



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

NUTRITION STUDY FIELD

at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences

Expert panel:

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Report language – English

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Dietetics
State code	6531GX039
Type of studies	Higher Education 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 / Qualification of Dietitian
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary Education
Registration date of the study programme	24-02-2016

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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 *12th of May, 2021*.

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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 documents were requested

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

The studies in the study field of Nutrition are carried out at the Faculty of Medicine, which has about 1,800 students. The studies of two groups of fields of study are implemented here, i.e. Health Sciences and Social Sciences. The group of Health Sciences includes studies in 7 fields: Nutrition, Medical Technology, Pharmacy, Nursing and Midwifery, Rehabilitation, Cosmetology, and Oral Care. 13 study programmes are implemented Dietetics, Biomedical Diagnostics, Radiology, Oral Hygiene, Odontology Care, Dental Technology, Pharmatechnics, General Practice Nursing, Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Cosmetology, and Social Work. The programme is important within the portfolio of health programmes since Nutrition is an increasingly important field 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. 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 and the number of Colleges offering training in this field in the last 10 years.

This is the first review to be carried out of the dietetics study programme at Kaunas university of applied sciences.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *Nutrition* study field and first cycle at Kaunas 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	4
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:	27

*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 SER outlines that the Resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania “On the Lithuanian Health Programme 2014-2025”¹ states that the data of nutrition surveys conducted in European countries in recent decades show the deteriorating nutritional status of the population. The World health organization (WHO) Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health encourages the Member States to take all measures to promote healthy eating and thus reduce the prevalence of chronic non-infectious diseases and their risk factors. Based on the data of research conducted in Lithuania, it can be stated that the diet of the adult population is unbalanced.

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 programmes are based on the objectives set out in Government legislation.

As a result of monitoring the public and labour market needs, 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 development activity undertaken. Examples of how learning outcomes have been updated were provided. The academic staff discussed this subject area passionately and displayed commitment to compliance.

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 and meetings with stakeholders outlined how the programme aims and learning outcomes have been developed to conform with the HEI strategy, for example the SER reported that The study programme in the field of Nutrition is based on the learning outcomes focused on training highly qualified dietitians and correlated with the current and future

¹ Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No. XII-2383, 19/05/2016.

needs of the labour market and social development. It is designed in such a way that during the study period learners can acquire strong theoretical knowledge and maximally develop practical skills. Students are not only provided with knowledge and professional skills; they have instilled the provisions and attitudes to follow the evolution of science, art, and technologies to enter the international market successfully. At the meeting how favourable conditions have been created to ensure the quality of the process of studying the field of Nutrition was discussed.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicator was evidenced from the learning outcomes fitting with the College strategy. There is appropriate information on the readiness of the graduates of the SFN for professional activities, the need for dietitians in the labour market and employment opportunities is obtained by communicating with stakeholders, representatives of professional associations, administrations of health care institutions, professional internship mentors; during conferences, seminars, courses, and the defence of final theses. The academic staff has 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 has 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 volume of the study programme in the field is 180 credits (4800 hours), which is sufficient to achieve the anticipated learning outcomes. The studies last for three years, six semesters. The volume of studies for all semesters is equal, 30 credits each. Professional internships are distributed in the study plan after theoretical training, which preconditions a consistent transfer of theoretical knowledge into practice. Students pursue the aims of the study programme and prove the level of their achievement of learning outcomes during theoretical and practical classes, professional internships while developing and defending final theses

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicator was evidenced from the evidence of the mapping of learning outcomes to requirements. 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 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. In addition, academic staff and students were positive about the alignment and programme development activity 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 results of the study programme and are mutually coordinated. The SER reported that the anticipated learning outcomes at the level of study programmes are consistent, complementary, non-duplicative. They are developed consistently, progressively from cognitive knowledge to practical skills, and constitute a total set of skills required to obtain the professional bachelor's degree in health sciences and a qualification of a dietitian.

Learning outcomes determine the content and structure of study programmes and the choice of teaching/learning and learning achievement assessment methods. The learning outcome of a specific subject provides necessary knowledge and skills required to achieve a certain result of the study programme. Various methods of the assessment of students' learning achievements are used e.g. oral and poster presentations, individual or team project reports, internship reports, analysis of clinical situations, closed and/or open-ended tests, essays, written or oral examinations, as well as the defence of final theses.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicator was evidenced from the evidence of the compatibility. The appropriate 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 were aware of the various evaluation cycles the College operates.

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 SER indicated that students study a maximum of 7 subjects each semester. The volume and arrangement of the course units in the study plans are related to the learning outcomes anticipated in the study programmes. The workload of theoretical classes, practical activities, consultations, and students' self-study is distributed in the plans of course units. Much attention is paid to practical training and self-study. Academic staff reported being committed to this type of totality evaluation in order to ensure students develop all the required competences.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicator was evidenced from 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, KUAS may credit the learning achievements obtained based on coordinated (in the case of partial studies) and/or non-coordinated study content (by recognising the accomplishment of previous studies). KUAS credits the achievements of students' partial studies in a foreign higher education institution (HEI) if it is recognized following the procedures established by the laws of the state; learning achievements of partial studies of Lithuanian HEI students in another Lithuanian HEI of the same or different type; and the achievements of partial studies of another study programme in KUAS.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicator was evidenced from the detailed curriculum information provided. Learning achievements are appropriate accredited from these studies options. 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 and methodical recommendations, prepared by Medicine faculty. Students are acquainted with the procedure for the preparation of theses and methodological recommendations approved by the Nutrition Study Field Committee. The SER outlined that the preliminary list of Final Theses (FT) topics is discussed at the Department meeting and announced to students alongside with the name and title of the supervisor no later than 3 months before graduation. Students prepare FT in accordance with the Methodological Recommendations for Developing Professional Bachelor Thesis in the Faculty of Medicine under the guidance of the supervisor. For the public defence of the final theses, a Qualifying Board is formed by order of the Director on the proposal of the Dean of the Faculty, and its chairperson appointed.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicator was evidenced from the theses data provided. Appropriate processes for the preparation of the research topics list and student selection, as well as supervision and assessment is in place. The assessment of the thesis is overseen externally for full transparency.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

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

The range of assessments is appropriately varied with innovative tasks to support the students in applying their knowledge and understanding.

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 detailed that there is a collaboration network with social partners and alumni, constituting the base for the future development of study directions. Research topics covered a range of fields relating to nutrition and dietetics. However, the number of publications was limited in clinical nutrition. Furthermore, there was no information within the SER regarding projects for which research was carried out. However, based on information provided during academic interviews the College has contracts with neighbouring countries like Latvia and Poland. Many more personal contacts and business contracts were apparent, resulting in collaboration with numerous events and conferences organized in mutual participation.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Lecturers have published an adequate number of publications in the field of nutrition studies. The project titles and implementation is not available. Hence overall the indicator is met.

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 SER provided a range of relevant examples and the academic staff reported working hard to link taught content and relevant current developments. Professors from the academic team are members of international associations in particular the European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicator has been evidenced within the SER and during meetings with staff and students. However, both students and teaching staff would benefit from extending networking opportunities such as joining other respectable societies. Participation in versatile societies could reach usage of its curricula in future teaching.

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

The SER reported a range of scientific activity. Students during the visit also reported being involved in applied research activities and their work has resulted in presentations at international and national scientific conferences, seminars, science promotion events. KUAS organizes a competition where academic staff and ambitious talented students provide solutions for individual organizations/society. This is another example of student involvement in scientific activities related to their programme of study.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicator is evidenced from the conference involvement and other activity, however where ongoing development is opportune. Students are actively involved in scientific events. However, they should also aim to have published papers i.e. conference proceedings from this activity.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. An adequate number of papers is published in respectable journals.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The number of published papers with international researchers is limited.
1. The number of publications was limited in the specialist area of clinical nutrition.
2. More domestic scientist teaching staff should be encouraged to participate within EU and other international projects.

RECOMMENDATION-

1. The teaching staff should make efforts to join various Associations in the area of research to improve their research profile and outputs.

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 the Description of Ranking the Best and the Rules of Students' Admission to KUAS, in relation to their competitive score. Information on admission requirements, competitive score and the administrative support is available to the students online, through the webpage of the institution, LAMA BPO and other websites in regards to studies at KUAS. Selection and admission consultation is provided by the Students' Admission Office, and consultations about the organisation of studies are offered at the faculty level. Criteria for awarding additional points to all entrants are available.

The admission is annual and the success of admission is 50% in regards to the number of applicants for the available positions. This college is one of the top 10 Lithuanian HEIs, so the competition to study there is high. Marketing of the course is done over the course of the first 2 weeks, where they describe the study programme to the students, who then choose the elective courses. The layout of the courses relates to the students' cognitive skills, theoretical and practical competencies. Students have lots of opportunities to join in other activities throughout the course. The School organizes Open Days, science fairs, they print and deliver leaflets to high schools, offer many types of information to high school students through the high school network (where their teachers teach students about proper nutrition) and other projects and initiatives. The information is also provided through their web page. Many activities are organized for the students by the students and they additionally help in the promotion of the Institution.

Theses are in Lithuanian with an English translation for the Summary. There was no need so far to have theses in English, however the Institution's international office is working on improving their international approach.

There are social, governmental and study scholarships in place, but there is no additional admission criteria for vulnerable groups. On the university level they can also get incentive scholarships and scholarships for students with disabilities. They can be periodical, one time or 2-time period. Scholarships are awarded based on merit.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are clear admissions criteria and information is available. In addition the students were very positive about the process. Every time there is an opportunity to include students or to promote the study course, the institution seems eager to take it and the effort is put in to make sure that their study programmes are well-presented. Despite having no courses taught in a foreign language, the students participated in many international conferences and had conference papers in English language. Bachelor theses could be in English, but it was mentioned that there is still some work to be done in order to assure this. The institution needs to have a stronger implementation of internationalisation, both in teaching and learning, and in their management.

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 academic recognition of secondary and higher education acquired abroad (except for scientific degrees) is performed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC). Formal competencies obtained by the students can be recognized based on the Procedure for crediting of learning achievements in KUAS. All credited competencies must align with the learning outcomes of the programme. Non-formal and informal learning, as well as self-study can be credited based on the Procedure for the assessment and recognition of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal and informal learning and self-study as learning outcomes.

There is a committee that assesses the informal and non-formal competencies requests. Students' volunteering activities are recognized through the study course, and teachers involve students in these activities. The Institution is currently working on validating

students` extracurricular activities in ECTS points or in different ways through the diploma supplement for example.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The procedures are well developed and student-centered. The student confirmation of this case is highly relevant. It seems that more attention needs to be given to the recognition of students` informal competencies, but the overall process of recognition seems effective.

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

(1) Factual situation

KUAS has an International Relations Division, and each Faculty has an international coordinator who plans the mobility flows. Students can go abroad for partial studies or professional internships and post-graduate internships under Erasmus+, Nordplus programmes and bilateral cooperation agreements are in place. Information on all mobility opportunities is available online through various outlets (website, social networks, intranet). Erasmus+ Info Days are organised.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The offer of mobility activity types and programmes is varied and well-developed. The students indicated awareness of these options and were positive.

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

Students have a right to academic, material and social support at KUAS. Information about support services is provided during the Introductory Week to their studies. Support includes consultations; information on various issues; group tutoring; social grants; loans; international mobility; services of the Library and Information Resource Centre; career, accommodation, cultural and leisure services; possibilities to participate in student activities; meeting special needs; psychological assistance, etc. Mobility opportunities are presented to the students twice a year. Teaching staff advise students on the issues related to the course, preparation for sessions and examinations, as well as performing self-study, final and other written assignments, either virtually or in presence. Students unable to participate in their studies due to justifiable reasons have the possibility to study according to the free schedule, take an academic leave or to request a study break.

All the information is disseminated through multiple channels, like notice boards, emails, academic groups, KUAS website and social networks. All students have the right to apply for scholarships, which are based on merit, or intended for particular disadvantaged student groups, such as students with disabilities, financially disadvantaged students. KUAS offers payments in installments for financially disadvantaged students.

Psychological counselling is available to students, in person and remotely. Different cultural, sports and student-organised activities are offered to all students, and their active participation is encouraged.

Students from higher years see that many changes happened in the 3-year period (i.e. anatomy was separated into a separate course). The structure of the subjects is often updated, and there are even specialized and narrow study courses and fields. The students have 1 month practice prior to their thesis, which is not so sufficient but the institution is planning on prolonging it the next year, which students support. Changes are implemented in 1 year time, so the process is very efficient. In the first year of their studies, students had 3 meetings with the administration staff, who are very eager to hear criticism and improve the current state of the study process. The administration staff knows students by names and interests.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

A wide range of activity has been detailed. In addition the students provided positive experience and examples. Students say that they have felt very important, even during distance learning. Teachers work hard to make sure that every single student is involved in the learning process.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

For the first-year students, an Introductory Week is organised and the Library, Information Resource Centre and students` study programmes are presented. Students are appointed their student-mentor and a group tutor is appointed to each student group, regardless of their academic stage. Students reported that the tutors help solve academic issues, advise on professional and other issues.

Round table discussions with representatives of academic groups of different academic years are organised yearly to collect feedback and feedback on actions from previous discussions. There was less established inclusion of underrepresented (LGBTQI+, students-young parents etc.) and vulnerable student` groups in students` activities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are embedded processes available to students. The Introductory week effectively signpost students to these resources and student mentors help the new students clarify any issues. The students indicated satisfaction with the sufficiency.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Staff are committed to providing diverse and broad mobility opportunities.
2. Broad and well-implemented network of support services.
3. Well developed and functioning system of recognition of non-formal and informal competencies.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Less established inclusion of underrepresented (LGBTQI+, students-young parents etc.) and vulnerable students` groups in students` activities

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 reports provided, as well as the online interview 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 technology knowledge and training in menu creation. There is a clear focus on food science and technology as well as nutrition, but there is a lack regarding the clinical specialty at hospitals.

(3) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The programme covers the required curriculum content. Some, but less provision is currently available for the development of the skills required to practice as 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

At the University of applied sciences, students with socially vulnerable groups and special needs benefit from the benefits applicable throughout the Republic, although there is not a clear definition of a KUAS specific program in order to ensure the access to study for these groups.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The content and examples of support demonstrated that good conditions are consistently provided to students with specific needs.

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

(1) Factual situation

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. For SER outlined that all students have the opportunity to learn the results of the assessment of the learning achievements of the course, the drawbacks, mistakes, and remarks of the assignment assessed. The lecturer enters the evaluation scores into the KUAS Study Management System, which records the learning achievements. After the final evaluation of the learning achievements of a course, students have the

opportunity to express their opinion on the course assessment system. The lecturer considers the feedback and students' learning achievements and improves the methods or criteria of the assessment of the course. Students were aware of their voice influencing future activity.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The monitoring processes in place are well developed and fit for purpose. Active and consistent monitoring of students' study progress at the level of the course unit is ensured by the cumulative assessment system applied. Such an assessment system allows the academic staff to see students' learning opportunities, identify problems and gaps, differentiate, and individualise work, select further study content and methods, anticipate support that meets students' needs and consultations. The academic staff are committed to ensuring the quality of the programme is retained and enhanced.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER reported that KUAS regularly receives information from the Lithuanian Employment Services on graduates' registration and analyses the data of the Government Strategic Analysis Centre on graduates' employment according to the qualification level acquired after 12 months after graduation. To collect the subjective data, *graduates are surveyed following the Procedure for Managing Feedback from KUAS Stakeholders*². Half a year after graduation, the Department surveys graduates to learn the situation about their employment. One year after graduation, the Quality Management Division conducts an institutional survey of all graduates on their readiness for professional activities and integration into the labour market.

Evidence was also provided that the graduates have secured employment in a range of dietetic areas. Experience gained working as a clinical dietitian, which can make employment in hospital based practice has been more limited to date. The meeting with the graduates provided positive feedback about career progression and an awareness that the programme was making ongoing adjustments and improvements to further enhance employability outcomes for graduates.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Employability is satisfactory and has improved since the programme commenced. An effective tracking process is in place. More focus on developing the skills of the clinical dietitian would enhance the programme further.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER reported that these policies are regularly updated. There was not a specific discussion in meetings related to these topics, or specific reference in programs within the

² Approved by Resolution of KUAS Academic Council No. (2.2)-3-23, 31/10/2017.

report. The issues are addressed appropriately following the rules established by the government of Lithuania.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There was no evidence provided during any meetings that there was a problem with policies about academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. 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 process is continuous and systematic. It includes all of the levels (institutional, study-field, department and programme level. Collection of the feedback from students is completed in spring and they evaluate studies` views on adaptation to university, and their likes or dislikes with the programme and department processes relating to performance. The results are analysed at the department level and by the study field committee. If there are remarks about a specific course, then specific teachers are also directly involved. Quality of study courses is assessed twice a year as well through a survey about specific courses. They have round table discussions with each academic group and they listen to their concerns, complaints or recommendations. All these meetings are formalized using protocols toward the study field committee, and the study plans are renewed and updated by them.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institution complies with the indicator due to the embedded processes. Students indicated awareness of the processes, although staff reported they are rarely required.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Flexible change of the study program, adapting to external requirements.
2. Excellent conditions for learning, such as the excellent library facilities.

(2) Weakness:

1. Some, but limited, attention to the development of skills and abilities required by a clinical dietitian.

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

Appropriately qualified staff deliver the programme. There is a clear multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity between all the teachers. Teachers have expert knowledge of food technology, public health, and the nutrition of healthy individuals. The SER reported that newly recruited academic staff take part in introductory training (during the first two months) where they acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the functions specified in the job description. Those lacking pedagogical knowledge and experience are provided with an opportunity of in-service training in education. Experienced educators are appointed for professional and pedagogical counselling on the issues of organising the study process, etc. The new staff are consulted by the Head of the Department, the administration of the FM. To ensure the adaptation of the newly recruited academic staff, 40-hour adaptation programme “Planning and organising teaching in KUAS” is implemented.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institution complies with the indicator, as evidenced by the number of suitably qualified staff employed on the programme.

The qualification of the academic staff is appropriate for achieving the anticipated learning outcomes. The indicators of human resources show that the qualification of the staff meets the requirements for the implementation of studies in the field of Nutrition, and suitable for achieving the strategic goals of the Faculty of Medicine and the KUAS. The academic staff of the field of Nutrition participate in the activities of various professional associations, societies, committees, expert working groups not only in Lithuania but also abroad. Staff were enthusiastic and confident and felt well supported.

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

Mobility data was provided within the SER. For example, the selection of the academic staff to participate in mobility programmes is announced at least four times a year and is conducted by the Staff Selection Committee. The selection criteria are clear and publicly available. They include the relevance of the visit to the HEI, the Department and/or study field represented and the purposefulness of the visit for the professional activities of the lecturer and/or another employee. There is also the International week which is available to all staff. Based on discussions with academics, it is clear the University offers opportunities for mobility, although for a range of reasons only some staff have undertaken this opportunity.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institution has evidenced promoting its academic mobility provision to staff. International mobility is coordinated by the FM project coordinator. The visits of the academic staff abroad are financed from the funds of the Erasmus programme, the Faculty of Medicine, other sources (professional associations, stakeholders). Staff were aware of the benefits. Fewer opportunities have been accessed recently due to the pandemic.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER outlined how staff are supported, for example, the topics for in-house training are also selected considering current issues. Due to the increasing impact of information technologies on the study process, training to improve IT competence is being organised. As the need for organising distance learning arises, it was necessary to enhance employees' competencies to work remotely, and relevant materials were provided on new communication and teaching tools via online seminars. In 2020, the webinar "Methodological recommendations on how to create tests in Moodle environment" was organised, as well as online training "Creating Tests in the Virtual Learning Environment Moodle". The staff have been provided with the information on teleworking tools such as Google Hangout. At the end of each semester, teacher evaluation is conducted, and staff get the results of this feedback, and readjust if something has not been working properly. After each subject an assessment is done. Yearly reports are prepared by the professors, in all subjects they teach, methodology used etc. Monitoring of the measures is also implemented. The expertise of each teacher is taken into account and their strong points are utilised at the University level. The professors also feel the support coming from the University level for their activities, both in providing tools and resources, and in appraisal support. Hence, the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff are favourable.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff are favourable and the available teaching resources provide a positive environment. Significant time is invested by senior staff in providing in house training and individual feedback and development discussions with teaching staff.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strength:

Academic staff feel very supported by the College, especially through the in house training provided.

(2) Weakness:

There is a need for further networking and internationalisation to acquire more knowledge and background from international institutions.

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 lecture halls, lecture rooms and laboratories at different facilities at KUAS. Computers and printers in KUAS computer classrooms and KUAS Library are available to students. Internet is available in all KUAS's structures and in students' dormitories. Current equipment, tools and materials in all facilities are sufficient for the number of students undergoing the programme. Every year, new apparatus and equipment, and new technologies are integrated into the study process. In the Campuses of Pramonès

Ave. and Puodžių Str., the premises are accessible to the persons with physical disabilities (elevator is available), and the Library has both the hardware and the software for visually impaired persons. Professional internships are done both in public and private sectors, domestically and internationally, such as institutions of personal and public health care, pre-school education institutions, schools etc. Achieving the learning outcomes during the internship is assured by tracking the students' progress and questionnaires for the students. The Library has areas for studies, consultations, library training, computer workstations, interactive whiteboards, and it contains printed and digital collections of publications. Library provides readers with electronic services: searching for resources in various databases, logging in to a personal account, email reminders, computer reservations, online help, YouTube videos, as well as news, and current affairs on Facebook. Publications are both in Lithuanian and in foreign languages. 70% of all Library resources are in an electronic format.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institution complies with the indicator due to the range of resources provided. The students reported satisfaction with these facilities and resources. Students are also happy that they could access the services of the Library and the counselling services during COVID-19.

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

(1) Factual situation

Based on the assessment of the needs for the current academic year, technologic resources, study material and methodological resources are planned and updated. Lecture notes prepared by the academic staff, methodological materials, tasks for self-study, descriptions of practical activities are available in the virtual environment MOODLE, and students are provided with access to passwords. The library subscribes for access to various Lithuanian and English electronic book publishers and databases.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The necessary learning and teaching facilities and resources are available and comply with the study field mission. KUAS maintains the virtual learning environment MOODLE and LIEMSIS servers to assist in the delivery of distance learning. Materials from 36 courses are available in the electronic learning environment MOODLE and students can access the material remotely. Hence, the institution complies with the indicator.

RECOMMENDATION-

Library should focus, not only on the annual upgrades, but have a longstanding plan of potential upgrades, not only in relation to the study programme, but individual in services they wish to provide etc.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Substantial variety of electronic services offered by the Library ensuring that the students are fully supported, especially when studying remotely due to placement or other reasons
2. The availability of numerous international databases of full-text scientific articles.

(2) Weakness:

1. Windows software in the Library is quite old (Windows XP Professional, Microsoft Office 2003 Professional)

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

It is clearly shown the internal quality assurance evaluates the studies at different levels. The quality assurance policy for the dietetics study programme is based on the *KUAS Strategy*. The strategic provisions for the improvement of the quality of the KUAS performance are based on the provisions of the Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, the KUAS Statute, the KUAS Policy of Study and Applied Science and Art Activities³ and the KUAS Policy of Human Resources⁴. The SER outlined the KUAS model, where a survey is completed to analyse the quality of studies, and the results are then presented to both students and teachers. Monitoring of the measures is implemented routinely.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institution has embedded a range of internal quality assurance processes. The quality assurance system covers all levels of the implementation of studies in the field of Nutrition and provides for all the relevant, related processes. Staff were knowledgeable and confident with the processes.

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 reported that students participate in the process of assessing the quality of the study programme of Dietetics and its improvement. They take part in surveys regarding the quality of organising studies and teaching courses (based on which the content and management of the study programme are improved); periodic meetings organised by the administration of the Faculty and Department (to discuss the progressiveness, attendance, the results of surveys). Students' representatives attend the meetings of the Study Field Committee, Dean's Office. The improvement of the quality of studies is also influenced by stakeholders, who participate in the activities of the Study Field Committee and in the Qualifying Boards to evaluate the defence of final theses and qualifying examinations. Every year, the chairperson of the Qualifying Board submits a report, based on which amendments are made to the study programme or the process of defending final theses. The results obtained during the feedback

³ Approved by Resolution of KUAS Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-25, 22/12/2017; amendments approved by Resolution No. (2.2.)-3-15, 12/04/2019.

⁴ Approved by Order of KUAS Director No. 1-363, 9/10/2018.

are presented to stakeholders, and the summarized research results are presented to students during meeting.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study program is adjusted operatively, taking into account the comments of students, social partners, and the documents of the Republic. There is a clear connection with public and private institutions, including hospitals and there are programs to monitor quality. The institution has embedded an appropriate number and combination of stakeholders (including students and representatives from the profession) within the internal monitoring processes. Stakeholders met during meetings confirmed their involvement in the processes. Students also expressed their satisfaction with monitoring processes in place.

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 reported that data from students is analysed and periodically presented at the meetings of the Department (once a month), the Study Field Committee (at least twice a year), the Dean's Office (at least once a month). Once a year, the reports on the performance of the Department, the Faculty, and KUAS are developed, and action plans are drawn up. Each semester, at the meetings of the Department, the results of students' learning achievements, their expectations, professional internships, the usefulness of stakeholders' participation in the study process are analysed. The analysis and the presentation are published on the KUAS website. Coordination is carried out at both the Faculty and the University level, and the results are publically available. There are specific programs for evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes yearly.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institution evidenced the indicator from the evidence of the data and results provided. The results of the surveys of the students of the field of Nutrition in 2018-2020 show that the students are satisfied with the studies chosen. For positive aspects of the study quality, they identify the connections of theoretical lectures with practice; clearly presented information; informative and useful classes; competent lecturers. The outputs are accessible with results being publically available.

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

According to the SER, students comment on the quality of teaching a course (twice a year). Surveys are conducted in the electronic environment, the Study Management System. Having finished the study course and been evaluated, students can connect to the Study Management System and anonymously express their opinion about the specific courses studied. The academic staff are provided with students' feedback on the courses they teach. The feedback on all study courses of the field is submitted to the Study Field Committee, and the Faculty administration is provided with the feedback on the courses of all study programmes implemented at the Faculty. Students' communication is assured, and if improvement is necessary, consultation with

students is held. The SER indicated that all surveys are initiated on the department level; students of the last year and graduates are included as well. Meetings with both staff and students confirmed how student input was collected and utilised within the programme.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institution complies with the indicator, as evidenced by the survey process and results. Students confirmed that the processes are satisfactory from their perspective. The results of the surveys of the students of the field of Nutrition in 2018-2020 show that the students are satisfied with the studies chosen. As the positive aspects of the study quality, they identify the connections of theoretical lectures with practice; clearly presented information; informative and useful classes; competent lecturers.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strength:

1. Effective links between University and the range of key stakeholders

IV. EXAMPLE OF EXCELLENCE

The academic staff team were impressive in their enthusiasm for delivering and further developing the programme in the future.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	Continue to update learning outcomes as required.
Links between science (art) and studies	Encourage staff to develop research networks and collaborations to enhance evidence based teaching provided.
Student admission and support	Continue to develop inclusion of under represented groups.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	Continue to develop support to students with learning difference and other challenges.
Teaching staff	Encourage staff mobility.
Learning facilities and resources	Continue to upgrade facilities and resources as required, especially in the area of information technology.
Study quality management and public information	Continue to audit and publish findings transparently.

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field *Nutrition* at Kaunas university of applied sciences:

The study program 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 HEI. The programme is executed and systematically updated following plans governing the policy and development of health within Lithuania.

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 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 consider enhancing the system for staff involvement in scientific research including financial support and special awards. Conditions for the involvement of the students in scientific research exist and this could be further developed.

The panel believe that the position of the college in the market is good and further emphasis of clinical dietetics teaching within the programme would enhance this.

The experts find that the college tries to foster the mobility of students to a reasonable extent and the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students and study information and study counselling offered by the college are suitable and adequate. The variety of feedback is a good method for reaching all students, taking into account the variety of tasks. Students rate their experience highly.

Teachers should be further supported to enable academic mobility, i.e. the teachers are provided with the opportunity to undergo internship and professional exchange.

The strategy of the organisers of the study programmes to engage social partners in the process of preparation of the final theses is assessed positively.

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 is strongly committed to its students and has been growing in reputation in recent years.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Prof. dr. Fiona McCullough, academic

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona McCullough". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F' and 'M'.