internationalization. On the other hand, students should be encouraged to make foreign stays outside the university, as the results between outgoing and ingoing mobility are uneven. Virtual mobility was enhanced during the pandemic through COIL. Therefore, it is recommended to continue to pay attention to the development and maintenance of this area, as it is, without a doubt, one of the strengths of this Degree and of KSU in general.

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

Organisational support is provided by the Coordinators and the Director of the Studies Development Department, who individually communicate with students, consult and help to solve their problems related with studies. Communication is supported through Moodle. Students can seek not only for psychological counseling on personal issues and issues related to mental health but also can get counselling on study related areas: time planning, effective learning, motivation, public speaking issues. This is valued very positively. Speaking of financial aid, two students were awarded in the 2019-2020 course for good academic achievements (100% of semester price). Students appreciate that financial aid is given to the best in the class. It is recommended to further enhance the procedure, as well as to carry out periodic control procedures to detect psychological problems that might arise in the shadows, before they become more serious. In general, students positively value communication with all university staff, highlighting their closeness and availability.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

As stated in the SER (p. 33-34), the University develops individualisation and tutorship culture within studies, with a particular focus on individual consultations. Information and consultations tools include phone talks, email exchanges, on-line meetings on Zoom platform, individual teaching staff acceptance hours, administrative staff consultation. A separate block of student counselling is implemented during the preparation of the final thesis. The feedback regarding its adequacy is collected after each defense. The feedback on the effectiveness of the student counselling system is being collected by the staff of the Study Development Department.

Information about the curriculum and everything related to the University flows constantly and there are no apparent problems in this field. However, not enough evidence has been obtained about the operation of the Students Council, just the opinion of one of its representatives during the meeting with the students. It is recommended to better plan its agenda and prepare signed minutes of its meetings, as the present procedure seems to be informal, not documented.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

13

(1) Strengths:
1. The Degree in Marketing is highly chosen for Erasmus from other European universities.
2. For the students, the information on the Degree is clear, accessible and the proximity with the professors facilitates the resolution of any doubt or problem.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. The information on the Degree in Marketing is not listed on the website in English. This does not contribute to internationalization and makes information less accessible for Erasmus students.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

University administration states that lecturers are encouraged to involve students in the process of choosing teaching and learning methods, planning the form and the content of subject lectures and seminars, as well as to ask their opinion, and take into account their suggestions. This statement was partially confirmed during the meetings with Teaching Staff and Students. University is trying to enable students to participate in other activities related to the content of the field of study, which, according to the University, would help to expand students' knowledge in the areas of interest to them and allow them to get acquainted with the latest study-related issues. This goal is being tried to achieve through cooperation between the lecturers, administration and the social partners of the programme: for scientific and experience purposes, by prior arrangement, students attend guest lectures, go on study visits to public and private institutions, organisations, etc. The information gathered during the visit is not sufficient to confirm the proper achievement of this goal.

Analysis of information provided in the SER and additional documents, and evidence collected during virtual visit to University, allows to agree with statement that organisation of all teaching and learning activities of the Programme is based on and focuses on compliance with the programme's learning outcomes, programme structure, teaching methods, student group size, and the aim to individualise studies to ensure their relevance to students. Based on the collected data, it can be stated that teaching and learning process that enables to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes would be significantly more effective if the collaboration between University (both Administration and Teaching Staff) and Social Partners (including Alumni, Employers) would be more intense, structured, and focused on marketing area.

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

Regarding the provided information, University offers 50 percent discounts on the tuition fee for persons who do not have both parents or guardians, for students from orphanages, and for persons who have a certain level of the working capacity of 45 percent or less, or a severe or

moderate level of disability. University is located in the modern new building, taking into account the needs of people with disabilities, and this statement was totally confirmed during discussion with representatives of the University regarding the Learning facilities and resources.

During the meeting with Senior Management and Faculty Administration staff it was confirmed that University has qualified staff who provide administrative-information support at the study time and who can advise students from socially vulnerable groups or with special needs about the possibilities to receive additional financial support from the State Studies Foundation, the Disabled Affairs Department, and other sources.

It could be assumed that the support system is oriented exclusively to financial/discounting support. It is concluded that the support system lacks elements and tools of psychological and spiritual support but participation in targeted projects (e.g., State Studies Foundation project "Increasing the Accessibility of Studies") shows that there is potential for proper improvement of the system.

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

University Administration demonstrates encouragement of lecturers of all subjects in the Programme to apply a cumulative scoring system in their subject and to provide feedback to students on their success in completing the tasks provided during the subject. Facts of encouragement were confirmed during the meeting with the Teaching Staff and facts of implementation during the meeting with the Students. Regarding the provided information, progress monitoring is carried out by the Studies Development Department and is based on the results of examinations passed by students. In cooperation with the Director of the Business School, consultations are organised for them, the problems encountered by each student are individually discussed, their causes determined, and an individual solution plan is drawn up. During the meeting with the Students, specific examples have been provided to support the statement.

The assessed information, data and collected evidence allows to state that signs of systemicity can be detected in the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress. Nevertheless, it is concluded that this activity is highly individualized and therefore suitable for a small number of students but may cease to function properly as it increases.

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

Regarding the provided information, the career-monitoring process of the University assesses the career change of graduates and monitors their establishment in the labor market (using interview) by four times (immediately and one-three-five years after graduation). University states that according to the survey data, all graduates of the programme were already working immediately after graduation. Their positions were related to the business sector. The data of the second survey revealed the active movement of graduates in the labor market – 80 percent of respondents who graduated in 2018, and 50 percent of respondents who graduated in 2019, worked in another job or position one year after graduation as compared to the time of graduation, but their fields of activity remained the same, i.e. no one appeared to be working in a field other than their education. Unfortunately, to verify the accuracy of the

15

data and the functioning of the system, there were no Alumni representatives in the dedicated meeting as well as Employers who employed graduates of the Programme.

According to information provided in the SER, by the end of the analysed period, 7 students had completed the Programme. The first batch of graduates (5 persons) graduated in 2018, another 2 persons graduated in 2019, therefore the amount of data available for the analysis of employment and career of graduates is small, especially given that the relevant information and data were not provided by either the Alumni or the Employers.

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

Collaboration between the community is regulated by the Code of Ethics of Kazimieras Simonavičius University. According to the information provided by the University, the relationship between the community and the students of the University is based on the principles of respect, impartiality, goodwill, nondiscrimination and tolerance, academic cooperation, and transparency. The application of these principles was confirmed by meetings with Teaching Staff and Students.

Ensuring academic integrity includes the development of a culture of academic integrity based on the value education of students and the measures taken to prevent academic dishonesty, which combine education (special academic writing subject), monitoring and evaluation (to ensure independent and honest performance of tasks) and use of information technologies and databases (eLABa system) to identify cases of plagiarism.

It can be concluded that processes of the implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination at University is properly described and formalized. The only one mentioned application (complaint) allows us to assume that the analysed system functions.

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 process of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints is regulated by the approved regulations of the Kazimieras Simonavičius University Appeal Commission, which ensures the procedure for the formation and action of the Appeal Commission, submission and examination of appeals. Based on the collected information and the analysis of the submitted data, it can be assumed that procedure of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies is properly documented.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Physical access (premises, equipment) to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Fragmented and inconsistent collaboration between University and Social Partners in 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.

2. Support system for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs lacks elements and tools of psychological and spiritual support.
3. System of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress suitable for a small number of students but may cease to function properly as it increases.

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

SER provides evidence on adequacy of teaching staff in terms of number, attained qualifications and competencies (SER, p. 42-45; Annex table 4). The composition is well aligned with legal requirements and will even be more favourable in the future (since some of the lecturers in the teaching programme are currently PhD students). Also, the procedure on the selection of teaching staff is described and substantiated as well as obstacles in trying to retain qualified lecturers on a more permanent basis are discussed.

Based on the expert committee's judgement, although the adequacy in terms of legal requirements are met (actual ratio between overall number of lecturers and students) as well as blend between academic and practitioners, the KSU should put more efforts in the retention of the qualified faculty members. At present it seems that only seven lecturers are employed on the full-time basis although many of part-time lecturers are also involved with KSU at a more formal basis in committees and other organizational aspects. During the meeting with teaching staff, the expert committee revealed that their connections to the corporate world seem to contribute strongly to the quality of the study programme and this is recognized by the students.

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

There is evidence on signed international mobility agreements with various foreign-based schools. The data on staff mobility is presented and shows the tendency of teachers' mobility (SER, p. 46-47). Although the mobilities are encouraged to provide teachers with the possibility to enhance their cross-cultural skills and mindset, there is rather a lack of justification on why it is strategically important for the study programmes per se. In other words, there is a lack of formalized mechanisms how the know-how from mobility is transferred into the study programme.

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

The SER provides evidence on the KSU's procedures and regulations in regard to acquisition of qualified teaching staff as well as training undertaken in order to improve teaching skills of the lecturers (SER, p. 45-56). Also SER provides the data on academic productivity of the core faculty members (publications, projects and participation in conferences) (Annex table 4). During the session with the staff teaching in the programme it was revealed that the SER data was mostly corroborated and that professional development is a foundation of their work.

The expert committee's judgement is that KSU should place stronger emphasis in securing the conditions (training, projects, conferences) that would facilitate the improvement of skills of its key lecturers. While KSU focuses greatly on improving the pedagogical skills of its teachers, the expert committee indicates that equal emphasis should be put on developing the teachers' competencies in research. Although the KSU is a private institution and thus has greater challenge in attracting the financing, there should be a stronger academic basis that would support the delivery of such a programme. In such terms, it would help KSU a lot strategically in positioning vis-a-vis other competitors that offer similar study programmes.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Teachers are able to transfer practical experience to students in-class. Strong corporate connections are envisioned through prior professional experience, relations with social partners and business consulting.
2. Pedagogical skills and innovative teaching methods are appraised by the students.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. International mobility is managed "ad-hoc". More strategic approach to internationalization is needed, with measurable and quantifiable objectives over time.
2. The scholarly output seems to be weak for the standards of the university-level institution. Mechanisms that promote intellectual activity to reinforce the link between education and research are needed.
3. Introducing the formalized research support system should be prioritized.

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

There are 17 auditoriums with 402 seats or workplaces, equipped with multimedia necessary for presentations and wireless internet. Two of these auditoriums are dedicated for work with computers (34 workstations) and additionally one reading room with 15 computers. Also there are spaces dedicated for individual learning. It is commendable that KSU has taken into account the importance of social spaces for informal learning and socializing, lounge areas, summer terrace, cafe.

University provides all necessary resources for distant learning, has licenses for ZOOM, free access to Office 365 cloud services, certain subjects related software such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, SPS, Statistics programmes. KSU provides access to all online information for the studies with the help of Moodle.

KSU students can use professional Audiovisual Arts Industry Incubator visual recording equipment (RED, SONY, JVC ProHD), optical sets, telescopic video camera crane, camera motion equipment (operator trolley, steadicam equipment), lighting equipment, sound recording devices for their everyday tasks.

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

Based on the information provided in the SER and during the meetings with KSU management, it seems that both physical and virtual library resources are constantly being renewed by an actual demand coming from teaching staff together with renewal of the study subjects. Software budgets appear to be sufficient to provide quality studies, they are being renewed periodically, the management of KSU seems to react quickly to the changing needs of evolving study programs. The Faculty has a library with 15 workstations with access to major international databases, periodicals with access to most recent scientific information in the field both from University site and from a distance.

It is commendable that KSU management has a creative and proactive approach to broadening their student access to learning resources. According to the SER, KSU has cooperation agreements with the Lithuanian Technical Library and Library of the Psychology Academy which provides additional books for marketing field study programme. KSU also uses social partners, such as digital marketing agencies to work with real digital marketing cases as they share the access to their Digital marketing management accounts. During the meetings both with management and social partners it was evident that University has a close relationship with social partners that ensure sufficient places for internships and later - job positions, which are valuable for both parties.

At the same time, heavily relying on social partners' resources could make this part of resources difficult to plan and manage. Therefore, there should be a process in place to diversify and plan them in advance, to make it more stable and at the same time having its own accounts (in order to take advantage of having marketing competence inside the University and save KSU marketing spendings dedicated to attract new students). Therefore, a greater involvement of both lecturers and students into marketing of the KSU should be strongly considered as a great resource of practical knowledge application as well as an instant, detailed feedback.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. KSU provides a substantial number of facilities and auditoriums that are equipped with appropriate hardware to implement studies in the field of marketing.
2. Information resources are sufficient and they are being renewed together with changing study programmes.
3. Strong network of social partners not only keeps the studies up-to-date but also supplements practical resources and knowledge of its day to day application.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Clear planning process and diversification of practical learning resources should be implemented to have more stability and less reliance on several social partners.

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

KSU has implemented the internal study quality management and assurance system, based on the distribution of responsibility for the quality of studies. The Business School of KSU encourages students and staff to participate in study quality surveys and meetings held during the semester. Student feedback is analysed and its results are used for the improvement of the educational process. The Study Programme Committee ensures the preparation and improvement of the quality of study programme with planning, preparation and evaluation activities. It also holds responsibility for learning resources, involves social partners, and reinforces connections between academic and professional institutions.

The expert committee finds the structural approach to quality management at KSU adequate. The current quality management evaluates changes and innovations in the field of study, considers possibilities of their application, in this way ensuring the quality and innovation of the study process. The approach to internationalization through the mobility of students looks promising.

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

The quality management process at KSU ensures the revision and update of the study programme (even before the academic year) with the strong involvement of students and social partners. This ensures the adequate response for the rapid changes in the field of marketing. This constant, systematic interaction with them ensures the possibility to gather, analyse and consider their opinion about the quality of the study programme, its content and organisation.

The expert committee finds the current involvement of social partners, graduates and students into the internal quality management adequate. Still, the missing scientific point of view poses a threat for future endeavours of KSU.

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

The data collection on general information, study programme content, results, qualifications and career possibilities has a systematic approach by the study programme management. The general information about the study programme (content, uniqueness, admission information) are available at the KSU website and information leaflets.

The expert committee finds the current practice of collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes adequate. Still, some information is limited to Lithuanian only. In the expert committee's view, in light of the aspiration for stronger internationalization, all information should be accessible in English, without limitation.

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 information about students' satisfaction with studies and for reporting the results. According to the University, during the meetings at the beginning and in the middle of each semester, students are presented with the results of the surveys conducted and the measures and plans to be taken in light of these results (feedback

is also given by sending summary information to each student by e-mail). However, expert panel missed the information on the work of the Students' Council. It is recommended to give more visibility and power to its activities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Involving experts from a wide area ensures objectivity.
2. Proactive students can boost the development in the field of marketing.
3. Keeping the study materials up to date based on external expert insights could be considered as strength.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The missing scientific point of view poses harm in the long term.
2. The Students' Council should be given more visibility and power.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	1. The expert committee suggests establishing a peer review system among teachers to ensure a high level of quality of teaching and assessment methods. 2. The KSU management is advised to start the necessary revisions in the study programme as soon as possible and increase the internationalization component. 3. Some of the courses are not contributing to the overall aims of the study programme, i.e., Management History and Theory / Economics and Happiness Economics should be replaced with more contemporary content. 4. Conduct revision to study programme in order to achieve higher level of personalization.
Links between science (art) and studies	1. Strengthen the scientific activities of students. 2. Strengthen the academic research efforts.
Student admission and support	1. The information on the website should be fully translated into English to promote the internationalization of the title.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	1. To structure and systematize the process of cooperation with social partners. 2. Expand the support system for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs by psychological, spiritual support elements and tools.
Teaching staff	1. KSU is advised to increase this number in future since this becomes instrumental if the KSU is to be recognized in national and international contexts for its excellence in producing relevant teaching and research outputs in the designated field. 2. The expert committee advises strongly to organize the in-house dissemination events (once per semester) where teachers who undertook the mobility could share their experiences and report on how they plan to utilize the generated know-how in the courses they teach. 3. KSU should introduce policies and procedures as well as formal and informal motivational mechanisms on how to stimulate more relevant academic research that is related to the field in which the study programme is delivered.

Learning facilities and resources	1. Clear planning process and diversification of practical learning resources should be implemented to have more stability and less reliance on several social partners. 2. There is still space to facilitate the usage of information resources, such as databases, e.g., by constantly tracking, measuring actual usage and at the same time setting goals which would make the usage necessary both for teaching staff and students. 3. If epidemiological situation allows, make better use of material and technological infrastructure of the University and the social partners in the study process.
Study quality management and public information	1. KSU should involve the scientific point of view into their quality management system. 2. The Students' Council should be given more visibility and power.

V. SUMMARY

The general goals of marketing field study programme *Marketing and Advertising* are essentially in line with the needs of the labour market. Admission procedures and information is clear, accessible and complete, the admission requirements are well-founded. The teaching methods are innovative and tied to business practice. Teachers are able to transfer practical experience to students in-class. Corporate connections are envisioned through prior professional experience, relations with social partners and business consulting. The information on the programme is clear and accessible. The University is developing individualisation and tutorship culture of studies and applies it when needed.

Although the aims of the study programme are in line with the mission of the KSU as well as the market needs, there is a lack of formalized strategic planning in general and especially in relation with management of the study programme. Fragmented and inconsistent collaboration between the KSU and social partners in the teaching and learning process could be improved and systemized. More formalized approach to study programme management is needed. Also, the academic depth is partly lacking in students' engagement during studies.

Internationalization awareness within the University is nicely there, but KSU should increase efforts to internationalize its marketing field study programme in both teaching and learning activities. Despite the fact that a degree in Marketing and Advertising is already now often chosen for Erasmus exchange from other European universities, the information on the programme itself is not listed on the website in English. This does not contribute to internationalization and makes information difficult for Erasmus students. More strategic approach to internationalization is needed - KSU in general and Business School in particular should have measurable and quantifiable objectives over time.

The scholarly output is not too strong for the standards of the university-level institution. The expert committee witnessed a concerning shortcoming, namely the overall missing importance of academic science. Mechanisms that promote intellectual activity to reinforce the link between education and research are needed. Introducing the formalized research support system should be prioritized.

KSU provides a substantial number of facilities and auditoriums, they are equipped with appropriate hardware to implement studies in the field of marketing. Information resources are sufficient and they are being renewed together with changing study programmes. At the same time, there is a space to facilitate the usage of information resources, such as databases, e.g., by constantly tracking, measuring actual usage and at the same time setting goals which make the usage necessary both for teaching staff and students. Clear planning process and diversification of practical learning resources should be implemented to have more stability and less reliance on several social partners.

Expert panel signatures:

1. **Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson (panel chairperson),** academic
2. **Dr. Dario Miočević,** *academic*
3. **Dr. Ákos Varga,** *academic*
4. **Dr. Giedrius Romeika,** *academic*
5. **Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis,** *representative of social partners*
6. **Ms. Alicia Presencio Herrero,** *students' representative*