



CENTER FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
DENTAL HYGIENE STUDY FIELD
AT UTENA COLLEGE

Review' team:

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Report language – English

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Dental Hygiene	Dental Technology	Odontological care
State code	6531GX025	6531GX026	6531GX029
Type of studies	College studies	College studies	College studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	First cycle	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time - 3 (years)	Full-time - 3 (years)	Full-time - 3 (years)
Credit volume	180	180	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor in Health Sciences, Professional qualification of Dental Hygienist	Professional Bachelor in Health Sciences Professional qualification of Dental Technician	Professional Bachelor of Health Sciences Assistant of the doctor odontologist
Language of instruction	Lithuania	Lithuania	Lithuania
Minimum education required	Not lower than secondary education, passed at least one state maturity exam.	Not lower than secondary education, passed at least one state maturity exam and entrance examination of manual skills	Not lower than secondary education, passed at least one state maturity exam
Registration date of the study programme	10-07-2007	31-08-2001	31-08-2001

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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 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 such study field is not accredited.

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

The study field **is not accredited** if at least one of 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 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 10th/December/2020. *Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the review visit was organised online using video-conferencing tool (ZOOM).*

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1.3. GENERAL

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Additional information provided from HEI to the Self-evaluation report
2.	

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

Utena University of Applied Sciences was established in 2000 by reorganising Utena Further Education Medical and Business Schools. The Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Business and Technologies are the main organisational divisions at Utena College. There are six departments in both faculties. Every faculty is managed by Dean and the Board of the Faculty.

There are three departments in the Faculty of Medicine. The Study Programmes of study field of Dental Care are implemented in the Department of Nursing and Dental Care. The Study field of Dental Care in Utena College includes the Dental Hygiene, Odontological Care and Dental Technology programmes.

Utena College was the first institution where the training of Dental Assistant started in 1995, which is the background of the Odontological Care study programme. The preparation of Dental technicians began in 1991. The institution started to implement higher college study programmes of OC and DT in 2001, and the DH study programme was implemented in 2008.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Dental Hygiene study field and **first cycle** at Utena College 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	4
4.	Studying, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and publicity	3
	Total:	24

*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 (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions);

Factual situation

The general aim of the study programmes in the study field of Dental Care is to prepare dental care professionals who, following their acquired professional qualifications and established competencies, are able to provide personal health care services. Evidence is provided in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) that the aims and learning outcomes of the programmes have been formulated in relation to the appropriate Lithuanian and European legislation, and guidance documentation. The number of students from the study field takes into account the needs of the community, the potential employers and the other training institutions in the region resulting in graduates who are valuable and who have good expectations of employment once graduated.

Utena College train dental care specialists without competing with other colleges in the country and take into account the needs of regional employers. Evidence in the SER and from the expert panel meetings demonstrate that there is good communication with the social partners, employers and alumni which help to ensure the graduate's competencies are fit for the needs of the labour market. For example, it was appealed to the Ministry of Education and Science regarding the shift of DT study programme to the study field of Dental Care. DT was shifted into the study field of Dental Care after the Lithuanian Medical Norm MN 46:2018 "Dental Technician", which regulates activities of dental technicians, was approved. The learning outcomes of the DT study programme were clarified and adjusted.

Although the employment figures for all three programmes over the last three years has been high, there has been a slight drop in employment rates for dental hygiene and dental assistant graduates in 2019 (Table 9, page 30 of the SER).

The employers and graduates identified that the licence for Radiography Safety was not achieved by the students during their studies and was required by them in their work. They suggested that it would be an asset to the newly qualified graduate if this was included in the programme.

The additional role of taking dental radiographs, which is part of the programme for dental assistants, would also be of use to the dental hygiene student. Many dental hygiene graduates add this skill as soon as they are qualified to improve their employment prospects.

In respect to the needs of the community, the expert panel see that the programmes are providing modules on care of children, the elderly and those with special needs.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The aims and outcomes of the study fields effectively consider the needs of society and the labour market with the exception of the dental radiography competencies. However, we have some suggestions that may allow even more consideration of the needs of society.

The expert panel feel that more interprofessional education among the different programmes of the Faculty of Medicine/ Health Science and Social Science Group in Utena College by creating common courses and participating together in outreach community programmes would allow the students to acquire competences of teamwork and collaborative practice and better prepare them for the labour market.

In addition, the expert panel feel that there could be more focus on the development of wider skills in the DH and OC programmes, such as communication and entrepreneurship, public health, general and oral epidemiology, biostatistics, health promotion and behaviour change, which would help the student's to be more prepare for their role as primary health care providers.

The three programmes in the study field have many modules or subjects that have similar learning outcomes, integrating the students in "learning together" in one team ensures the rational use of material and human resources while allowing the team members to better understand their individual roles. We look forward to seeing the plans for interdisciplinary teaching both within and between faculties in the College developed and implemented as soon as the pandemic restrictions allow it.

In the "Links between aims and learning outcomes document" (Annex 2), "intended study results of the programme" No. 12 states: "Is able to perform and evaluate dental radiogram". So, we were surprised that the competency of taking / exposure of dental radiographs is not included in the scope of practice for dental hygienists in Lithuania. This is indicated in the "Common European Curriculum for Dental Hygiene" (EDHF, 2020) in Domain III: Patient-Centred Care, as a recommended learning outcome for dental hygiene programmes. Some consideration might be given to allowing the dental hygienist students to complete or integrate with the dental assistant students for the Odontological Care module on Dental Radiography which we believe prepares these students to take dental radiographs, possibly as one of their optional modules, as this competency is greatly sought after by the stakeholders.

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.

Factual situation

The College aims to produce quality graduates who are motivated to continue their professional development, keeping up with new innovations and advances in the field of study. In addition, they aim to develop applied scientific research relevant to the regional and national needs and non-formal education services. The SP DCSF aims, and outcomes are also in line with Utena College strategic priorities for 2019-2021: attraction and retainment of students; study improvement; development of internationalisation; improvement of the

organisational culture of the institution; improvement of applied scientific consulting activities and research; development of strategic partnerships.

In relation to internationalisation, during the panel meetings the experts could see that efforts to improve the internationalisation of the programmes for student and staff has been undertaken. This included expanding international networks and promotion of international projects. Graduates from the college who work abroad assist in the process and may provide places for exchange students. The internationalisation strategy for 2021-2027 is currently being finalised.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study programmes are conforming to the mission, activity objectives and strategy of the HEI.

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

Factual situation

The expert panel are satisfied that the structure, aims and outcomes of the study field as presented in the SER report (Annex 1) corresponds to the General Requirements for the Provision of Studies, approved by Order No V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016 (consolidated version as of 15 June 2018) and the Register of Legal Acts, December 2016, ID 2016-30192. The scope of all three study programmes in the study field is 180 credits (4800 hours) and are full-time for a duration of 3 years.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is the experts' opinion that the aims and learning outcomes for the study field of Dental Care comply to all the legal requirements and are in line with the Descriptor of the study field of Dental Care.

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

Factual situation

There was evidence in the SER, and from the meeting with the teachers of the study field, that they have considered and are adhering to all the national, educational and scope of practice requirements as outlined in by the legal acts of the country and HEI. The aims and learning outcomes are clearly outlined for each of the programmes.

The assessment methods take into account the recommendations set out in the Description of the Study Field of Dental Care. Multiple teaching methods are used including lectures, seminars, group discussions, presentations, case studies, evidence-based learning, observation in clinical situations, reflection on experiences and application of the learning during practical activities.

Accumulative assessment is applied and passing of all assessments is compulsory, a clear indication of the percentage of the overall grade each assessment holds is provided in the descriptor of each subject. Assessment methods include written and oral assessments and assignments, presentations, OSCEs, project work and the final thesis. The pass rate is 50%.

A revision of the teaching and assessment methods has taken place for the study programmes which has aimed to ensure a critical understanding of knowledge and skills and the ability to apply them in practice. The assessments aim to assess levels of learning under the hierarchical categories of Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation reflecting a theory of progressive contextualization of knowledge as the student progress. Evaluation of these teaching and assessment revisions has begun with a comparison of the students and teacher's evaluation of the processes. Further evaluation is anticipated.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel were provided with evidence in relation to the compatibility of the aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods for the study programmes and that they are being regularly monitored and revised.

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

Factual situation

The expert panel could see from the SER report that, for the most part, the modules are presented in a logical sequence. Generally, there is a change in emphasis across the programmes, from being more theoretical-based early on, to more practical-based in the later years. However, the position of the module for Dental Radiography in the Dental Hygiene Programme, in the 5th semester, was felt by the expert panel to be delivered too late. The expert panel felt that this would not allow the students sufficient time to apply their learning from this module into their clinical practice.

Along with the core subjects, students also undertake general higher college education study subjects which make up 15 credits of each study programme. These general subjects are intended to development the student's worldview and include law, professional ethics, information searching, human safety and professional language. Some of these subjects are compulsory and some are optional and can be chosen by the students.

The reflective diaries completed by the students are considered to impact on the development of the study programmes by helping the teachers to identify any shortcomings; allowing them to adjust and improve subject content, teaching methods and learning outcomes.

The Study Quality Committee of the Faculty of Medicine engage with employers and managers of institutions related to the training of dental care professionals and undertake focus group discussions with stakeholder groups (professional associations, practice supervisors, students, graduates), to review the learning outcomes of the programmes. The HEI evaluation report outlined the changes recommended by the Study Quality Committee in recent years and how they have been incorporated into the training to improve the programmes.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study programmes have developed positive communication links and have engaged in productive consultations with the stakeholders to ensure the consistent development of the students' competencies. However, the expert panel believe that calibration of practice-mentors along with the use of the standard protocol for professional internships would allow a standardized set of requirements that each student has to fulfil at the end of the internship

while also ensuring clinical practice procedures, assessment and feedback are fair and consistent between practice place sites.

The expert panel feel that the combination of consistently developed study field subjects and the inclusion of the higher college education study subjects ensures the development of well-rounded students with a broad view of the world and their role in it.

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.

Factual situation

The Study Regulations of Utena College indicates that students have the right to have an individual study plan with an individual assessment schedule drawn up for the student if required. Students have the right to choose from the list of Optional Chosen Subjects (9 ECTS) and to choose either foreign languages such as English, German, Russian, Norwegian (3 ECTS) or Applied Research (3 ECTS).

The students can choose the theoretical topics that they will learn remotely and what tasks they can perform in the virtual space. The list of optional topics is developed with students' input.

The students are also encouraged to choose their own external practices. The Moodle environment provides a range of courses that the students can access and study in their own time.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel see from the SER and from the meetings with staff and students that the students have many opportunities to personalise their study programme to suit their own needs.

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

Factual situation

The procedures for the preparation and defence of the final thesis are described in the Requirements for the Professional Bachelor's Theses in the Field of Health Sciences at the Faculty of Medicine document which is available to the students in the Moodle environment of Utena College. The students are supported by their teachers and their practice institutions in the choice of the topic for their final theses. The topics are relevant to the field of study for each of the programmes and approved by the Bioethics Commission.

The findings from the theses are presented to the institution where the research was conducted, some are published in scientific journals or presented at conferences.

Since the last external evaluation, the number of credits for the preparation of the final theses has been extended to 9 credits and criteria have been added to make the final theses comparable to standards in other European countries.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel are satisfied that there is appropriate training, time and credits provided for the completion of the thesis.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

The expert panel recommends that the employment figures continue to be monitored to ensure that the percentage of graduates gaining employment within their profession remains high and steps be taken to understand and counteract any drop in demand.

The expert panel recommends that the module for Dental Radiography in the Dental Hygiene Programme be completed alongside or before the modules Clinical Odontology & Anaesthesia and Professional Dental Hygiene & Clinical Practice in the 4th semester to ensure that this skill becomes embedded into their clinical practice.

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.

Factual situation

The purpose of the research activities of Utena College is to develop applied research, experimental development (applied activities) and consulting, by solving topical social and economic problems of the country and the region. The scientific activities in Utena College are carried out in accordance with the Regulations of Scientific Activities approved by Decision No AT-61 of the Academic Board on 30 November 2018.

A summary of the research activities for the study field was provided in the SER. They included topics such as application of digital technologies in the manufacture of dental restorations, manufacture of dental prostheses, finding the most favourable manufacturing solution, taking into account the needs of the patient and solving dental care problems and educational research. Scientific activities and research are funded by institutions, state budget assignments, the Lithuanian Science Council and other targeted state budget funds, national and international research programmes, projects and funds, orders of Lithuanian and foreign entities, sponsors, and other legally acquired funds.

The bulk of the research carried out relates to educational research to evaluate the programmes themselves, the SP DCSF uses the findings of this research to update the teaching /learning methods and to introduce evidence-based practice.

A strategy for improving research projects in the study field is planned for the next five years.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel could see from the SER, additional information provided and during the meetings with staff that there are future plans to improve the volume and range of research projects undertaken in the study field. A limited number of scientific articles and presentations at conferences were completed within the period 2016 – 2020 (Table 2. Data on Scientific Applied Activities in the Study Field of Dental Care page 14 of the SER). The impact

of the COVID pandemic on some research projects is acknowledged. Continued support and encouragement of staff and students to engage in research projects and the new five-year strategic plan may allow these numbers to increase in the next evaluation period.

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

Factual situation

The SER outlined the positive impact the teaching staff who are involved in research are having within the programmes, by implementing the findings of their research into practice, thereby keeping the module contents updated. For example, following the research project “Production of Orthodontic Rapid Expansion Devices Using Digital Technologies”, research will be continued within the College on the topic of the application of digital technologies in the production of dental restorations.

Seminars are regularly delivered to the students to support and encourage them to engage in applied research and from companies introducing new products, materials or technologies, students are encouraged to critically analysis these new developments.

The Study Quality Committee of the Faculty of Medicine also engage with stakeholders to ensure the training and competencies remain current and meet any changes in legislation or technological and health developments.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Links between the content of the studies and the latest developments are maintained through a number of different avenues including research projects undertaken within the study field by teaching staff and student engagement with companies introducing new products, materials or technologies.

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

Factual situation

Since 2016 Utena College has been involved in charitable activities; 20% of students in the study field participate in these activities. The aim of the charity is to provide professional and timely dental assistance to members of society living in poverty and experiencing exclusion. This allows the students to apply the relevant scientific literature to real life situations.

The teachers involve their students in any research activities they are involved in themselves. For example, the students were participants in research related to their training during the COVID-19 pandemic; the students were interviewed about distance learning during the spring semester 2020. During their studies the students carry out clinical research projects, search for data for their assignments and final theses and develop the skills of critical analysis of the data.

(2)Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Although the students undertake some research projects as part of their studies, they have limited opportunities to engage in research that might be published.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

The expert panel recommends that additional support and encouragement be provided to both staff and students to engage and undertake research projects and disseminate their findings. The expert panel believe that students when involved in research are compelled to learn more efficiently and better. As the programmes have strong partners it might be valuable to see if students, social partners and teachers could develop some innovative research projects. This could be done by increasing the number of contracted thesis. We recommend that the college set goals for this activity before action plans are implemented.

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.

Factual situation

Admission to the programmes is regulated by the Utena College and undertaken according the Student Admission Regulations and all admission information is available in the website of the school. For admission, a person must have at least a secondary education, they are admitted to the programmes in the study field by competition. The DT applicants also undertake a manual dexterity test.

Admission to three different types of study places are possible: state funded, state non-funded with the study scholarship and state non-funded.

Potential candidates can attend open days and school trips are organised. The details of the overall number of applicants, 1st priority applicants, numbers admitted, and numbers graduating were provided in the SER and additional information.

There is considerable demand for all programmes in the study field. The number of entrants during the last years has remained stable with only one visible decrease in 2019. Taking into account the Governance Strategic analysis Centre MOSTA study “Model for Predicting the Need for Medical Staff” and the needs of the labour market, the minimum number of students for the study field each year should be no less than 30 and the maximum no more than 54. The number of students admitted in 2017, 2018 and 2019 were 58, 55 and 43 respectively.

The minimum competitive score is set by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. The highest competitive scores ranged from 9.39 (for DT in 2019) to 4.14 (for OC in 2018). The lowest competitive scores ranged from 1.60 (for DH and DT in 2017) to 4.37 (for DT in 2019). This indicates a general rise in the competitive scores over the last three years. The teaching staff indicated in the additional information provided that this has impacted positively on the students writing skills, computer skills, language skills and general abilities.

The number of state funded places dropped from 17 in 2017 to 7 in 2019. This drop was explained in the SER as being due to a reduction in the total number allocation of the state-funded places to this study field.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is a good student selection and admission process in place at Utena College. The expert panel found the admission criteria and students selection process suitable, fair, transparent

and published with easy access for the public.

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

Factual situation

Recognition of foreign qualifications is regulated by the Lisbon Convention on Recognition and this is described in detail in the SER and the Utena College Study Quality Management System Guide. The SER provided examples of the information taken into consideration for the recognition of foreign qualifications, they included personal learning outcomes, achieved at Lithuanian or foreign states' HEIs, acknowledgement principles and the procedure of their official registration, the study certificates' as well as module (subject) descriptors. The school also provides guidelines in relation to the possibility of transferring to programmes after the first year of studies for students wishing to change programmes. Examples of such transfers between programmes include the graduates of Odontological Care Study Programme wishing to acquire Dental Hygienist's Qualification and graduates from Dental Hygiene Study Programme aiming at the Dental Assistant's Qualification.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The procedures for recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application are clear and meet all the necessary regulations.

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

Factual situation

International cooperation and students' mobility are priority areas for Utena College. Such cooperation provides students with the possibility to acquire new academic experience and general competencies. Also, students have the right to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme. The duration of study mobility is between 3 and 12 months and internship last between 2-12 months. Utena College in *SP DCSF* has 10 cooperation agreements with Erasmus+ programme partner institutions. Information on mobility opportunities is provided by the International Relations Department during meetings, annual international Erasmus+ week and is visible on the website or in the MOODLE environment or on the school Facebook account.

According to the data provided, during the last three years there were two incoming students from abroad for the *SP DCSF DT* study programme (from Portugal in 2019). There were 27 outgoing students from *SP DCSF* programme which constitutes 33 percent from all outgoing first-cycle students. The largest number of these were in the period 2018 – 2019 when 14 students from the study field (7.6% of the outgoing first-cycle students in Utena) travelled to Latvia, the UK, Norway, Sweden and German. The greatest activity during this period was evident among the *Dental Hygiene Study Programme* students.

The numbers of students who left for part-time (at least 15 credits) field studies or practice during their studies was not provided in the SER, nor did this issue arise during the meetings. However, the SER did report that during the last 3 years, all the students returning from partial studies, had all their learning outcomes acknowledged.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The students are provided with ample opportunities for mobility during their studies, however many do not avail of these opportunities. Continued efforts should be made to enhance the mobility of incoming students. Setting targets for the numbers of exchanges the programmes within the study field in the future may support this.

It may be valuable for the study field to utilise information gathered from student surveys in relation to the barriers for them seeking an exchange to increasing the numbers. It may also be worthwhile to survey the foreign partner students as to why they do not apply for an exchange to Utena College and identify a package of information that should be offered to the foreign partner programmes students in order to attract them.

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.

Factual situation

Academic support is provided to the students by the teaching staff, administration, members of study programme committees, the faculty practice supervisor, Career and Communication Department, Study Department, International Relations Department, Project Management Department, the library, etc. The programme details including descriptions of the subject content, study purpose, intended learning outcomes and assessment methods are provided in written and in the virtual learning environment. In MOODLE students can also find compendia, practical tasks, self-control tests, assessment schedules of the subject and also guidelines for preparation for the independent written assignments and the final thesis.

The students get advice regarding the alternative and freely chosen subjects, acknowledgement of subjects and competences. The person responsible for the supervision of external practice consults the students, mediates the search of places for practice and communicates with the persons responsible for the practice in the external institutions. The *Clinic Teaching Diary* is used for practice organisation and content.

The Department of International Relations advise the students on the opportunities to participate in the ERASMUS+ exchange programme and helps in the preparation of relevant documents.

The Career and Communication Department supports students with career planning and management.

The SER states that students have access to financial support for their studies. Students get scholarships for partial studies during mobility programmes. Students are awarded the scholarships on a competitive basis based on their study results and the process is regulated by Utena UAS Scholarship Allocation Regulations.

Discount on the study price is possible for students paying for their own studies. Social scholarships are also possible, and they are available to students, according to the criteria set by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Social scholarships are awarded and administered by the State Studies Foundation. Financial support of foreigners of Lithuanian origin wishing to study is available in the form of a scholarship which is regulated by the *Description of Procedure for Administration of Support to Foreigners of Lithuanian Origin*. However, this is rare and during 2018/2019 only two such persons were admitted. Students

also can receive one-time scholarships if encountering financial difficulties, death of relatives, illness, for active scientific, cultural or sport activities. Some nominal scholarships have been established for students' achievements in learning, active artistic and social activities.

Psychological support is also provided for the students. Counselling to assist the students to better understand themselves, their own behaviour and to help solve personal difficulties is provided by an independent external psychologist to ensure confidentiality.

Utena College provides accommodation services for students and have 3 student houses. The internal procedure to get accommodation in the houses is regulated by Utena College Student Home Regulations.

SP DCSF students are active members of the Student Representation which deals with issues, related to students' rights and responsibilities, social needs.

Over the period of 2017 to 2019 the following financial supports were provided to the study field: Incentives (122), One-time scholarships (27), Social scholarships (19) and "Translinija" UAB, nominal scholarship (1). They were spread fairly evenly across the three programmes.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

A wide range of supports (academic, financial, social, psychological and personal) are in place to support the students during their studies. The students indicated during the meetings that they feel well supported.

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

Factual situation

Each academic group has a tutor which is assigned at the beginning of the academic year. The tutors are in constant contact with their academic group of students supporting their adaptation to their changed environment. The students are provided with information about their studies including the organizational structure, students' rights and responsibilities, the *Utena College Code of Academic Ethics*, the study programme. Utena College uses an academic information system, the Students' Academic Database (SADB), where students can find their subjects, assessments, other required information.

Teachers advise students on the preparation of independent assignments, course papers and final theses during scheduled consultations which are included in the subject hours of study programme. The consultation schedule is presented in MOODLE environment.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study field has suitable, adequate and effective support of study information and student counselling.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

No specific recommendations for this evaluation area.

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.

Factual situation

The teaching process is organized in a way that allows the students to achieve the learning outcomes that are necessary to successfully complete the programs. Learning is organized in two ways: practical and theoretical, practical skills training has mandatory attendance and the theoretical parts can be adjusted to suit the personal needs of the student as self – study. The College uses mixed way of teaching that includes traditional classes held in College with the possibility to study in the virtual environment using video recordings and learning material supplements that are accessible on the Moodle platform. A great emphasis is placed on practical skills development. A ten-point scale is used for students' assessment. At the beginning of each subject students are introduced to the description of the subject and the ways of assessment.

Students who have obtained a professional bachelor's degree may continue their studies in Lithuanian and foreign HEIs according to the university first and second cycle study programmes in DCSF or in other study fields such as nursing, public health, and social sciences. Each university reserves the right to decide on the conditions under which college graduates are admitted.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The processes to evaluate the needs of the students are sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. During the meeting with the students they indicated some confusion regarding the processes to continue their studies. The expert panel feel it would be beneficial to provide additional pointers to the students in this respect.

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

Factual situation

Study field programmes are organized in such a way that allows adapting them to the students' individual needs, which is necessary in the case of having student with special needs. One case of a student with special needs has been reported in SER (4.2.1, p. 26), which was in the DT study program.

If students have difficulty accessing the facilities of the College, a distance learning option is offered, followed by individual study and assessment schedules. In addition, students have an opportunity to use psychological counselling services. Lastly, students with special needs are eligible to receive financial aids provided by Utena College.

Students with disabilities can be provided with individual study and assessment schedules adapted to individual needs as required, indicating tailored dates for examinations, project work, practice defence or the deadline for assessments, this is regulated by Utena UAS Study Regulations. Financial support is regulated by the Procedure for Providing Financial Assistance Measures to Disabled People, Studying at Utena UAS37. Students belonging to other socially vulnerable groups may be supported by a social scholarship. Information regarding the study opportunities and supports are available on Utena UAS website.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs are provided for by the College. These provisions are regulated, and details are available on the Utena College website.

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.

Factual situation

The monitoring of students' study progress is attended twice a year, at the end of the autumn and spring semester. The meetings are held in the study program departments, Dean office and Faculty Council meetings to address the study improvement and problems of underachievement. Students can track their study performance progress on the Students' Academic Database. If needed, additional consultations with teachers are held and conditions to liquidate academic debts are given to the students.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The students' progress is well monitored. Although they are given the opportunity to provide feedback, few students use the opportunity.

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.

Factual situation

Feedback is delivered to the students in various forms, e.g. discussions between students and teachers, surveys, questionnaires, interviews. These types of feedback help the students develop skills helping them to monitor their own academic progress.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The students indicate that they receive timely and helpful feedback from their teachers. However, it is important to maintain a record of the feedback provided to the students during discussions with their teachers. The expert panel feel that generally the response rate to student surveys is poor. This will be discussed in more detail under 3.7.2.

The expert panel feel that if student self-assessment and peer assessment was embedded in the study field the students would be given the chance to develop critical reviewing skills, manage their own learning and develop more independently. The students will become more able in giving constructive feedback and receiving and acting on feedback received. This practice would contribute to a range of important graduate competences.

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

Factual situation

Data about graduate employment comes from Lithuanian Higher Education Information System (KVIS), Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA), Employment Services and the surveys received from the students. The rate of student employment observed is sufficiently high. According to Career and Communication Centre, 71-88 % of the graduates receive job offers. However, this varies between programmes and was as low as 60% for DH

in 2019. It is a common practice that employment is offered by the institutions where the students conduct their final practice. According to the data collected, the majority of the dental hygienist, dental assistant and dental technician graduates are working according their profession. All the data regarding the graduate employment is made public on the College website.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Employment rates are well monitored but have seen some fluctuations over the last three years.

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

Factual situation

In order to assure academic integrity, tolerance and non – discrimination several principals are implemented at the Utena College: Utena College Code of Academic Ethics; Student Internal Order Regulations; Provisions of Academic Ethics Committee Activity; Utena College Policy of Equal Opportunities (p. 29). Utena College has established an Academic Ethics Committee that reviews requests regarding violations of academic ethics, which are later assessed. No breaches of academic integrity, intolerance or non – discrimination has been reported during the time of the analysis.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are in place.

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.

Factual situation

Students can make an appeal regarding violations or disputes of assessment. The appeal can be submitted no later than 2 working days after the assessment/examination. In case of disagreement with learning outcome crediting the appeals can be made in 10-day period and are submit to Utena College Director. During the period under analysis no appeals or complaint have been reported.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaint are in place and accessible to the students.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

The expert panel recommends that the employment figures continue to be monitored to ensure that the percentage of graduates gaining employment within their profession remains high and steps be taken to understand and counteract any drop in demand.

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.

Factual situation

In the study programmes of Dental Care Study Field there are 151 students and 23 teachers of whom 18 are full-time and 5 are part-time. The teaching staff have been stable during the last 3 years which helps with consistent implementation of the study programme. Five teachers are qualified dental technicians (all full-time), four are qualified dental hygienists (3 of them full-time), two are qualified dental assistants (1 of them full-time) and three are qualified dentists (2 – full-time). The ratio of student and teacher 1/7.

Between 37% and 60%, depending on the programme, of the study field subjects were taught by teachers who were specialists in odontology and dental care (dental hygienists, dental technicians, dental assistants or dentists).

There is a legal requirement for teachers to have at least a Master's or equivalent degree. Teachers who are from the professional field are accepted with a professional Bachelor's degree. Utena College supports the education of young teachers, providing some financial support and time to gain Bachelor and/or Master's degrees. The SER detailed that one DH teacher had availed on this opportunity during this evaluation period.

Researchers, according to the legal regulations must teach not less than 10% of all the subjects of the study field. In *SP DCSF* four teachers with a PhD degree are involved in teaching.

Teachers teaching their specific subject and practical classes must have at least 3 years of practical experience.

Training internships and lectures in foreign partner institutions under the Erasmus+ mobility programme contribute to the professional development of teachers. The education of young teachers is ensured by creating opportunities for further study and professional practice. This, as well as the Strategic Plan of Utenos College, should cater for the dynamics of teaching staff turnover in the field.

There are currently no plans to deliver the *SP DCSF* programmes in a foreign language. The Strategic Plan also includes plans to provide incentive measures to improve the level of teachers' foreign language proficiency. During the period from 2017 to June 2020, seven teachers in the study field undertook education in a foreign language.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The ratio and qualifications of the teaching staff is adequate. The percentage of teachers who are specialists in the study field subjects could be improved. Support is available to teachers to undertake further studies. The College has a strategic plan for improving the qualification of teachers.

3.5.2./Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile).

Factual situation

The Department of International Relations works hard to promote internationalisation and raise awareness of Utena College in Europe. The SER states that International cooperation is one of the best developed areas of Utena College, which includes promoting bilateral and multilateral institutional cooperation. However, no specific details were provided in relation to the agreements that relate to this study field.

Applications from teachers for Erasmus+ visits are evaluated by a commission, which makes the selection of applicants. Eighteen teachers from the SP DCSF programmes visited Latvia, Bulgaria, Portugal, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Turkey in the last three years. During the same period a total of six teachers from Izmir Kavram College of Higher Education (Turkey), Jordan University of Science and Technology (Jordan), Riga 1st Medical College (Latvia), University of Lisbon (Portugal) visited the SP DCSF programmes.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Teachers from the SP DCSF programmes have availed of the opportunities that are provided for them for academic mobility.

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

Factual situation

Utena College has a Strategic Activity Plan which indicates the priorities, measures and appropriations for the improvement of the qualification of teachers. These include strengthening the composition of teachers and subject, scientific, practical competences, the foreign languages proficiency of teachers, motivation of teachers to enter PhD studies.

Utena College supports teaching staff to participate in professional development courses, seminars, conferences, projects, events organized by professional associations, for research activity and to undertake scientific and practical internships. Every 5 years teachers may take a year off, with pay, for research.

The SER details the nature of the education undertaken by the SP DCSF programme teachers (table 12, P36). The focus was on subject and pedagogical competences. Internships, foreign language proficiency and PhD studies were undertaken by a small number of teachers.

A flexible work schedule is offered to teachers undertaking professional development, and financial support may be provided.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Opportunities to improve the competencies of the teaching staff are available. Staff should be encouraged to undertake the full range of competencies prioritised by the strategic plan. Monitoring and assessments that identify any gaps or needs and a system that sets clear goals and documents their achievements would support this.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

No specific recommendations for this evaluation area.

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.

Factual situation

The learning facilities and resources are important to ensure the quality of the study programmes of Dental Care study field. Theoretical training takes place in auditoria, classrooms and specialized classrooms. All classrooms are equipped with stationary, multimedia projectors or widescreen TVs, computers and software and accelerated Internet connections.

Facilities to cater for the needs of people with disabilities including ramps, wheelchair accessible elevators, WCs for people with disabilities, specially adapted equipment for people with visual, hearing and or mobility impairments, are available throughout the College.

Practical classes for training of techniques for performing dental care procedures or manufacturing dental prostheses are held in the Training Centre for Dental Care Professionals. *SP DCSF* students also have classes at the Nursing Simulation Centre of Utena College.

Students also undertake practical training with social partners in personal health care institutions. These institutions must meet the criteria of Utena College. The ratio of practice supervisor (mentor) and student is 1/ 2-4. Utena College has 79 bilateral agreements with social partners: 22 for the *DH* study programme; 30 for the *DT* study programme; 27 for the *OC* study programme. In 2019 Utena College organized training for practice mentors for *SP DCSF* practice supervision.

Internet access. Active Directory technology, free access to Utena College wireless Internet and to the EDUROM network provides the students with flexible access to the information they need either onsite or in their own homes.

The E-learning centre has 16 working places. The Distance Learning classroom has 13 workstations equipped with webcams, microphones and speakers, with dual computer screens. Students and teaching staff have the opportunity to participate in video conferences and make their presentations without going to the conference venue.

A budget of €74175.12 was allocated for the three-year period for *SP DCSF* programmes. The purchase of materials to develop the student's practical skills is the biggest cost.

Utena College fulfil the requirements for people with disabilities and their needs are taken into consideration for all facilities under reconstruction.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The physical The Computer Technology Room is equipped with 15 computerized workplaces with, informational and financial resources available for the field studies in Utena College are adequate for the current number of students and ensure an effective learning process to achieve the learning outcomes. The practical facilities have recently been updated and are well equipped. The physical resources available in the personal health care institutions where external practical training is undertaken meet criteria set by the College. The evaluation

criteria, intervals for assessment of the learning facilities and resources used for external training and the findings would be good to see in future SER reports. Further expansion of internal practical training facilities to allow a greater percent of the practical training to be undertaken internally would allow more consistent and calibrated training. This will help to ensure the number of patient experiences or categorization of patients according to difficulty level and oral health/disease status are equal among the students, with less reliance on the external practices, ensuring more consistency in developing the clinical practice procedures and fairer assessment and feedback for the students.

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

Factual situation

The processes of planning and upgrading the resources needed to carry out the field studies is the responsibility of the Utena College Study Quality Management System and these were detailed in the SER.

Renovation of the library took place in 2019 to meet the needs of the students. Library readers can access a wide range of literature from the electronic library catalogue, virtual library and subscribed databases. The Utena College Strategic Activity Plan for 2019-2021 included the upgrade of information technology and software for the library, laboratories and classrooms, including increasing the range of resources available in the English language. €800,000 has been allocated to Utena College for the planned transformations. The direct impact of this project on the studies of SP DCSF is that high-quality distance learning will be ensured, in line with international standards of distance learning.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The processes for planning and upgrading of resources for the SP DCSF programmes and the College in general are well managed within the Study Quality Management System. Further to the recommendations in relation to the Dental Radiography Module for the DH programme, some additional resources may be required.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

No specific recommendations for this evaluation area.

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.

Factual situation

The College Director is responsible for the overall quality of College activities and the Deputy Director for Studies and Science is responsible for the quality of studies. However, the functions and responsibilities for the quality management of the SP DCSF programmes are delegated to staff at all levels within the programmes ensuring compliance with current market needs, scientific achievements and upgrading. All information in relation to the quality assurance regulations are available to all staff on the College website.

The Faculty Practice Placement Supervisor is responsible for the quality of professional practices and their duties include on-site visits to the student placement settings and maintaining constant contact with the social partners. Students and social partners are also encouraged to be involved.

Management and improvement of the SP DCSF programmes are monitored by the Study Programme Committees which includes staff members actively involved in the delivery of the programmes. The teachers perform self-analysis of their activities yearly including self-assessment of the quality of teaching, scientific, methodological activities, etc.

Human and material resources allocated for effective management and improvement of the study programme includes a Study Programme Committee of at least 7 members of which 3 - 4 members are the teachers, at least 1-2 are social partners and at least one is a student representative. The Committee is granted an allowance for the management of the committee once an academic year.

The responsibilities of study field executors are defined in the following documents: Utena College Statute (2020), Utena College Quality Guide (2018), the Strategic Activity Plan of Utena UAS for 2014-2020, the Strategic Activity Plan of Utena UAS for 2019-2021, regulations for the activity of the above-mentioned self-government institutions (e.g., the Board, Academic Board), regulations for the activity of organizational units (departments, divisions of Utena College, centres, services), staff regulations, and other documents.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The internal quality assurance system for the study field is well developed, fair and inclusive. However, we see no clear signs of a systematic approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen procedures and processes.

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

Factual situation

The SER, the additional information provided and gathered during the meetings with staff social partners and students provided details of the involvement of stakeholders in the quality assurance processes in existence for the study field. Stakeholders in Utena College include the students, teachers, and administration staff, outside the College they include the alumni, employers and parents of the students. The activity plans for quality assurance of the study field programmes are designed the College Study Quality Committee. Since 2018 surveys of students and social partners are undertaken annually. The summarized results of the surveys are published on Utena College website and disseminated within the College community.

Cooperation with the professional associations of dental care professionals, allows collaboration in relation to the preparation and content of the study field programmes. Employers and social partners are actively involved in the development of study field. They complete satisfaction surveys and the results are summarized providing information on the labour market situation needed to improve the study field. The 2018 survey of graduates led to changes to the study programmes including organization of the process, improved study

infrastructure and the creation of more student lounge spaces, these changes were well received by the graduates and current students.

Students are represented on many of the College committees ensuring direct communication with them. The results of the student surveys at the end of the semesters show the students' satisfaction with the organization of studies (schedules, workload, arrangement of assessments), teaching methods, relevance of teaching material, learning facilities and resources. However, only between 4% and 9% of the students completed the surveys in 2019.

The students report that the surveys are circulated by email, and that no reminders are issues to encourage them to complete them. They may be very busy with external clinical practices or study assignments and so although intending to complete the survey they tend to be forgotten and the deadline missed. They suggested that providing the surveys in person when they are in attendance at College for lectures might improve the completion rate.

The students reported that they felt able to approach their teachers with any concerns. The students' reflective diaries were also found to be helpful to the teachers to understand any issues the students were encountering during their studies.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Although good processes were in place to monitor the quality assurance of the study field, the participation rates of students in the process are poor. Further works needs to be done to improve this.

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

Factual situation

The Department of Studies is responsible for the information about students, their progress and result indicators. The Faculty administration keeps records of the study performance of students of individual study programmes. Information about study programmes and subjects taught (modules), admission requirements and data are collected by the Study Department and Departments. Depersonalized graduate employment rates and employers' survey results are compiled by the Career and Communication Department. Information on international mobility and international events at Utena UAS is collected by the departments and the Department of International Relations. Information on the tools for e-learning competence development (seminars, conferences, trainings, courses, etc.) is collected by the E-Learning Centre. Information on the projects being implemented and planned at Utena College non-formal education is collected by the Project Management Department. The Deputy Director for Studies and Science analyses and summarizes the results of the survey of custom research clients. The Study Quality Committee analyse the student surveys and make recommendations to the structural subdivisions. Actions have been taken based on the findings at the study field level, at the level of the Faculty of Medicine, at the library level and at the level of the Economic Service since 2018.

The College website is engaging and provides the staff and students with the results of any surveys undertaken and updates them on changes made as a result of these surveys. Updates about the study field student enrolment results, results of external expert evaluation,

improvement plans, etc., are publicly available on the Utena College website and also available on the AIKOS database.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The collection, use and publication of information based on the evaluation, improvement processes and the outcomes are readily available to staff, students and social partners.

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.

Factual situation

Recent graduates and alumni of the College are asked for feedback on the quality of their studies. Sadly, the percentage of respondents was fairly low (5- 12%) in 2018, the specific results for the 2019 survey for the field of study were not presented in the report. The majority of those that completed the 2018 survey reported the elements of the programmes to be sufficient, good or very good.

A specific survey to assess the quality of the teachers in the opinion of the students was carried out in 2019, which included an evaluation of 13 teachers from SP DCSF programmes. However, the reported findings did not relate specifically to the SP DCSF Programmes.

The graduates that participated in this Evaluation process seemed interested and happy to provide feedback and understand the value of their opinions.

Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The opinion of the recent graduates from the study field demonstrated overall contentment with the quality of their studies at Utena College. However, the number of graduates who completed the surveys was low.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

The expert panel recommends increased efforts to improve the response rates of both the current students and the graduates to more successfully evaluate the study quality management and publicity of the programmes. This should preferably be in a way that allows the students to utilize this competence in their professional life e.g. it could be a learning outcome on quality assurance and development in relation to patient treatment.

The expert panel suggest that the SP DCSF programmes consider utilising the SKVC questionnaire as this could ensure the fulfilment of the requirements of the HEI, furthermore, it would also allow benchmarking with other similar programmes in Lithuanian that might also use this tool.

We recommend that Quality Assurance system is reconsider continuously to revalue the process.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following general recommendations are intended to direct the Dental Care Programmes (SP DCSF) in Utena College to some areas that require greater attention in its commitment to continuous improvement of the study field.

1. *To promote more interprofessional education among the different programmes of the Faculty of Medicine/ Health Science and Social Science Group in Utena College.*
2. *To increase the opportunities for students to work with patients at the Utena Training Centre for Dental Care Professionals.*
3. *To focus on the development of wider skills such as communication and entrepreneurship, public health, general and oral epidemiology, biostatistics, health promotion and behaviour change, which would help the student's to be more prepare for their role as primary health care providers.*
4. *To consider advocating for the addition of the competency of taking/ exposure of dental radiographs into the scope of practice for dental hygienists in Lithuania. This is indicated in the "Common European Curriculum for Dental Hygiene" (EDHF, 2020) in Domain III: Patient-Centred Care, as a recommended learning outcome for dental hygiene programmes.*
5. *To further promote active involvement of students in research activities from the beginning of their programme.*
6. *To strengthen research collaboration with international partners.*
7. *To increase student mobility to and from foreign study field programmes.*
8. *To further embed student self-assessment and peer assessment in the study field to develop their critical reviewing skills, manage their own learning and develop more independently.*
9. *To improve the quality and follow-up of employment monitoring of graduates.*
10. *To continue to improve and foster the scientific qualifications and professional development of the teachers.*
11. *To foster greater academic mobility of teachers.*
12. *To promote calibration of practice-mentors along with the use of the standard protocol for professional internships, ensuring clinical practice procedures, assessment and feedback are fair and consistent between practice place sites.*
13. *To give more attention to developing the different methods used in the internal quality assurance system and how the efficacy and effectiveness of the system contributes to the development of the studies.*
14. *To further develop the student's involvement in the quality assurance and development*

processes.

15. *To consider utilising the SKVC questionnaire as this could ensure the fulfilment of the requirements of the HEI, furthermore, it would also allow benchmarking with other similar programmes in Lithuanian that might also use this tool.*
16. *To consider collaboration between study field teachers in the colleges and universities in Lithuania in relation to the standardisation of programme content and development.*

V. SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the main positive and negative aspects of each of the study fields in the Dental Care Programme (SP DCSF) in Utena College.

The aims and learning outcomes of the SP DCSF programmes correspond to the higher education in Lithuania and approved Lithuanian Medical Norms. The aims of the study field are clearly stated and matched to the learning outcomes, focusing on practical activities and the development of applied research. The duration, depth and scope of the programmes are adequate to accomplish the aim and learning outcomes of each of the programmes.

The subjects are aligned to provide a transition from theoretical knowledge to more practical activities. Nevertheless, some changes are recommended in the Dental Hygiene Programme to better integrate some subjects in the curriculum to better facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The study field is in high demand and the students speak very highly of the support they receive from their teachers.

The volume of the practical component is adequate and practical activities start early in the programmes. The involvement of external practice mentors in the study fields benefit the development of a professional identity in students and enhances the quality of the study fields. However, less reliance on these external practices and increasing the number of patients treated in the Utena Training Centre for Dental Care Professionals would provide greater opportunities for the students to master techniques, procedures and therapeutic protocols in a consistent environment. In addition, there is a need to establish minimal standards for external practice placements in terms of number of patients, complexity and type of patients to ensure balance between different student practical experiences and calibration of practice-mentors to ensure a more consistent assessment between students.

The study field presents conditions to undertake interprofessional education, yet these are not fully explored.

Efforts have been made to improve the scientific level of the programme. Still there is a need to improve the academic qualifications of the teaching staff and more actively enrol students in applied research throughout their academic route. Additionally, there is also a need to increase the visibility of the research produced at an international level.

Admission to the programmes is organized in accordance with the regulations and are clearly defined. The number of candidates that apply to the study field and the entry grade is high ensuring better quality applicants. Opportunities for student mobility exists however, the number of students from Utena participating although adequate, should have set targets and there were only two incoming students from abroad for SP DCSF programmes during the last 3 years. Financial, social, psychological and personal supports for students at Utena College is appropriate, sufficient and effective.

Teaching and assessment methods support opportunities for the students to be active participants in the learning process. The methods of assessment of each subject are clear for the students, and feedback is constant and timely. Still there is a need to explore how students apply teachers' feedback on their learning progress and to promote more self-assessment and peer assessment on the study field. Teachers seemed very committed to students' achievements. The students have opportunities to personalise their study programme to suit their own needs and sufficient support for socially vulnerable and special needs students is provided.

The graduate employment rates are relatively good, there was a slight drop in 2019. The students' readiness to enter the labour market was good.

The composition of the academic staff complies with the legal requirements. The study fields are run by engaged and committed teachers that strive for students' achievements. Teachers are qualified in their study areas and prepared to meet the requirements of the programmes, although the scientific qualification need to be augmented, as well as the involvement of more area specific professionals particularly for teaching of practical skills.

The study fields possess the physical, informational, and financial resources required for achieving the anticipated learning outcomes. These resources are updated and renewed according to the needs and possibilities. The students are introduced to the use of current information and clinical technology relevant to their programmes; however, consideration of the future of digital solutions in healthcare could be improved.

The internal quality assurance system for the programmes in Utena College is well developed, fair and inclusive. However, evaluation of the effectiveness of the chosen procedures and processes, how they impact the development of the programmes and the participation rates of students in the processes could be improved. Thus, the internal quality assurance system needs constant and systematic development just as the study programmes.

Expert panel;

1. Dr. Catherine Waldron (team leader) *member of academic community;*
2. Assistant Professor Sandra Ribeiro Graça, *member of academic community;*
3. Bo Danielsen, *member of academic community;*
4. Prof. dr. Vytautė Pečiulienė, *representative of social partners' ;*
3. Meda Vaitonytė, *students' representative.*