



CENTER FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD

HISTORY

at Klaipėda University

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	History of Europe	Baltic History
State code	6121NX075	6211NX051
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies (3 years)	Full-time studies (2 years)
Credit volume	180	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor's degree in Humanities	Master's degree in Humanities
Language of instruction	Russian; Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary	Bachelor's degree
Registration date of the study programme	14/12/2017	19/05/1997

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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 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) visit of the review team at the higher education institution; 3) production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

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

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

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

1.2. THE REVIEW TEAM

The review team was completed according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The Review Visit to Klaipėda University was conducted by the team on 1 December 2020. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Review Visit was conducted online using video conferencing tools (Zoom).

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Ms. Maria-Giovanna Lotito, *student of University of Teramo, 2nd cycle study programme in Public Administration.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Virtual presentation (slides) of learning facilities of the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology at Klaipėda University.
2.	Study subject questionnaire sample and the results (de-personalized).
3.	Course descriptors (syllabi) of the main history field subjects of the first and second cycles.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN HEI

Since the establishment of the Klaipėda University (hereafter – KU), history studies have played an important role in its research and educational activity. The first history programme started in 1993, two years after the official establishment of the University. Since that moment history studies have experienced several organizational changes. Now, it is the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology (BRIAI) which supervises five (1st and 2nd cycle) programmes related to History and Archaeology study fields offered at the Klaipėda University. These are: Baltic History, Archaeology and History, Landscape Archaeology, History and History of Europe. The last degree programme was launched in 2019, and is delivered in Russian. The Institute also provides doctoral education in the field of History and Archaeology, cooperating with the Vytautas Magnus University. There are currently 16 doctoral students at the BRIAI.

The Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology is the successor of the Centre for West Lithuanian and Prussian History (which commenced its activities in 1992) and, in effect, focuses its research activity on studying the multicultural heritage of the Eastern Baltic Region between the Vistula and Daugava rivers in the context of the entire Baltic Sea Region. The members of the Institute participate in international scientific collaborations and exchange and academic networks. The Institute, which plays an important role in the Lithuanian research map, develops various forms of relationships and cooperation with other Lithuanian scientific and educational centres, museums, societies and organisations. Bringing together a multidisciplinary expertise, the Institute aims to be an internationally-recognised research centre for the Baltic Sea region. It constantly works to strengthen its national and international reputation, and does so successfully. Its scientific achievements are acknowledged by historians in other European countries.

The Institute (in 2020) employs 40 researchers, 37 of whom have a doctoral degree. Most of them are involved in teaching in the Bachelor and Master programmes offered by the BRIAI.

The Institute also hires, on an annual, short-term basis, specialists needed for highly specific courses. According to the SER, of the 23 lecturers who delivered courses for students in 2019–2020 academic year, only five were not BRIAI researchers. The depth and breadth of research expertise of the BRIAI's members provide a solid foundation for their teaching.

In sum, the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology, with its ambition to develop high quality research and teaching, fulfils the goals and mission of the Klaipeda University.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

History study field and *first cycle* at Klaipėda 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.	Study aims, outcomes and content	3
2.	Links between science (art) and study activities	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Studying, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and publicity	4
	Total:	22

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

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

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

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

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

History study field and *second cycle* at Klaipėda 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.	Study aims, outcomes and content	4
2.	Links between science (art) and study activities	5
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Studying, student performance and graduate employment	5
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and publicity	4
	Total:	29

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

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

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

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

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. STUDY AIMS, OUTCOMES AND CONTENT

Study programmes' 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 Bachelor/first cycle study programme, the *History of Europe*, has just been launched: the first students were admitted to the programme in September 2019. That fact alone, made the evaluation of the degree somewhat more challenging since the expert committee did not have a holistic view of the programme (how it develops throughout the whole cycle, from the first year to the third year), and, as a result, could not fully evaluate how do the intended curricula operate in practice. However, the expert panel did have an opportunity to discuss extensively, with the authorities of the BRIAI (Institute of History and Archaeology of the Baltic Region; also: The Institute), the details of the degree programme and the reasons and motivations for launching that specific route.

The Self Evaluation Report (hereafter – SER) demonstrates that the Institute demonstrates a good understanding of the needs of the labour market. Both study programmes, *History of Europe* (1st cycle) and *Baltic History* (2nd cycle), are intended to equip the students with a broad knowledge related to the history of Europe and Baltic region, along with a set of competences, (such as collecting, efficiently analysing, systematizing, evaluating information), which will make them attractive to potential employers, representing various sectors.

According to the SER, the programme *History of Europe* is unique across all of the Baltic States, as it is the only degree in History of Europe, and European history studies more broadly, to be offered in Russian. The Klaipėda University's initiative to launch that programme, primarily addressed to the candidates who represent the countries constituting the EU Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine), has also been appreciated by Lithuania's Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. As the first cycle programme *History of Europe* has been launched in 2019 and there are no alumni yet, the expert panel could not compare the intended goals of the programme with the achieved ones. Nor were we able to evaluate whether the competences acquired by students in the course of the entire cycle meet the real needs of the labour market. It is also very difficult to find out whether the programme, targeted primarily to international students, is really interesting for them, and whether it should be continued in its current form.

Overall, the graduates of the second cycle programme *Baltic History* are prepared to work in the field of education, heritage, archaeology, museology, cultural management, just to name a few. The most research-driven graduates of the programme can develop their interests as doctoral students. Moreover, Klaipėda plays a very important role in the Lithuanian military

defence system, and Klaipeda University cooperates with various military institutions (see part 3.4). These factors led to the emergence (in 2017) of a new study module, “military history” (within the *Baltic history* programme), which enjoys popularity among students, and candidates of whom some serve in the Armed Forces. The students who study that module can acquire additional knowledge and competences useful in the national defence and public security sector. The launching of that module proved that the Institute can operate in a flexible way and adjust the programme to the wider social needs and partnerships. The cooperation with the military sector creates new opportunities to develop new research projects, and the students can also clearly benefit from collaboration.

The evidence from interviews with the BRIAI’s social partners suggests that they are very satisfied with the attributes of the graduates from the *Baltic history* programme (*History of Europe* started in 2019 and there is no evidence to judge) and highly value the collaboration with the department.

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.

Both programmes are aligned with the Klaipeda University’s vision, ambitions and its strategic action plan (SER p. 7). The programmes intend to train highly qualified specialists in the field of study, who can flexibly adapt to the needs of society and labour market, and contribute to the development of the region. The first cycle programme *History of Europe* is strictly connected to Klaipeda University’s internationalization strategy. The creators of the programme hope that the admission of foreign students will also help to balance the declining number of local candidates interested in studying at Klaipeda University.

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

The aims and outcomes of programmes of both first (*History of Europe*) and second (*Baltic History*) cycle meet the legal requirements of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania and comply with the Lithuanian Qualification Framework, corresponding with the criteria of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (SER p. 7–8).

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

The details of both programmes (aims and expected learning outcomes) are presented in the AIKOS system, on the Klaipeda University website, and on the Klaipeda BRIAI website. They are also distributed through various communication channels, with social media at the top of the list. The main purpose of the *History of Europe* programme is (according to SER, p. 8): “to train specialists who are able to orientate in the changing labour market and who can effectively apply the acquired knowledge and skills”. The *Baltic History* programme is aimed mainly to “deepen the knowledge on the history of the Baltic region in modern and

contemporary periods, with the focus on the specific issues and historical experience of this region”, along with equipping the students with methodological and theoretical tools and practical skills which help them to understand better the regional context. The above-described purposes are operationalised on several levels according to the legal requirements (SER, p. 9–10). The study outcomes related to the *History of Europe* programme are divided into four groups: knowledge, cognitive skills, practical skills, transferable skills. They constitute a complex set of competences which can be achieved in the course of the study years, and are in line with the study programme’s vision. The learning outcomes of the *Baltic History* programme are divided into five intersecting cognate groups: 1. Knowledge; 2. Special skills; 3. Social skills; 4. Personal skills; 5. Ability to conduct research.

As the SER states (p. 9), “with the aim to ensure active work of students throughout the study semester, their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, objective assessment of study outcomes, the University applies cumulative assessment”. The study plan indicates that each course concludes with an exam, which makes the programme not only exam heavy, but also does not allow to fully verify the outcomes (such as independent critical thinking; ability to conduct a research project) declared in the programme. Students also undergo various forms of interim assessment, most of which are, still, of summative rather than formative nature. However, as pedagogical research and practice stipulate, formative assessment is much more beneficial to the student’s long-term learning. Therefore, it will be fruitful to increase the range of assessment methods with more emphasis being given to ongoing, formative assessment that would nurture students’ learning.

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

The first cycle programme *History of Europe* is intended (according to the SER and the responses received during the online visit) to be taught in Lithuanian and Russian, with strong emphasis placed also on learning English in the course of the programme. Currently, the programme is delivered entirely in Russian – *lingua franca* for the current cohort of students. In addition, the degree programme declares to promote European values among the students and to “contribute to the understanding of the experiences of various European societies” (SER, p.6). The programme also aims to “train specialists who are able to orientate in the changing labour market and who can effectively apply the acquired knowledge and skills” (SER, p. 8) and “to train competent professionals who are able to effectively apply the acquired knowledge as well as cognitive and practical skills” (SER, p.6). These include: “basic research skills necessary for the collection, analysis, systematisation and evaluation of research information [as well as providing necessary] skills to conduct historical research independently”. It also pursues “to form a universal, responsible and socially active personality” (SER p.6).

Still, the above-mentioned goals are formulated in a very general way, which can apply to any programme, regardless of the discipline. Fortunately, there is also a list of the concrete, more specific study outcomes (SER p. 9-10), which refer to the discipline of history more

specifically. Overall, the members of the expert panel find those declarations to be praiseworthy, hoping that the aims intended can indeed be achieved and that the graduates of the first cycle programme will demonstrate such a high level and holistic set of knowledge, attitudes and skills.

The wide scope of the modules provide the students with a relatively broad basis and subject-specific knowledge. The programme consists of three main subject blocks: a) History of Europe from antiquity to the present day; b) History of Central and Eastern Europe, History of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and History of Modern Lithuania; c) History of European culture, military conflicts, genocides, everyday life and ideologies. Each block contains a number (2-4) of compulsory units and a list of electives. Moreover students are required to attend Philosophy, Logic, Sociology courses along with the language courses - English, Lithuanian, and Latin. Students are also required to take introductory courses: Methodology of Historical Research, Introduction to Archaeological Studies, and to complete two practical placements (Archival Practice, Archaeology Practice). According to the study plan each student is expected to prepare two so called Course Papers. Unfortunately, in its current formulation, there is no clear distinction between the Course paper 1 (60 contact hours, 160 total, and 6 ECTS) and the Course Paper 2 (55 contact hours, 107 total, and 4 ECTS) as to the content and outcomes. Moreover, the relation between Course papers and Bachelor thesis should be defined more clearly and consistently.

In the panel's view, Latin (only 30 contact hours!) as well as Lithuanian should receive more teaching hours. These 30 contact hours of Latin (presumably from *ab initio* level) are not sufficient to provide a solid linguistic foundation for the study of earlier historical periods and texts (e.g., the Middle Ages). As a consequence, the students will be prevented from engaging with earlier epochs, since they will not have the necessary linguistic skills. This, in turn, greatly limits the educational opportunities available to the students.

According to the degree specifications, the foreign students are required to take only 60 contact hours of Lithuanian language classes at A1 level. As it is, there is a visible incoherence between the intended aims (Russian and Lithuanian as the languages of instruction) and practice. In addition, the Experts did not find any details neither in the SER nor during the online visit as to the way in which the Lithuanian language would be implemented as a language of instruction (presumably requiring a much higher level of language competences than A1).

KU's subsequent follow-up commentary specifies that the University offers a Lithuanian Language and Culture courses in summer and winter. This is a much welcomed addition which, however, had not been mentioned in the available evaluation material. It is hoped that these summer/winter courses are indeed available and accessible to all international students and can, therefore, contribute to the overall learning goals.

Likewise, the study plan included in the SER does not provide sufficient details as to how "the strong emphasis on learning English language" will be transformed from declaration into

practice. According to the study plan presented to the experts, the subject “professional foreign language” (credited for 3 ECTS) is assigned to the first semester and will take only 30 contact hours. The experts find this number insufficient if the degree programme is really to provide the students with a meaningful and high-level foreign language competence.

As a result, the experts are afraid that with limited hours there is no guarantee that all learning outcomes can be met, especially those related to the development of foreign language proficiency as well as subject-specific research skills. Furthermore, there are no (zero) contact hours assigned to the Bachelor Thesis. One way to address this would be to establish a special seminar linked to the preparation of Bachelor Thesis.

Seen together, the above remarks provide a comprehensive roadmap for improving the “Study aims, outcomes and content” evaluation area (in relation to the first cycle of study).

The second cycle programme, *Baltic History*, has been offered for 23 years (since 1997). During that time, the degree programme has been systematically monitored and underwent various developments in order to make it more attractive to students. In the course of these changes, the degree programme also adopted the recommendations given by the experts who assessed it on behalf of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education in 2011.

The goal of the programme is (SER p. 6-7) to prepare the prospective graduates “for professional research work” and to develop “the skills required to solve research issues”. It also aims to “further development of students’ theoretical and methodological training and raise their abilities to analyse, systematize, evaluate, interpret, arguably debate the issues related to political, social, cultural evaluations of the past and present”. In the course of two years, each student is expected to write three Research papers which are supposed to gradually acquaint her/him with research methods.

As the SER states, the programme is research-oriented and focuses on mastering research analytical skills, along with deepening and broadening the content knowledge related to the history of the Baltic region. The *Baltic History* programme is more inclined towards political history. The programme focuses on the history of Eastern and Central European countries (16th to 20th centuries), putting emphasis on two leading issues: confessionalization and nationalism. The list of obligatory courses includes, e.g., Nationalism in German History, Holocaust History of Europe, Society and Confessional Processes in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It should be noted that following the recommendations given during previous external evaluation, a new study unit was created (*Baltic Region: Concepts of Mental Geographical Concepts and Spatial Imagination*). This obligatory subject lays the foundation for the study of Baltic history and offers students the broader, more complex definition of the region. The students are offered additional elective subjects to broaden their study field knowledge: e.g., History of War Thought and Warfare; Cultural Heritage Management, Microhistory: Methodology and Research.

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.

According to SER (p. 12), the KU students can personalise their studies. The general principles of the process, which apply also do the participants of the *History of Europe* and *Baltic History* programmes, are described by the internal university regulations and apply to the whole University. The students can “complete the program in a shorter study period” (before the scheduled time/deadline). They can also individualise their curricula by taking additional or alternative subjects, choosing electives and the topics of their course/research papers as well as the topic of their final theses.

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

The *History of Europe* programme concludes with Bachelor Thesis and the *Baltic History* programme finalises with a Master’s Thesis – individually prepared by the student under the supervision of a member of staff. Each topic is agreed on an individual basis; as a matter of agreement between the student and the supervisor. According to the SER, the thesis is supposed to be an extended research paper. Following the University’s regulations the final thesis is reviewed by one (1st cycle *History of Europe* programme) or two reviewers (2nd cycle *Baltic History*). The list of topics of final theses (MA, because there is no BA theses yet) proves that the students are offered a great selection of various problems related to history. However, papers related to contemporary history dominate; that phenomenon is also observed in other history programmes in Europe.

Students are expected to defend their work in front of the Qualification Panel; the wider public is welcomed. Public defence is supposed to demonstrate student’s competences acquired throughout the study. The expert panel finds the public defence procedure is a perfect example of “good practice”.

Recommendations:

1. The Institute should create a clear and transparent mechanism for coordinating and mapping modes of assessment in order to facilitate students' progression. As the study plan of both cycles (*History of Europe* and *Baltic History*) demonstrates, each subject included into the programmes ends with an exam. It is recommended to search for alternative ways of evaluating students' achievements, especially those related to skills acquisition.
2. The Institute should analyse and reconsider the process of leading students towards the writing of their Bachelor or Master thesis. It is recommended to restructure how the thesis research and supervision are run by creating a “diploma seminar” and including it into the curriculum. In addition to providing the much-needed guidance and mentorship for a young researcher, a specialized seminar can be a perfect opportunity to develop the student’s social and academic skills. Such a seminar would be a great opportunity to build the community of young scholars and also prepare them for a range of academic and professional settings.

3. The Institute should broaden the scope of the *Baltic History* programme through offering more subjects (or even a separate module, similar to the military history one) on social history, gender history etc.
4. The Institute should develop new incentives in order to expand the programmes' scope (esp. in relation to the range of historical periods studied) and encourage students to study and conduct research related to the history of epochs other than just the contemporary one.
5. As the students of the *History of Europe* programme are expected to acquire "professional foreign language skills", it is necessary to ensure consistency between the number of hours dedicated to foreign/English language and the expected goals. It is therefore recommended that the Institute increases the foreign language provision within the programme.
6. The Institute should also rethink how to provide more opportunities for international students to learn Lithuanian language.
7. As the *History of Europe* programme started in 2019 and there are no graduates yet, it is recommended to prepare an internal evaluation of the programme after completing the first edition, when the first cohort of alumni will graduate and enter the job market.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDY ACTIVITIES

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 BRIAI, Institute of History and Archaeology of the Baltic Region, is regarded as one of the leading research centres in Lithuania. This is reflected in the results of the assessment provided by MOSTA (Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre) as well as by international experts (SER p. 14).

The academics working there have significant research achievements in the field of Baltic studies, in which they are recognized and acknowledged by historians in other European countries (SER p. 14 – 17). They carry out research projects funded by external institutions, and compete for their funding. The results of their analyses are published not only in Lithuanian, but also in English, German, Russian, and other languages. The members of the Institute participate in international scientific collaboration, exchange and networks. Their research expertise in the field of study lays a solid foundation for their teaching in both first cycle (*History of Europe*) and second cycle (*Baltic History*) programmes.

In effect, it is clear that the Institute's research strengths and expertise lie in Baltic history and regional studies, broadly conceived. This is a highly commendable position. However, it is strongly advised that the teaching and research staff expand their research interests to include more explicitly the history of Western Europe.

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

The expert panel finds a strong link between the content of studies (*History of Europe* and *Baltic History*) and the latest developments in European and Baltic history. The teaching staff prepare their lectures based on the relevant, constantly updated reading lists, and have an impact on the resources (books, databases etc.) acquired by the University library and accessible to the students. What's more, the second cycle programme *Baltic History* is deeply rooted in the research topics developed by the members of the Institute, focusing on various aspects of confessionalization and nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe. The core subjects and content offered to the students are linked to those issues. Concrete examples of research-led teaching are provided in the SER (p.15). The academics involved in teaching in the programme integrate the results of their research into the curricula. The students can benefit from that in terms of their own research related to the Master thesis.

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

During the course of their studies, students of the first cycle programme *History of Europe* are gradually familiarised with the methodology and methods of providing research in the field of study. They also have the opportunity to develop their research skills while preparing (under the supervision) the course papers and final theses assigned to the study plan. As the programme has been launched in 2019, the expert panel does not have sufficient data to assess how effectively it works.

The 2nd cycle *Baltic History* programme aims to develop Master students' research skills and provide them with the adequate knowledge of scientific procedures, which together will allow them to carry out independent research projects. Those goals are operationalised on various levels during the two year period of study: each student is obligated to prepare two research papers and a Master thesis.

Students, especially those of the 2nd cycle (*Baltic History*), are encouraged to participate in various scientific activities, e.g., to contribute to the organization of seminars, conferences, publication of articles, and editing of primary sources publications. However, only the research driven students are interested in the above-mentioned extracurricular activities. Although the students constitute a relatively small cohort (in terms of numbers), the list of their achievements (conference papers, and publications) for the last three years (since 2017) presented in the SER (p. 16-17) is quite impressive.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the Institute develops a set of incentives to encourage more students (especially those of the 2nd cycle) to participate in various research activities.

2. It is strongly recommended that the BRIAI staff expand their research interests and establish stronger links between their research and curriculum in the *History of Europe* programme so that the scope of the programme goes beyond the current dominant focus on the Baltic region. To this end, the staff are advised to develop research projects more clearly related to the history of Europe, as it has been defined in the curricula.

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.

Admission criteria to the *History of Europe* and *Baltic History* programmes (SER, p. 18–19) are established by the KU Senate; they are precisely described and published on the KU website and known to the prospective applicants in advance. The candidates have sufficient time to get acquainted with formal requirements and the admission timetable.

The procedures meet the rules of transparency and equity. Access to both programmes is through public competition. The ranking of the candidates and the list of those admitted are made on the basis of the scores achieved by each applicant.

The first cycle programme *History of Europe* launched in 2019. Because of that, there was only one admission session. The number of applicants was relatively small: 9 and all of them have been accepted. Two students hold so-called “state-funded places”, and 7 “state-non funded places”. The candidates performed well – the average competitive score was 8,65/10, however there was a relatively substantial difference between the highest (9,17) and the lowest (6,91) score. It would be very important to monitor whether the above-mentioned difference is reflected during the degree programme itself.

At this moment, the number of places offered in the programme *History of Europe* is the same as the number of those selected. The same applies to the second cycle programme *Baltic History*. There were 10 candidates in 2019 and all of them were accepted. In 2018, out of 9 applicants, 9 were enrolled. All those who were admitted in 2018 and 2019 hold so-called “state-funded” places.

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

Klaipėda University has a clear procedure for recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning, which is in line with national and international requirements. The competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning are assessed internally by special commissions appointed by the Rector.

The main principles of the procedure are summarised in SER (p. 19-20). For both cycles, *History of Europe* and *Baltic History*, the recognition of academic qualification is based on the requirements and procedures which apply to the entire University.

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

The Institute is very interested in encouraging students to take part in mobility programmes. The most important is Erasmus+. The rules, how to apply and the conditions of participation, are known to the students well in advance. However, as the expert panel could notice, the students generally demonstrate low interest in going abroad for one semester. This is a result of their personal situation: most of them have families and small children or are full-time employed with long-term commitments at work. These factors most certainly determine their lack of interest in the international internship programme. This poses a serious challenge for the entire academic community. University authorities have high hopes for increased internationalization, with the new Erasmus Charter for 2021-2027 also promoting the idea of 'virtual mobility' and remote mobility.

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.

According to the SER (p. 21–22) and interviews with the students, KU offers various forms of financial and social support, some of which are regulated externally, by state bodies and distributed among the students according to the set of criteria. Moreover, KU has an internal policy of awarding various forms of student achievement and activities. Students can win special prizes funded by social partners. These can be awarded mainly for their academic achievements, e.g., for final theses. KU also offers several types of incentive scholarships: for students who demonstrate very good or excellent study results and who actively participate in the students' scientific, artistic or university activity. These are university-wide awards and the winners are selected among the candidates, nominated by departments, one of which is BRIAI. Students can also be rewarded for individual achievement, such as conference papers, publications, artistic or sport successes.

In addition, according to the SER (p. 22), "KU provides psychological counselling and spiritual pastoral services available to both students and university staff". The experts were not able to verify whether students know about that possibility, and how they assess the system, since none of the students attending the meeting with the expert panel had sought that sort of assistance. Furthermore, the university also provides careers assistance, for example, in the form of individual career counselling, available to all and tailored to each student's needs.

At the same time, following the discussion with the university authorities and the students, it became evident that the university's understanding of additional learning and support needs is rather limited. The focus was almost entirely limited to mobility issues and physical impairments (and the building infrastructure these might require, e.g., lifts), while mental health issues as well as psychological conditions (e.g., disorders) were not recognized by staff and students as 'additional learning needs.'

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

According to the SER (p. 22–23), the information related to the study (such as study regulations, academic calendar, scholarships, and practical tips referring to day-to-day student's life) is available to the students on the KU virtual platform. This information is published in Lithuanian, and additionally (shorter versions of it) in English and Russian. The University website also provides so-called accessibility mode, which helps students with vision impairment to navigate in a virtual environment.

Newly admitted students are also provided with basic information related to the University and the department (the programmes, procedures, and regulations) at the beginning of the academic year, during the introductory week. They are also acquainted with the KU campus in order to locate the most important, study-related locations (e.g. library).

Students looking for specific information related to their studies can also use special electronic services provided by the University: Academic Information System (AIS) and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The first one stores data related to the student progress, course grid and syllabus descriptions, while VLE is designed for interaction between students and lecturers. Students can also contact the teaching or administrative staff in person during office hours or via email. Students from both first and second cycle programmes (*History of Europe* and *Baltic History*) are also provided with oral information referring to the details of each course and its requirements during their first seminars.

As the *History of Europe* programme is addressed to foreign students who can come from various educational backgrounds, it seems crucial to offer them an effective induction in order for them to smoothly adapt to the Lithuanian context. On the whole, a coherent vision and plan for future strategy (esp. in the fields of recruitment; student support and internationalization) would be welcomed. Currently, there are very few international applicants. This enables an individually-tailored support, but when (as we all hope) the number of international candidates increases, a coherent, scaled-up induction policy will be needed. It is important to help them understand the teaching and learning styles in Lithuanian context better. Students who will join the degree programme come from secondary schools where they were used to different methods, and, as a result, can present different levels of historical knowledge. In effect, it's essential to integrate within the programme those who come from international and multicultural contexts, and do so in a systematic and holistic manner, not limited to the introductory week only.

Overall, the data collected by the expert panel leads to the conclusion that the University offers its students clear and accessible information related to the study and counselling. However, the University does not currently provide any satisfaction survey that would help to assess the level of support available to students at the University – introducing such practice would help the university to provide a more holistic and wide-ranging student-centred support. Moreover, in line with providing a more holistic support, there is an urgent need for a radical broadening of the university's understanding (and policies crafted in response to it)

of student's support needs to cater not only to the disabilities visible in mobility challenges but also to include invisible disabilities and neurodiversity of all student groups (whether that translates into different learning and participation styles; particular additional learning needs or else). Only such a broadening will allow the department to fully respond to the range and diversity of students' backgrounds, making the university and the programmes (in the long run) a much more inclusive and accessible place.

Recommendations:

1. In the context of decreasing domestic applications (both in *History of Europe* and *Baltic History*), it is recommended that the Institute revisits and adjusts its recruitment strategy, focusing, among others, on promoting the programmes within Lithuania (*Baltic History*) and abroad (*History of Europe*).

2. It is recommended to consider the potential for technology to provide virtual mobility. As the students generally demonstrate low interest in going abroad for one semester, it is recommended that the department liaises with the University's central services to co-operate to envisage a new approach to mobility, which could meet students' needs and personal circumstances.

3. The expert panel recommends that the Institute introduces students' satisfaction surveys (on a regular basis, e.g., at the end of the year). This will allow the department to monitor whether the students are satisfied with the help the University offers them and what could be improved. It would also help to provide a more holistic and wide-ranging student-centered support.

4. It is strongly recommended that the Institute and the University support services broaden their definition, policies, and practices related to supporting students' needs in order to go beyond the current exclusive focus on mobility impairments and visible disabilities.

3.4. STUDYING, 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.

During the online meeting with the experts, students of *History of Europe* (1st cycle) and *Baltic History* (2nd cycle), who attended the event, expressed their strong appreciation for the fact that the weekly study plan allows them to share their university duties with work obligations; a relatively substantial number of students, in particular of 2nd cycle, have part-time or permanent jobs. They expressed their overall satisfaction with the educational environment and, particularly, the enthusiasm and expertise of university staff at the Institute. The

professors are very helpful, student friendly, and willing to devote extra hours from their time to additional, individual one-to-one consultation. They are also accessible by email, and through social media. However, as the expert panel could notice, the teaching staff should receive more professional support on how to best respond to students with additional learning needs. The students of both programmes (*History of Europe* and *Baltic History*) can also tailor their plan of study in line with the university regulations, and according to the advice given to them by the Director of the Institute or their supervisors. The students, via their representatives to the KU Senate and KU Students' Union, can also contribute to the development of the programmes and study plans.

According to the SER (p. 24), the Institute provides an annual update of study units aimed to ensure that the programmes are carried out using the most effective methods of teaching. However, no examples of such action are provided in the SER. As the study plan indicates, each course concludes with an exam, without specifying the exact nature as well as the potential formative character of the assessment. Students also undergo various forms of interim assessment, most of which are, still, of summative rather than formative nature. This, in effect, risks making the entire programme too exam-heavy. It should be noted, however, that the students interviewed by the expert panel gave some examples of formative assessment methods which are exercised by the teaching staff. This leads to the conclusion that, in contrast to what the SER indicates (esp. its use of "exam" as the default type of assessment for all of the evaluated modules), formative methods of assessment are used more frequently than documents suggest – a much welcomed observation. As such, it is therefore necessary to make sure that the SER reflects, in adequately and sufficiently detailed manner, what types of assessment and what formats are used in teaching.

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

According to the SER (p. 24) and the information collected during online meetings with students and staff, the KU study regulations allow students who are in need (e.g., due to illness, pregnancy, maternity or parental leave) to temporarily suspend their study up to one year. All students can seek psychological assistance as well as modify their curricula adjusting them to their individual situation. The expert panel noticed, however, that the term "special needs" is being used almost exclusively to refer to mobility challenges and visible physical impairments (including hearing and visual impairments; see parts 3.3.4. and 3.3.5. above). Experts were also surprised to learn that, in the whole Institute, there was no student with additional support needs (even narrowly understood).

Even the detailed additional information as to the range of technical support available (e. immersive readers; text to sound software) still primarily emphasises these aforementioned visible impairments and the "added" support available to students. This is a very good starting point for developing a fully inclusive teaching practice, meaning employing a range of teaching practices and methods that speak to and address a variety of learning styles, strengths and neurodiversity found in each seminar room, whether there are students with

so-called additional support needs and disabilities or not. In short, inclusive teaching (one that would ensure access for socially vulnerable groups and others) must be understood not as an add-on feature or “service” but a type of holistic, pedagogic practice. As it is, the SER does not provide sufficient data which could allow the expert panel to judge the full extent of the policies provided in order to ensure university access to socially vulnerable groups. According to the national regulations, the University offers various forms of financial support in the course of the study. However, there is very little if any information about any other measures which can address the issue of social inclusion.

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

The SER does not address that issue directly (p. 24), focusing, instead, on the forms of feedback implemented in the course of the study as well as the opportunities the students have if they are willing to express their opinions related to various aspects of the study process.

In 2019, the KU Rector approved “The Description of the procedure for Organizing Feedback on Studies at Klaipeda University”, a document which regulates the rules and procedures related to the organization and collection of students' opinions on the study programmes. This will help to assess whether the monitoring provided by the teaching staff works effectively and meets students' needs.

However, taking into account the feedback given to the previous points and the on the ground quality assurance practices, the expert panel can assume that students are monitored systematically and are also consulted regularly by lecturers, coursework and thesis supervisors, even if this is not necessarily reflected in the SER.

3.4.4. Evaluation of the feedback provided to students in the course of the studies to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress.

According to the SER (p. 24), ‘during the study process, various forms of feedback are implemented: discussion of task performance or exam assessment, feedback and comments via electronic means, students’ self-assessment or peer assessment, group discussion’. The students interviewed by the experts expressed in broad terms that they were satisfied with the feedback they received in the course of their study. Still, it is very difficult to judge whether the assessment feedback really helps students to acquire the necessary skills and level of self-reflexivity to be able to successfully evaluate their own learning.

The *History of Europe* programme and the *Baltic History* programme both have a relatively small number of students; their progress can be monitored on individual basis. The panel observed that the assessment (refers to both programmes: *History of Europe* and *Baltic History*) tended to be dominated by exams. However, during the interviews with students, it emerged that formative assessments were practised, but not on a regular systematic basis,

often informal (see above 3.4.1). It also emerged that tutors and lecturers were routinely very supportive to the students. This definitely would help to monitor student progress.

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

Due to the fact that the first cycle programme *History of Europe* started only in 2019, there is no relevant data to assess the employability of the graduates (see above: 3.1.1). Potentially, the students who will complete that programme will have knowledge and skills useful, for example, in the cultural and educational institutions mainly in Russian speaking countries (as Russian language is the language of instruction). Looking at the graduate employability of the (older) second cycle programme it can be assumed that the students who will demonstrate good knowledge of Lithuanian language (i.e. those currently enrolled in the first cycle of studies) will also be able to look for a job in Lithuania. The graduates of the programme can also continue their education and enrol into 2nd cycles programmes in their home countries, or (depending on their language abilities) in Lithuania, and other European countries.

In contrast, as the second cycle programme *Baltic History* has been offered for over two decades, there is sufficient data to evaluate how its graduates locate themselves on the job market. It should be noticed that Klaipėda University graduates are recognized regionally and nationally. This remark applies also to the alumni of the *Baltic History* programme. There is a substantial number of institutions representing various sectors - including the Armed Forces (Air force and the Navy), culture, education, administration sectors - where the graduates are welcomed and appreciated. Social partners demonstrate a high level of loyalty to the Institute and strongly value the competences acquired by the students in the course of the programme. In sum, students have no difficulties with getting a job according to their individual interests and profiles.

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

Klaipėda University puts a strong emphasis on academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. In June 2015, the KU Senate approved the Code of Academic Integrity of Klaipėda University. The Code is intended to promote across KU: a culture of research and academic quality, socially responsible behaviour, and foster academic fairness, transparency and accountability to stakeholders. The academic values that ensure the transparency of the research and study process are: academic integrity, mutual trust, respect, equality, justice, non-discrimination, responsibility, resource efficiency, academic freedom, impartiality of valuation in research and studies, protection of intellectual property.

According to the KU Regulations the breach of academic ethics (e.g., plagiarism, or violation of other student academic rights) can be a reason for the expulsion of a student. Students are informed from the start of their education as to the rules regarding academic integrity.

KU has a special software to analyse students' submission in order to avoid plagiarism. The *History of Europe* and the *Baltic History* programmes both have a relatively small number of students; their academic integrity can be monitored continuously, on individual basis, and it is much easier to react immediately whenever it might have been required.

3.4.7. 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 procedures for student appeals and complaints are determined by the University's regulations (SER p. 26). The students are also informed as to their rights to take an action if they are not satisfied with various aspects of their study process. It can be assumed that the students, if need be, would be able to make use of their rights. However, according to the SER and the interviews, in the last three years there were no appeals nor complaints. In effect, the expert panel cannot judge how effectively the appeals system works if it has not yet been used..

Recommendations

The recommendations given in this part complement those made in sections 3.1. and 3.3.:

1. It is strongly recommended that the University adopts a much broader contextual definition of 'special needs' (to go beyond visible physical impairments and mobility challenges) and adjusts teaching practices accordingly. It is highly recommended that this issue is addressed at the central, university level and that adequate training and assistance are offered to teaching staff.
2. The expert panel recommends that, first, the Institute coordinates methods of assessing students' progress; second, that it monitors the effectiveness of feedback given to students (e.g., on assessment; in class) and whether it allows students to make substantial learning progress towards achieving the programme goals.
3. It is recommended that the Institute seeks alternative ways of evaluating students' progress and achievements (e.g., individual or group projects, portfolio etc.), especially those related to skills acquisition.
4. The Institute should prepare and put in place a plan of thorough monitoring of students' performance in the *History of Europe* programme, through the entire cycle and after the completion of the BA degree.
5. The Institute should analyse and address the issue of social inclusion, especially access to education for students from marginalized and under-represented groups. To this end, the Institute should design a long-term strategy for widening participation and ensuring equitable graduate outcomes for all students.
6. The expert panel recommends that the Institute puts more emphasis on ensuring that all students are familiar with the procedures related to appeals and complaints (e.g., by including a session on the appeals process in all of the required courses, or by other means appropriate to the wider university context).

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching 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 levels of staffing, both in terms of numbers and academic quality, are suitable for the delivery of both the first (*History of Europe*) and second cycle (*Baltic History*) programmes. Staff are, as stated above (3.2. 1 and 3.2.2), highly respected in their fields of historical enquiry. The list of their principal achievements (SER, p. 28–38) from the period of the last 5 years looks very impressive. The students appreciate the opportunity to be taught by leading experts in the field of history. However, the SER does not provide sufficient data related to the teaching skills and pedagogic competences. The panel had a strong impression that the emphasis is laid on research on publications, and teaching is undervalued.

The teaching staff demonstrate a diversified profile in terms of age, teaching, and research experience, from distinguished professors to junior lecturers. The entire group might benefit from that fact, providing mutual exchange of expertise, as well as competences. However, the expert panel gained the impression that the tutors do not work as a cohesive unit, especially in terms of their teaching methods and assessment. It would be highly valuable to coordinate the efforts (see above 3.1.4), mapping respective tactics and practices as well as identifying and addressing any inconsistencies of areas for potential improvement. Finally, as mentioned in the paragraph 3.2.1, it would be beneficial if this coordination of teaching practices was accompanied by a consistent effort to broaden the research expertise of the staff teaching on the *History of Europe* programme, specifically, so that its thematic coverage could go beyond the well-established focus on the Baltic region.

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

The mobility of the teaching staff is set out in the Regulations for Improving the Qualification of KU Lecturers and Researchers, which have been approved by the University's Senate. The members of the BRIAI regularly travel abroad as part of their research projects, visiting foreign archives, libraries and conferences. Some of them take advantage of the Erasmus+ exchange programme. SER (p. 35) lists also several international scholars (mainly from Germany) who visited KU and delivered lectures to the BRIAI's students.

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

As the SER states (p. 35), the University provides a procedure of regular (every five years) evaluation of research and pedagogical staff. The meeting with the authors of the SER and the lecturers confirmed, however, that the focus and emphasis is put on research activities, while pedagogical aspects are less important.

According to the students present at the online meeting with the expert panel, the teaching staff assigned to the programmes *History of Europe* and *Baltic History* consist of dedicated,

student-oriented academics. However, the expert panel gained an impression that they lack systematic pedagogical training which could help them expand their professional competences, awareness towards students with additional learning/support needs (in a very broad meaning of that term), and make the programmes more attractive and accessible to a wider range of students.

When the pandemic broke out and the University had to transfer its teaching into the digital environment, the teachers were offered practical courses and IT training to help them with that transition. That was centrally organized and welcomed by the lecturers.

During the online visit, the expert panel gained the impression that academic staff wanted more training on virtual learning environments, e.g., how to use more engaging methods of teaching.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the Institute creates a long-term plan for designing tailored assistance to the teachers, helping them to better understand, e.g., the need for more varied assessment, alternative methods of developing students' social and transferable skills.
2. The Institute should launch a coordinated programme to enhance digital teaching skills, and absorb digital humanities methods into practice. When appointing new staff in the future, the Institute should consider candidates with expertise in the digital humanities.
3. The expert panel recommends that the Institute establishes a special set of incentives, for example a special, annual award, for the best, innovative teachers.
4. Overall, the mobility of teaching staff should be increased and targeted towards the development of their pedagogical experience. As the University is a member of international consortium EU-CONEXUS, the expert panel strongly encourages the university to take advantage of that network in this regard.

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.

According to the SER (p. 36-37), the University pays great attention to the constant update and upgrade of the study infrastructure, acquisition of advanced information technologies and academic literature. The University also benefited from the fact that in 2010 the Government of Lithuania launched the Maritime Valley project which included a substantial money grant for the development of the University's infrastructure. Based on the data delivered in SER, 5% of the total budget was allocated to the infrastructural needs of the humanities and social sciences. This helped to modernize the locations where the students work. As a result, all premises are now well-equipped with access to the Internet.

The students of both programmes, *History of Europe* and *Baltic History*, are offered both traditional and electronic resources. The panel recognised that the University has a good repository, and students do have access to a long list of databases. What should be emphasised is that the Institute has its own book and database collection with thematic literature (about 30 000 publications, in English, German and Russian), so the students have all of the materials needed for the courses close at hand. The BRIAI's library is still developing resources required to meet the needs and expectations of the 1st cycle programme (*History of Europe*).

The students also have various educational IT facilities at their disposal, along with the IT helpdesk. Students interviewed during the online visit expressed their satisfaction with the resources provided by the Institute and the learning environment. Overall, the expert panel has a positive opinion on the suitability and adequacy of the resources of the field to ensure an effective learning process. As the *History of Europe* is a relatively new programme, it is expected that the library resources increase with the growth and development of the programme in consecutive years.

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

As the SER makes clear, the Institute makes a considerable effort to upgrade the resources needed to carry out teaching and research in the respective fields of study. The teaching material, facilities and learning environment are monitored frequently in order to be able to react as quickly as possible to the needs which can appear in the course of study. The department has a plan (SER, p. 39) to do this more systematically and on a regular basis. IT resources and equipment are serviced on a daily basis, to facilitate the flow of information within the University community, and to secure the stability of the teaching and learning processes. The KU Library cooperates with its peer institutions in various countries, developing the interlibrary loan system and networks for the exchange of scholarly publications. The teaching staff can shape and update the library collection by recommending specific books or databases to be acquired. It can be assumed that in the near future learning resources might be enhanced even more thanks to the international cooperation within the EU-CONEXUS alliance. In sum, the expert panel has no objections to the planning and upgrading of resources presented in the SER and during the online visit.

Recommendations:

1. It is very important to ensure that the required research and learning resources are available to the *History of Europe* students (in relation to library and IT resources; incl. databases, journal access to foreign language periodicals).

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICITY

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.

The department considers its management system as “clear and transparent” (SER, p. 44). According to the SER (p. 39-41), KU has a specific project to implement QA and it also has the ISO 9001:2015 certification. There are some processes and procedures related to QA implemented by individuals, groups, departmental and faculty committees. The responsibilities for programme management are clearly defined, according to the national and international procedures of QA. The internal assessment undergoes an annual review process conducted by the Study Fields Committee and the BRIAI Governing Body. Both include the participation of students’ representatives and also social partners’ representatives.

During online meetings with the expert panel, students and teaching staff expressed their satisfaction as to the effectiveness of the system. However, the expert panel has no sufficient data to provide a conclusive evaluation related to the 1st cycle programme *History of Europe*, as it has been started just recently (2019).

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

According to the SER (p. 41-42), at the end of each semester KU conducts a survey with the specific aim to give to students the possibility to give their feedback about the study programme (p. 24). There is also a survey for the graduates with the aim of knowing their opinions about the whole degree. Employers and practitioners are regularly invited to the meetings with the aim of harmonizing and ensuring the real-life relevance of the quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods used in the course of the study programme. There are also some meetings with the KU students’ representatives to consider their opinions, observations and suggestions.

As regarding the involvement of students, they all underlined the family atmosphere in both programmes. This is a great help to them if they need to solve their problems. This further supports the sense of community not only during the study but also afterwards, for example alumni.

During the online visit, the stakeholders have emphasized their participation in the review process of the programme *Baltic History*. The emergence of the military module was to some extent the result of discussions between the department and external stakeholders (Lithuanian Armed Forces).

Still, the expert panel does not have sufficient data related to the 1st cycle programme (*History of Europe*) how those procedures work in practice and how effective they are.

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

According to the SER (p. 42-43), the information provided by surveys are summarized in KU annual report; it is available on KU website. The SER provides an example of the students' survey use: the update of the study programme *Baltic History*. As the programme *History of Europe* started in 2019, "no specific suggestions from students on how to improve it have been received so far" (SER, p. 43).

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

According to the SER, all the collected information is analysed and evaluated at the meetings of the Institute administration, the Committee of Study Fields in Archaeology and History, and the Institute Governing Body. Expert panel also had the chance to familiarize with the results of the student feedback survey conducted after one of the courses of the second cycle programme *Baltic History*. Looking at the scale of the grades given, students' opinion seems to be rather positive. However, all open questions were given no answers. As the number of students in both first and second cycle study programmes is not high, teaching staff could encourage them to share their views more openly.

Recommendations:

1. The Institute should provide better, easily accessible information on the internal quality assurance system and actions taken by the department to meet University-wide regulations.
2. The Institute should design a long-term plan of actions to strengthen the relationship with KU graduates.
3. It is strongly recommended that the Institute monitors the effectiveness of the *History of Europe* curriculum in relation to the expectations of stakeholders, (especially students and the wider university community), since the programme has been launched only in 2019 and is only beginning to develop a rigorous quality assurance process. In order to achieve this end, it is recommended that the Institute designs a set of evaluation tools, tailored to the specific nature of the programme.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Staff teaching training

Across the first and second cycle programmes (*History of Europe* and *Baltic History*), academic staff, at all levels of seniority and experience, should increase their engagement in continuing professional development; in particular, in relation to pedagogic training which remains somewhat undervalued at the University. This can have negative effects on the teaching provision in the programmes, students' engagement, and teaching satisfaction levels. In order to redress this, the University should promote the efforts of all teaching staff, support them in their ongoing and comprehensive development (throughout their career path), and formally recognize innovative teaching practices.

[please see more detailed recommendations in parts 3.5. (1); 3.5. (2); 3.5. (3)]

2. Assessments

The department should create strategies for increasing variety in the forms of assessments carried out by teachers during the course of their programmes. The objectives for this should include a general move away from exam-dominated assessment and shift to formative assessment. This will assure that students are informed about their progression as well as allow the Institute to implement assessment methods that can more accurately assess students with special needs (e.g., those with a wide range of different learning styles).

[please see more detailed recommendations in parts 3.1. (1); 3.4. (1); 3.4. (2); 3.4. (3); 3.5. (1)]

3. Curriculum

A) The department should implement the suggestions as to the development of the programmes, among others, through the inclusion of new components – e.g., BA/MA thesis seminar - which will offer students formal support and guidance during the process of researching and writing their final theses.

B) The department should secure consistency between the expected outcomes of given modules and teaching hours devoted to specific subject areas.

[please see more detailed recommendations in parts 3.1. (2); 3.1. (3); 3.1. (4); 3.1. (5); 3.1. (6); 3.1. (7); 3.2. (2); 3.6. (1)]

4. Student and staff mobility

The Institute and the University should rethink and redesign strategies for improving student and staff mobility, by envisaging a new approach to that issue, taking benefits from being a member of European consortium as well as the development of digital technologies.

[please see more detailed recommendations in parts 3.3. (2); 3.5. (4)]

5. Department organization: leadership, coherence, policy

The Institute should encourage all its members to coordinate their teaching efforts and practices (e.g., forms of assessment) in order to gain a comprehensive view on the range and effectiveness of approaches to the teaching, learning and assessment across the programmes.

[please see more detailed recommendations in parts 3.2. (1); 3.5. (1)]

6. Quality assurance and monitoring

A) The University should design a more effective strategy in terms of enhancing the visibility and knowledge of the internal quality assurance systems as well as the other regulations related to the studies at place at the University.

B) The University should take concrete actions, across all institutional levels, in order to promote quality of teaching, as well as examples of good practices.

C) Both the University and the Institute should monitor very thoroughly the newly established programme *History of Europe*, in particular the effectiveness of its curriculum, the fulfilment of the intended learning outcomes, and graduate destinations upon the completion of the programme.

D) Both the University and the Institute should work together to design a comprehensive and long-term strategy for attracting international candidates to apply.

[please see more detailed recommendations in parts 3.3. (1); 3.3. (3); 3.4. (4); 3.4. (6); 3.7. (1); 3.7. (3)]

7. Student support

Both the University and the Institute should work together, in accordance with their respective areas of responsibility, to ensure a holistic, student-centred support services at all stages of the programme. This includes designing a widening participation strategy, broadening the definition of additional learning needs as well as supporting and maintaining relationships with KU graduates in order to ensure best programme outcomes for all students.

[please see more detailed recommendations in parts 3.3. (4); 3.4. (5); 3.7. (2)]

V. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each study field evaluation area at Klaipėda University.

The Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology consists of a number of research active practitioners, recognised, and respected scholars, who publish widely and make a distinct contribution in their respective fields of historical inquiry, and Baltic studies in particular. This research is incorporated into the teaching programmes, for example in regards to the students' research projects (especially for 2nd cycle students). In effect, the Institute provides research-informed and research-led teaching (esp. in the second cycle programme *Baltic History*). The students interviewed during the experts' online visit expressed their positive opinion about the content of the programmes taught at the Institute and highlighted the friendly atmosphere and good relationships between students and teaching staff. As the number of students is relatively small, the students have easy access to the professors and can be monitored regularly as to their progress.

In addition, the Institute has very good relations with social partners, external stakeholders, current and prospective employers, who are very satisfied with the graduate attributes and competencies. The alumni of the *Baltic History* programme are usually very successful on the job market and enter into a range of highly skilled careers. It is hoped that the graduates of the *History of Europe* programme (first graduates will enter the job market in 2022) will also successfully manoeuvre their professional development, whether continuing the education within 2nd cycle programmes or being hired as employees. However, at this stage, the expert panel cannot verify that hypothesis.

The Institute has a coherent set of quality management procedures, but it should make greater effort in order to promote the quality of teaching and create a system of incentives encouraging teaching staff to master their competences. The Institute should support teaching staff in their pedagogic development and formally recognise innovative teaching practices. As the expert panel could notice, the methods of assessment used in both field programmes (*History of Europe* and *Baltic History*) are to some extent very traditional and should be enriched by implementing more diversified ways of evaluating students' knowledge and competences, transferable and social skills in particular. Another issue to be considered is the understanding of students' special needs. It is necessary that the University as a whole goes beyond the current limited focus on visible physical impairments and mobility challenges. A special attention should be put on the programme *History of Europe*, as it is a newly-established programme. To this end, the programme should be monitored throughout the entire cycle, and systematic survey of student satisfaction should be carried out on a regular basis.

Expert panel signatures:

1. Prof. dr. Jolanta Choińska-Mika (panel chairperson), *academic*
2. Prof. dr. Jörg Hackmann, *academic*
3. Assoc. Prof. Peter D'Sena, *academic*
4. Mrs. Giedrė Švėgždaitė-Randienė, *representative of social partners*
5. Ms. Maria-Giovanna Lotito, *students' representative*