



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**

**NUTRITION STUDY FIELD**

at Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences

**Expert panel:**

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2. Prof. dr. Francisco J. Barba , *academic;*
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5. Miss Pegi Pavletić, *students' representative.*

Report language – English

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## Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<b><i>Dietetics</i></b>
State code	6531GX005
Type of studies	College studies
Cycle of studies	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies (3 years)
Credit volume	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Health Sciences - Dietitian
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	2014/03/28

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on *11 May, 2021*.

- **Prof. dr. Fiona McCullough, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom**
- **Prof. dr. Francisco J. Barba, University of Valencia, Spain**
- **Prof. dr. Suzana Rimac Brnčić, University of Zagreb, Croatia**
- **Phd, MD Edita Gavelienė, Vilnius University Hospital, Santaros klinikos, Lithuania**
- **Ms Pegi Pavletic, student representative**

### 1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
	no additional information was requested

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

The **Dietetics** (hereinafter referred to as DT) study program was initially registered in the Register of Studies, Training Programs and Qualifications on 28 March 2014 and was begun to be implemented from 1 September 2014. The study program, by 3 April 2014 SKVC order No. SV6-16 was accredited until 30 June 2018. The dietetics study programme commenced in the Faculty of Health Sciences, but was moved to the Faculty of Technology in 2019 to be able to utilise enhanced facilities and other resources.

The Faculty of Technology is one of the three faculties of the College with academic autonomy. The Faculty has four departments (Environmental and Civil Engineering, Informatics and Engineering, Transport Engineering, Food Technology and Nutrition), where nine study programs are implemented and recruitment onto the dietetics study programme remains viable. Nutrition study field is important in Lithuania, for various reasons. These are mainly the Health concerns of the population and also on a national and regional level, well-trained specialists in this field are in demand. One of the main directions of the strategy is to prolong productive and healthy life expectancy, improving the training of healthy lifestyle skills for the population, including the improvement of nutrition habits and the management of harmful health factors (excessive alcohol consumption, smoking). Hence, management of health concerns of the population and also on a national and regional level, well-trained specialists in this field are in demand. The benefit of graduates' involvement in the treatment of diet related diseases and in public health and disease prevention has become more apparent from clinical research and developments. This has resulted in an increased number of students being trained across Lithuania in the last 10 years, with currently 3 programmes offered by 3 Colleges.

This is the first review by SKVC that this programme has undertaken.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The Nutrition study field and first cycle at Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences is given a **positive** evaluation.

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

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	26

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

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

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

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

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

### III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

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

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

*3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)*

*(1) Factual situation*

The study programme in the study field of Nutrition corresponds to the public and labour market needs. The programme is executed and systematically updated following the national and international strategic documents and plans governing the policy and development of nutrition specialists for a range of roles. The aims and outcomes of the programme are based on the objectives set out in Government legislation. The organisers of the study programmes update the programme content and learning outcomes accordingly.

The existing coherence between the programme content and qualification awarded enables the specialists prepared under the Nutrition study field to work in the health, food industry, kindergarten and sport nutrition sector. The graduates have the possibility to seek higher university education degrees by studying at universities in Lithuania and across Europe.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator was evidenced from the learning outcomes compiling with Government legislation. It is evident that ongoing learning outcome development activity is undertaken. The academic staff discussed this subject area passionately and displayed commitment to compliance, to ensure the best possible training for students on the study programme.

*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*

*(1) Factual situation*

The SER outlined that the goal of the DT study program corresponds to the College's 2011-2021 strategic development priorities, identified in the strategic action plan: to train specialists meeting the needs of the labour market; to meet the needs and expectations of the students of the College with high quality student-oriented studies; develop cooperation with stakeholders, assessing their needs, expectations and requirements.

The study program also corresponds to the development perspectives of the region. It is related to one of the priorities envisaged in the Klaipėda City Strategic Development Plan "Improving the quality of public services and increasing their accessibility to the public", which envisages paying more attention to the availability and quality of health care services.

The aim of the study program corresponds to one of the aims of Klaipėda city 2013-2020 strategic plan - to ensure a high level of health care services, the task of which is to strengthen public health activities. The aim of the study program corresponds to one of the priorities for activities of Klaipėda City Municipality for 2019-2023

The meetings with stakeholders outlined how the programme aims and learning outcomes have been developed to conform with the HEI strategy, which aligns to local development plans.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator was evidenced from the learning outcomes fitting with the College strategy which aligns to regional aims and development plans. The academic staff have a clear understanding of the value of aligning the learning outcomes.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The aims and expected learning outcomes under assessment and provided under the study programme have been formed using five structural elements (knowledge and application thereof, research abilities, special skills, social skills, and personal skills). The level of complexity of the learning outcomes conforms to the level 6 qualification requirements under the European and Lithuanian Qualifications Framework for higher education. The studies are focused on preparation for professional occupation in the nutrition field. The SER reported that the DT study program consists of compulsory, alternative and optional subjects (see Annex 1). The results of compulsory subject studies (168 ECTS) aim to prepare a dietitian who would acquire comprehensive knowledge, general and subject skills necessary for professional activities.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator was evidenced from the evidence of the mapping of learning outcomes to requirements of the European and Lithuanian Qualifications Framework for higher education. Academic staff and students were positive about the alignment in place.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

According to the SER, the learning outcomes of each subject take into account the curriculum requirements. The learning outcome of a specific subject provides necessary knowledge and skills required to achieve a certain result of the study programme. By assuring the close link between the theoretical materials delivered under the subjects and practical classes as well as applying flexible (including remote) teaching and learning methods and techniques, the subjects studied play an important role in achievement of the programme aims and successful implementation of the learning outcomes. The SER cited examples such as the built-in e-learning environment, which provides students with the opportunity to find the references necessary for self-study, many practical examples, as well as allows the students to self-assess their achievements. The practical work of the subject *Food preparation technology* takes place in the Faculty's Food preparation laboratory, Food microbiology, Food chemistry laboratory

works are also carried out in special faculty laboratories where students work in small groups. In addition, there is an appropriate range of assessment for modules such as exams, practical write ups, case studies and reports, summarised in the SER.

#### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator was evidenced from the evidence of the compatibility and constructive alignment of learning outcomes, with module content and assessment. The link between the study programme outcomes and subject learning outcomes has been reflected in the self-assessment report while the conformity of the teaching, learning and assessment methods with the learning outcomes has been described in greater detail during the discussions with experts. Students made positive comments about the content of modules and type of assessment undertaken.

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

##### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER described the content of the programmes consisting of general study subjects, subjects of study fields and special subjects. The subjects are distributed sequentially in semesters, following a systematic and logical sequence. Most general college study subjects are studied in the first year of studies, the subjects of the field start being taught in the first semester, and it is this group of subjects that remains dominant in terms of volume throughout the study period. Full-time students do internships in the spring semester of the I-II course after the theoretical training, in the III course they have two internships (one in autumn, the other in spring). The volume of internships is consistent and allows to systematically develop the practical skills of students. All internships are conducted in institutions and companies. The consistency of studies is focused on the results of subjects and the content of professional practice. At the meeting with academic staff they reported being committed to supporting students to develop the required competences in a logical sequence.

##### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator is met by evidence of the curriculum information provided. The subjects and modules are positioned in the programmes consistently, the subjects and content/topics thereof do not overlap. The analysis of the logical relations and sequencing of the study subjects has shown coherent positioning of the study subjects by semesters. The subjects which provide fundamental knowledge, understanding and abilities forming the foundation for further studies and research are delivered in the first semesters. The modules delivered during subsequent semesters build on the knowledge and abilities gained during the previous modules. This enables the students to successfully achieve the learning outcomes.

#### *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*

##### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER outlined how the study programme has been designed in such a way that during the study period students covered all the required subject content. For example, the compulsory alternative subject in the DT program is one: students can choose either the subject of Philosophy or Communication Psychology. Electives subjects (hereinafter referred to as LPD) are allocated with 9 credits (three subjects of three credits each). They are provided in the study plan in the third and fifth semesters. LPD students choose according to the procedure for choosing elective (optional) subjects established by the College, which is described in the study regulations<sup>1</sup>. Lists of proposed LPDs are published on the College's website.

## *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator was evidenced from the detailed curriculum information provided. Opportunities are created to choose subjects that correspond to abilities and inclinations, general and subject competencies are developed for general cognition, further learning, and practical activities. Elective subjects can be from another field of study. Hence, the College has the opportunity to credit study results, study according to an individual study plan, formalize competencies acquired through non-formal and informal self-education. In addition, close relationships with stakeholders support the field studies adequately.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

Theses are prepared in accordance with internal papers of the college. The SER reported that the Final thesis is awarded 12 ECTS. The purpose of the final thesis is to determine the level of a student's professional competencies acquired by studying subjects for obtaining a professional qualification and performing professional internships (practice).

In preparing the final thesis, students follow the procedure of preparation, defence and storage of the final theses<sup>2</sup> of the College and the methodological instructions of the Study written works of the Faculty of Technology<sup>3</sup>. In order to achieve the quality of the final theses, seminars are organized every year, to explain expectations to students. The study committee of the program makes a decision on the suitability of the protocols for the application of the ethical principles of biomedical research (bioethics) and the methodology of empirical research. The students present their thesis to at least 2 stakeholders. Each lecturer supervises a small group of students simultaneously. The SER provides a list of theses undertaken.

#### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator is evidenced from theses data provided. Students are appropriately acquainted with the procedure for the preparation of theses and methodological recommendations approved by the Study Programme Committees. The assessment of the thesis is overseen externally for full transparency.

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<sup>1</sup> Internet access: [https://www.kvk.lt/file/manual/Bing/Studij%C5%B3%20nuostatai%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.kvk.lt/file/manual/Bing/Studij%C5%B3%20nuostatai%20(2).pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The procedure for preparation, defense, and storage of the final theses of the College, approved by the 9 March 2018 KVK Academic council protocol Resolution No. SV1-04.

<sup>3</sup> Methodological instructions for study written works, approved by the order of the dean of the Faculty of Technology on February 4, 2020 No. STE6-06

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

#### ***(1) Strength:***

The mapping provided of the course content was comprehensive and is very easy for students and other stakeholders to access and understand.

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

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

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

#### ***(1) Factual situation***

The SER and meetings with staff explained that the Institution has collaboration with social partners and alumni, forming in this manner the base for the future developments of study directions. They have national projects but international projects are missing. However, based on information from the onsite visit they have signed an agreement of collaboration with different international research centers/institutions. In addition, ongoing bilateral and Erasmus agreements which might instigate further collaboration and it is promising.

#### ***(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis***

The indicator was evidenced within the SER and with details provided from staff. The lecturers and other staff of the Institution are publishing articles but they should be encouraged to pay more efforts towards publishing in Journals indexed in Web of Science. This Erasmus relationship would improve the teaching process since foreign lecturers are involved.

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

#### ***(1) Factual situation***

The Institution is organising interesting International scientific conferences and also many other National events. For the mentioned events, the number of publications in the form of conference papers have been reported. Furthermore, achieved results are used as topics for the final thesis. However, the indexing of the both scientific and conference papers is not fully visible in WoS.

#### ***(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis***

The College is moving in a positive direction with teaching and it is improving. The publication process should undergo efforts and publishing within respectable journals indexed in internationally recognized data bases.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

Students are involved in research activities. However, although there is information about possible organised student international participation within some societies only brief detail was available. Nevertheless, the academic staff and students have mutual publications within nationally organised conferences.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

Academic staff and students have mutual publications within nationally organized conferences. The students participated in a competition related to development of business ideas within entrepreneurship projects.

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

***(1) Strengths:***

1. Collaboration with a broad range of social partners and well established ongoing contact with alumni, utilising their feedback and involvement which enhances the quality of the study program and keeps the content updated.
2. Organisation of Scientific Conferences benefits students from involvement and also academic staff professional development.
3. Involvement of students in research activities enables them to gain useful understanding of the research process, as well as experience and confidence in this key area.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The Academic staff have no publications in Web of Science and research activity is less well developed at international level.
2. The level of participation of staff and students within EU programmes is limited, although this has been impacted by Covid recently.

### **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***

***(1) Factual situation***

The admission criteria are clearly stated, as well as the student selection process based on their competitive score and the enrolment process. Information on admission requirements, competitive score and support services is available to the students online, through the webpage of the institution. The procedure for awarding additional points to all entrants is established and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. The programme is offered in Lithuanian, however, students can write their theses in English if they desire so.

On an annual basis, Open Days are organised and the study programmes are introduced to potential students. The University also participates in different science festivals, Night of the Researches, where high school students are usually present. Additionally, the online Open Day e.g. 4th May was an opportunity for each department to introduce their study programmes.

The University also promotes this information over social networks. The College has a total of 65 students on the dietetics study programme, and annually 20 students are admitted. The competition is 2 students per 1 place in the programme.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The admission criteria are very clear, however it would be good to include other admission criteria, such as underrepresented student groups. This would contribute to diversifying the student profiles and promoting equality in higher education. To promote internationalisation, the use of a foreign language would be beneficial to students long-term.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The procedure for crediting College study results provides a possibility for persons who studied in another institution of higher education or foreign institutions of higher education (according to a standing legal arrangement or documentation) to be credited, if their study is harmonized. For non-harmonized studies, compliance with the study programme is assessed. The College has established the Order of evaluation and recognition of non-formal learning. Students can continue their graduate studies at the Klaipeda University in the master's course in alternative medicine. The University offers 2 master levels, the Faculty of Tourism offers a course that combines sports and nutrition as well. The recognition process is handled by the Head of the department.

Students' workload is flexible, leaving enough time for the students to participate in numerous extracurricular activities, projects, training and initiatives.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The institution complies with the indicator. Students were aware of and positive about the procedure. They consider that the process of recognition is transparent and they feel encouraged to participate.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

Mobility is supported through an Erasmus+ programme, which is presented to the students twice a year. The Department of Food technology and Nutrition advises students on the suitability of internships, preparation of tasks and coordination of study subjects during their mobility. Students are reluctant to take up mobility due to the potential job loss, academic differences in study programmes between the institutions or reluctance to leave their place of study.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The institution evidences the indicator through the availability of mobility opportunities across Europe. More attention needs to be given to the promotion of students' mobility opportunities, and other mobility opportunities outside of the Erasmus+ programme need to be assessed.

### *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*

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The provision of support/assistance to the students at the College is regulated by the KC Study Regulations. Student support/assistance is provided: support for the disabled, psychological, social, and academic assistance.

The week of the academic support for the liquidation of academic debts is organised.

Teachers provide counselling for students 2 hours per week.

Scholarships awarded to students are mostly based on merit, and scholarships are provided by the state funds or by the College. There is also a one-time scholarship for particularly active students in organizing activities for students, participation in the College's events etc.

Academic and social support for students is provided by the Students' Union of the College.

During the interviews, it became known that the administrative staff cares a lot for students and their study process. They often provide the support to students, in regards to all study-related matters.

#### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

There is evidence of an appropriate range of support available. Students provided positive feedback and have no complaints about the support offered. In fact, they consider that they have the full support of all University service providers.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

Group tutors at the College provide counselling services to students, in relation to their studies. A programme for the adaptation of the first-year students is in place, and there is an introductory lesson organized for them where the study program, traditions, requirements and the library are presented to the students. Psychologists gave recommendations to students on how to cope with COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers hold email consultations, and students' feedback is collected regularly.

#### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The institution evidenced the indicator through details about the study information provided and counselling provision. The students were positive about this provision.

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

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

1. Staff across the College consistently support the proactivity of the students which enhances the student experience
2. Diverse and well resources student support and counselling services

##### ***(2) Weakness:***

1. Low mobility rates and the diversity of mobility opportunities

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

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

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

*(1) Factual situation*

Based on the report presented and the meeting discussions, the teaching process is organised taking into account the valid legal acts and other documents of the Republic of Lithuania regulating the study process. The process of training a dietitian's specialty is dominated by the provision of food science and technology knowledge and training in menu creation. However, there is a lack of detail regarding the training process for a clinical dietitian, especially collaboration with hospitals.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

There is evidence that learning outcomes are met and the processes take into account student needs. More limited attention is provided for the development of the skills of a clinical dietitian.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

Students from socially vulnerable groups receive help and attention and there are programs from the government. No clear University-specific programs for those purposes. There is little information on learning opportunities for students with special needs.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator was evidenced within the SER and also from the meetings with students and staff. Students were aware of some of the support provisions available to all students.

*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*

*(1) Factual situation*

The SER evidenced that the study program is changed flexibly, taking into account the documents of the Republic, the needs of the social partners and the observations of students.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The institution evidenced an embedded, effective monitoring processes. Students and academic staff understood and were positive about the monitoring processes in place.

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

##### *(1) Factual situation*

The programme has a good track record of employment. However, less attention is paid to the work of the clinical dietitian, who can find employment in hospital wards, as well as in the hospital kitchen. The graduates have a strong important background in food science and technology as well as nutrition at the lab.

##### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The indicator is evidenced by the employability track record to date of graduates and the tracking. Graduates were very positive about their College experience and its contribution to supporting their graduate prospects. The programme has potential to focus more on developing the skills of the clinical dietitian.

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

##### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER described the policies in place. There was not a discussion in the interview specifically related to these topics. They are addressed appropriately following the rules established by the government of Lithuania.

##### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

Taking into account SER and the meetings no problem with policies about academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination were observed as the students were very positive about student support.

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

##### *(1) Factual situation*

The appeal and complaint information is collected at the end of each semester, for each subject. Students can also provide information on issues they have met, improvement ideas and suggestions etc regarding the whole process. Annually, there is an annual satisfaction survey on their studies, about their study programme level.

##### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The institution has embedded effective complaints and appeals processes. It is positive that students have an opportunity to feed their ideas about how the process could be improved into the regular updating and revision process. Academic staff and students were aware of the processes.

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

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

1. The staff are committed to being flexible and making timely changes within the study program, enabling agile adaptation to external requirements, and helping maintain the high quality of student experience
2. Excellent conditions for learning, especially the facilities available for student learning, such as the comprehensive library base.

#### ***(2) Weakness:***

1. Limited focus (related to the amount of staff expertise available as noted in 3.5) to support the development of skills and abilities of a clinical dietitian amongst the students. This is particularly relevant since more jobs in the area of health are emerging in Lithuania.

## **3.5. TEACHING STAFF**

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

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

#### ***(1) Factual situation***

The SER outlines the staffing. There are 5.17 full time shifts in the DT study program: 1.24 associate professor, 3.93 lecturer, 0 assistant. The General study requirements have been implemented in the DT study program, i.e. at least 10 percent of the subjects of the study field are taught by researchers, more than half of the lecturers of the study program have at least three years of practical work experience in the field of the taught subject. During discussions with staff it was clear that the teachers have varied knowledge of food technology, public health, and the nutrition of healthy individuals. However, there are fewer teachers who have experience in clinical nutrition.

#### ***(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis***

The staff of the study program meets the requirements of the pedagogical and scientific degree specified in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, are competent and qualified, able to convey to students the knowledge and develop the skills required for future professional activities. The indicator was comprehensively evidenced through discussions with staff, as well as within the SER. Given the need for dietitians in personal health care facilities, the programme could involve more instructors with experience in clinical nutrition.

*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)*

#### ***(1) Factual situation***

The SER described the mobility opportunities available and 16 cooperation agreements are dedicated to the field of Nutrition. Teachers and students can go to Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Greek higher education institutions. The lecturers of the department work closely with the Escola Superior de Saude de Leiria (Portugal), University of Life science (Poland). During meetings with academic staff they were aware of the opportunities but many staff for a range of personal reasons could not undertake such opportunities in recent years. It was noted that the Covid pandemic had further complicated travel.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

Some opportunities exist although it is clear that staff are limited in the amount of travel they can undertake due to varied personal reasons. Hence opportunities could be further developed to enable more staff to partake and the area of virtual exchange potentially explored.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The SER outlined by the appraisal system for staff and support to improve teaching competence. Academic staff were passionate about teaching quality and felt supported, encouraged and valued by the College.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

There are supportive processes in place to enable staff to develop personally, especially in the area of teaching and research. The academic staff confirmed that the conditions are effective for their teaching competence development and job satisfaction.

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

***(1) Strengths:***

1. Teachers have supportive conditions for enhancing their teaching practice and ongoing improvement, with regular personal development reviews and action planning in place.
2. Teachers have a strong knowledge through substantial experience and training in the subject areas of food technology and public health issues.

***(2) Weakness:***

1. A The number of teachers who are specialist in the area of clinical nutrition is currently adequate but limited, so more staff in this area should be recruited in the future to further support students who wish to work in clinical areas after graduation.

### **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*

#### *(1) Factual situation*

Physical resources include auditoriums for lectures and seminars; specialized laboratories of practical work, etc.; administrative, common use and technical purpose premises. An agreement with the Klaipeda Tourism School is in place to assure the development of the students' practical competencies. Students can use the resources of the College library located at the premises of three faculties of the College. Computers with access to the internet are available, as well as the necessary software. The premises of the MTM Department are adapted to people with physical disabilities, and the Library uses software for people with vision impairment. Students' internships and their final practice are conducted in health care institutions and companies, who with the College have agreements in place.

The university has sports facilities (basketball course, bodybuilding equipment). The University does not provide the health services, as by the Law the students can receive them only from the official health institutions.

#### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The institution complies with the indicator. The institution provides enrolled students with adequate resources to support their effective learning. The faculty does not have any problem with the premises and the classrooms are well equipped for teaching.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The material base of practical work of study subjects in the study program of dietetics is constantly updated with new equipment. Between 2017 and 2020, the development of the Training base was carried out under the College's investment project and own funds. Food products, microbiological means and chemical substances used in the study process are acquired yearly based on the needs.

Material and methodological resources are updated based on the College's activity plan for the study programme.

All the software used is regularly updated. In 2020, a new lab for food quality assessment was equipped and new equipment according to the wishes of the teaching staff was purchased, to be used both in teaching and research. In regards to the equipment for the clinical studies: equipment is available for primary food preparation and to deepen their knowledge in dietetics. They take into account their partners' input from the industry when purchasing equipment.

#### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The institution complies with the indicator. Students and academic staff were very satisfied with the facilities and resources. Institution's own funds are used to raise the quality of teaching and scientific activity in line with its mission. New teaching methods (case studies, problem-based learning) may also require new or different types of spaces and facilities, so the HEI should focus on EU funding or public-private partnerships where equipment can be used both for education and commercially by third parties.

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

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

1. Collaboration with the external partners in providing practical competencies for the students.
2. Dedication to providing student support.
3. The availability of numerous international databases of full-text scientific articles.
4. Virtual electronic learning environment with teaching material is in place.

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

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

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

###### ***(1) Factual situation***

The SER outlined the annual process in place and the administrative support in place. For example, the College has implemented, maintains, and continuously improves the Quality Management System (QMS) that meets the requirements of the LST EN ISO 9001: 2015 management system standard and the legal acts regulating the activities of the College. The internal quality assurance system includes the main processes of strategic management (studies, applied scientific activities, adult training and education, consulting services) and supportive business processes.

###### ***(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis***

The indicator was comprehensively evidenced. The College quality centre collects targeted data on study compliance, analyzes feedback information obtained from annual social participant surveys. The process is clear and an effective model.

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

###### ***(1) Factual situation***

The SER outlined that the study program is adjusted operatively, taking into account the comments of students, social partners, and the documents of the Republic. In summary, the head of the department and the head of the SPK systematically monitor the effectiveness of the field studies: process measurement indicators and level of goal implementation are analyzed at least twice per year. Some data for analysis are provided to the SPL and the department by college centres and other sections. Other data is obtained by directly observing the study process, communicating with social stakeholders during various meetings, working on joint projects, working groups or committees. Detail regarding the process of financial resource management was also provided.

###### ***(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis***

The indicator was clearly and comprehensively evidenced from the range of processes in place and the Department responsible for each. The academic staff and stakeholders were

familiar with the processes in place and aware of the type of action planning that results from such audits and evaluation.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER provided evidence that the students gain a wealth of evidence-based nutritional knowledge. College graduates could be more actively involved in disseminating information about healthy eating and forming an opinion about the specialty of dietitians. In summary, general data on the DT study program is provided in the Open information, counselling, and guidance system (AIKOS)<sup>4</sup>, admission requirements - LAMA BPO website. The College website<sup>5</sup> provides more information on program evaluation, accreditation, purpose, objectives, content, subjects studied, and professional career opportunities. The public relations department is involved and the study program is also publicized in the social account of the Department of MTM on Facebook to stay in contact with alumni. Graduate survey data is also collected.

#### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The surveys of satisfaction of students and graduates with the quality of studies and employers' opinions on the compliance of the competencies of specialists trained at the College with the research on the needs of the labour market, is carried out by the KVK Quality Centre and are linked to the indicators of KVK's strategic and annual activity plan and their use for the improvement of studies in the field, their periodicity and the use of results for the improvement of studies is collect thorough a range of surveys and evaluations. The academic staff were able to discuss the processes and benefits.

### *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*

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER outlined the processes in place and the annual cycle of monitoring and action planning undertaken. Surveys of students' opinions about the study of the subject since 2018 has been through using the mobile app, to survey interview students. An example of analysis of DT students' satisfaction with the quality of studies conducted during 2017-2019 has shown that the overall level of student satisfaction is increasing. Areas where the quality is *constantly improving* every year are highlighted: various means are used to convey information in lectures (3,90); co-operation and counselling of teachers outside lectures (3,85); if necessary, teaching staff further clarifies unclear subjects (4,05) During meetings with staff some examples were discussed.

#### *(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/studijuoti/SitePages/Noriu%20studijuoti.aspx?ss=93b82e9a-09bd-4553-a3b7-39d8ab32c243>  
[https://www.kvk.lt/file/repository/DT\\_AIKOS\\_2020\\_EN\\_1.pdf](https://www.kvk.lt/file/repository/DT_AIKOS_2020_EN_1.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kvk.lt/lt/studiju-programos/dietetika/23>

The indicator was evidence within the SER clearly. DT students' satisfaction with the quality of studies evaluated through the mobile quality evaluation survey application developed by the KVK Quality centre, and at the program level - with the students' satisfaction with study quality survey. Hence, the processes in place are appropriate, robust and consistently applied.

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

***(1) Strength:***

Effective links between University and the range of key stakeholders and in particular the work of the College external relations department through social media and other means.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	Continue to update these as required.
Links between science (art) and studies	Increase staff support to improve the publication record of staff and collaboration within and beyond the EU.
Student admission and support	Encourage student mobility and the recognition of formal and informal learning on admission.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	Increase the focus on clinical dietetics within the curriculum.
Teaching staff	Encourage staff mobility, increase the number of clinical dietitian specialists on the staff.
Learning facilities and resources	Continue to upgrade facilities as required.
Study quality management and public information	Continue to audit and present findings transparently.

## V. SUMMARY

### **Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field Nutrition at Klaipeda State University of Applied sciences:**

The study programme in the study field of Nutrition corresponds to the public and labour market needs and is in line with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the College. The programme is executed and systematically updated following the national plans governing the policy and development of health.

The coherence between the programme content and qualification awarded enables the specialists prepared under the Nutrition study field to work in the sector. Graduates of the programme have the possibility to seek higher university education degrees by studying at universities.

The aims and expected learning outcomes under assessment are in line with the Description of Study Fields and requirements applicable to the first-cycle college studies. The level of complexity of the learning outcomes conforms to the Level 6 qualification requirements under the European and Lithuanian Qualifications Framework for higher education. The content and description of the study subjects are in line with the requirements applicable to the college and first-cycle studies, and the programme volume is sufficient in view of the expected learning outcomes. The subjects and modules are positioned in the programmes consistently.

In preparation of the final theses, the students select the topic and apply them to produce a report.

The college should develop an enhanced and transparent motivation system for staff involvement to support scientific research including financial support and special awards to staff and students. Conditions for the involvement of the students in scientific research exist and consist of different mechanisms incl. annual research conferences.

The panel believe that the position of the college in the market is good and a further focus on clinical dietetics would enhance this further.

The experts found that the college support to students was appreciated. Academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students and study information and study counselling offered by the college are both suitable and adequate. The variety of feedback is good.

Further attention should be given to improvement of the international scope of activities. Teachers should be provided with improved conditions for academic mobility, i.e. the teachers are provided with the opportunity to undergo internship, and also exchange professional experience. Further development in the area of clinical dietetics would support the teaching of this key area.

Appropriate attention has been given at the HEI to teachers' improvement in teaching and professional development.

The strategy of the organisers of the study programmes to engage social partners is good.

The list of purchased laboratory testing equipment plus information collected during the meeting with SER staff and teachers prove that the faculty is committed to investing in the ongoing development of the programme.

The programme has a developing track record in Lithuania.

**Expert panel chairperson signature:**  
**Prof. dr. Fiona McCullough**