



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**

**STUDY FIELD**

**HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARTS**

at VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

**Expert panel:**

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5. Mr Justas Žemaitis, *students' representative.*

**Evaluation coordinator - Ms Agnė Grigaitė**

Report language – English

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## Study Field Data

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Title of the study programme                             | Programme “Art History, Criticism and Media”                            | Programme “ Art Curating”   | Programme “Theatre Studies and Management”                              |
| State code   | 6121NX048   | 6211NX037   | 6211NX043   |
| Type of studies  | University studies  | University studies  | University studies  |
| Cycle of studies   | Bachelor  | Master  | Master  |
| Mode of study and duration (in years)                    | Full time (4)   | Full time (2)   | Full time (2)   |
| Credit volume  | 240   | 120   | 120   |
| Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification | Bachelor’s degree in Humanities   | Master’s degree in Humanities   | Master’s degree in Humanities   |
| Language of instruction                                  | Lithuanian  | Lithuanian  | Lithuanian  |
| Minimum education required                               | Secondary   | Bachelor’s degree in Humanities, Social sciences or Arts                | Bachelor’s degree in Humanities, Social sciences or Arts                |
| Registration date of the study programme                 | 1997-05-19, Order No 565Renewed registration 2001-08-02, Order No. 1187 | 1997-05-19, Order No 56Renewed registration 2001-08-02, Order No. 11875 | 1997-05-19, Order No 5Renewed registration 2001-08-02, Order No. 118765 |

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

On the basis of 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 is **accredited for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as ‘exceptional’ (5 points), ‘very good’ (4 points) or ‘good’ (3 points).

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

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

## 1.2. THE REVIEW TEAM

The review team 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 Review Visit to the HEI was conducted by the team on 11/12/2020.

1. **Prof. dr. Dana Arnold (team leader)** *the University of East Anglia, Professor of Art History, United Kingdom.*
2. **Dr. Michael Fox**, *Limerick School of Art and Design, Senior Lecturer and Programme Co-ordinator Year One Art and Design Core Year, Ireland*
3. **Lect. Hannu Apajalahti**, *Sibelius Academy / University of the Arts Helsinki, Lecturer of Music Theory, Finland.*
4. **Ms Monika Lipšic**, *VIDEOGRAMS. International Kaunas Film Festival (artists' film festival), Program curator, Lithuania.*
5. **Mr Justas Žemaitis**, *student of Vilnius University, Master study programme Religious Studies, Lithuania.*

### 1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

| No. | Name of the document  |
|-----|---|
| 1.  | 'Field of Study: HISTORY AND THEORY OF ART (N15) BA (programme "Art History, Criticism and Media") MA (programmes "Art Curating", "Theatre Studies and Management") SELF EVALUATION REPORT' (hereafter abbreviated as SER). |
| 2.  | Introduction to the VDU infrastructure provided in video and photo formats.   |
| 3.  | Examples of theses.   |

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

This evaluation covers three study programmes at the Vytautas Magnus University (hereafter – VDU, University):

- BA programme "Art History, Criticism and Media";
- MA programme "Art Curating";
- MA programme "Theatre Studies and Management".

All three programmes, within the History and Theory of Art study field, are administered by the Department of Theatre Studies and the Department of Art History and Criticism at the Faculty of Arts. The Departments were established in 1996 and 1997 currently they administer four study programmes in the study field of History and Theory of Art – "Art History, Criticism and Media" (BA level), "Art Curating" (MA level), "Theatre Studies and Management" (MA level) and "History and Theory of Arts" (PhD level).

The importance of the culture industry has been highlighted in both EU and Lithuanian strategy documents. As natural resources are scarce in Lithuania, there has been a particular emphasis on developing its cultural and heritage industries. As a response to developments within the culture sector an integrated model of history and theory of arts was developed in VDU resulting in the BA "Art History, Criticism and Media" programme (state code – 6121NX048) (hereafter – BA programme). The combined nature of this programme makes it a unique offering within Lithuania.

The two second cycle study programmes (hereafter – MA programmes) in the study field of History and Theory of Art – "Art Curating" (state code – 6211NX037) and "Theatre Studies and Management" (state code – 6211NX043) (hereafter – MA Theatre Studies and

management) – were developed to deepen the knowledge acquired in the first cycle and prepare graduates for independent academic research and organizational work in two distinct areas those of visual arts and performing arts.

The programme “Art Curating” (hereafter - MA Art Curating) has been developed from a previous programme “Art History and Criticism” following a self-evaluation in 2012. “Art Curating” emphasises the curation practice and research into exhibition history as a part of art history.

The rationale behind these programmes in the study field of History and Theory of Art correspond to the general mission of VDU, defined in the Strategic plan and focused on creating liberal learning conditions for an individual, developing partnerships, taking active part in the life of Kaunas, advancing the future of Lithuania, and contributing to the global cultural and academic development.

All three programmes of the study field have been evaluated and accredited in 2012. Based on recommendations of the evaluation panel then, the 1st-cycle programme Art History, Criticism and Media (formerly named History and Theory of Arts) has been significantly renewed in 2016. The 2nd-cycle programme Art Curating was completely renewed in 2013 and the 2nd-cycle programme Theatre Studies and Management has been changed on the minor scale based on constant consideration and quality evaluation.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*History and Theory of Arts* study field and **first cycle** at Vytautas Magnus University is given **positive** evaluation.

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

| No. | Evaluation Area                                       | Evaluation of an area in points* |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1.  | Study aims, outcomes and content                      | 4                                |
| 2.  | Links between science (art) and study activities      | 4                                |
| 3.  | Student admission and support                         | 4                                |
| 4.  | Studying, student performance and graduate employment | 4                                |
| 5.  | Teaching staff  | 4                                |
| 6.  | Learning facilities and resources                     | 4                                |
| 7.  | Study quality management and publicity                | 4                                |
|     | <b>Total:</b>   | <b>28</b>                        |

- \*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;
- 2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;
- 3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;
- 4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;
- 5 (exceptional) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

*History and Theory of Arts* study field and **second cycle** at Vytautas Magnus University is given **positive** evaluation.

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

| No. | Evaluation Area                                       | Evaluation of an area in points* |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1.  | Study aims, outcomes and content                      | 4                                |
| 2.  | Links between science (art) and study activities      | 4                                |
| 3.  | Student admission and support                         | 4                                |
| 4.  | Studying, student performance and graduate employment | 4                                |
| 5.  | Teaching staff  | 4                                |
| 6.  | Learning facilities and resources                     | 4                                |
| 7.  | Study quality management and publicity                | 4                                |
|     | Total:  | <b>28</b>                        |

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

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

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

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

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

## III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

### 3.1. STUDY AIMS, OUTCOMES AND CONTENT

*Study 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*

In general programmes at the VDU are cognisant of European and Lithuanian strategic documents, including the EU document “A New European Agenda for Culture and the national Lithuania 2030”, which highlights Lithuania’s commitment to creativity, culture and Cultural Heritage, and The Lithuanian Cultural Policy Strategy. This cognition of the place of the study field of History and Theory of Art is reflected in the breath of the programmes. Relating to these policy documents embeds the programmes within wider Lithuanian socio-cultural strategies

The learning outcomes outlined in the self-evaluation report (hereafter – SER) match the aims and reflect both breadth of the programme aims and the acquisition of relevant communication technologies.

The principal aim of the second cycle programme (MA Art Curating) also has a strong social focus and is centred on providing professionals who can operate in a wide social, cultural and economic context (SER Annex 1).

- In this programme also the learning outcomes are reflective of this aim and centre on skills to equip students to be critical, reflective, analytical and flexible within a social context.
- The main aim of the second cycle programme (MA Theatre Studies and management) is to prepare specialists to manage theatre practices in an analytical and critical way, which is cognisant of the contemporary society in which it is operating.
- The learning outcomes reflect the development of critical, reflective and analytical, necessary for theatre management in a socio-economic context.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The expert panel members are positive in their view of how the learning outcomes relate to society and the labour market across all three programmes. The broad skill acquired by students coupled with management and communication skills make the graduates highly

employable. Additional training also enabled graduates to teach. Their flexibility and broad knowledge base also enables graduates to take advantage of any events that may present themselves as opportunities; a case in point being the upcoming Kaunas European Capital of Culture 2022, in which the students played a part in both the research and bid book preparation. The value of this participation was outlined by a number of the Social Partners at the meeting with the panel.

Members of the Senior Management and Faculty Administration Staff also echoed this role and how it was guided by the programmes' emphasis on mediation between art and society. The interdisciplinary nature of the programmes were also indicated as an enabler for the students to participate in society and the labour market by members of the social partner group. The success of these learning outcomes relative to social need and the needs of the labour market is evidenced in the high number of graduates finding employment in areas related to the study field (listed in SER Annex 7).

### ***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 VDU's commitment to a humanistic orientated culture, based on a broad Liberal Arts profile, as outlined in the self-evaluation report is strongly reflected in the structure and learning outcomes of the programmes under review.

The 240 credit first cycle programme consists of 184 credits devoted to core modules and 56 credits allocated to other liberal studies from the wider range available in the VDU. The Second cycle programmes build on the broad knowledge acquisition from the first cycle, develop greater critical and analytical skills, incorporate both theoretical and practical elements and continue the communication and mediation skills central to the VDU's commitment to intercultural dialogues.

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

The panel concurred with the Members of the Senior Management and Faculty Administration Staff who at their meeting stated that the programmes adopted an integrated approach developed after extensive research into arts study programmes in the context of liberal arts. It adopts a University interdisciplinary approach and its emphasis is to act as a mediator between art and society.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The programmes are compliant in meeting the legal requirements for the study cycles, as outlined in the Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies approved by [Order No. V-1168](#) of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016:

- The Bachelor programme consists of 240 ECTS, 180 of which are in the field of study, 56 ECTS for University specified or optional studies, 15 ECTS for internships 18 ECTS for the final thesis, 40% contact hours and 60% individual learning;
- The MA Art Curating consists of 120 ECTS, 102 of which are for study field, 18 ECTS for University specified or optional studies, 30 ECTS for the final thesis, 25% contact hours and 75% individual learning;
- The MA Theatre Studies and Management consists of 120 ECTS 96 ECTS for study field, 24 ECTS for University specified or optional studies, 30 ECTS final thesis, 25% contact hours and 75% individual learning.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel members are satisfied that all of these categories exceed the satisfactory standard for the required study cycles.

***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*

The teaching, learning and assessment methods adopted by the programmes to achieve the learning outcomes are outlined in the SER. They include lectures, seminars, practical classes, consultations and both individual and teamwork practices. Teaching uses a variety of standard and blended modes and includes use of virtual learning environments (hereafter –VLEs). Assessment methods vary in accordance with their relevance to the content. A sample course descriptor is provided in SER Annex 5 and outlines the parity of approaches between content, teaching/learning methodology and assessment. Within this descriptor there are a variety of assessment approaches including observation of discussions, evaluation of case studies, evaluation of research presentations, evaluation of group-work presentations, testing evaluation of case studies. The SER also describes assignments, and cumulative scoring, and thesis.

Assessment methods are introduced to students during introduction lectures and also made available on Moodle.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel members are of the opinion that the methodologies adopted on the programmes are varied and reflect the range of learning activities. The use of VLEs in particular Moodle is an effective way of keeping students informed of the programmes and their progression within it. At the meeting with the Teachers, the panel heard how after

assignments feedback is given as comments on Moodle, feedback is given to students regularly during lectures and there is a weekly allocation of consultation hours. The Teachers' group also indicated the use of Moodle was a popular form of communication with the students.

In the area of teaching and learning methodologies there was only one dissenting voice when one of the B.A. Student Group said in relation to study mentoring "I miss a mentor it would help me through my studies, help me with how I could improve, especially when we are submitting for academic texts". Perhaps developing mentoring could be examined by the programmes, particularly for some of the younger students at B.A. level.

### ***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 pp. 13-17 outlines the general programme subject and module content, with a more detailed breakdown of the individual course subjects and their alignment with the learning outcomes contained in Annex 4.

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

In the opinion of the panel, there is a clear and coherent progression of subject matter, outlined in tabular form in Annex 4. It ranges from the broad introduction nature of the early B.A. studies and becomes increasingly reflective, analytical and critical, as students' progress through the latter stages of the first cycle programme, increasing in focus as one progresses through the second cycle. However, this linear coherency may be problematic for students who join the programmes at an advanced stage from other institutions and it may be initially difficult for them to locate themselves within the established framework.

### ***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*

Obviously, the opportunity to personalise the student's study differs between the first cycle and the second cycle.

In the first cycle the opportunity to personalise one's study comes from the combination of choices which a student can make when selecting their University specified or optional studies. An extensive list of the optional courses available for the B.A. students is available in SER Annex 2 (Study Plans). The range of options is varied and on viewing one can see how they could have directional influences on further studies.

In the second cycle, in both M.A. programmes the opportunity to personalise is centred on the choice of personal research project some of which have been decided on prior to

application and included in the students' motivation letter. Their chosen direction provides the source for two research papers and eventually the final thesis. Guided by their chosen direction students in the second cycle can also choose to engage with optional courses, which in turn may influence the personalised nature of their studies.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

It is the view of the panel that there is ample opportunity to personalise studies based on students' own individual choices. Evidence of the variety of this personalisation can be seen in the variety and scope of thesis titles and subjects listed in Annex 6.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The preparation, production and defence of thesis in both study cycles are governed by the general VDU study regulations and are comprehensively outlined in the General Order on the Preparation, and Defence of the Final Thesis This document was made available to the Panel in English through a link in the SER. Each department is given responsibility for the dissemination, and overseeing of these guidelines. The thesis defence is attended and quality assured by a five-member panel, which consists of 3 members of the faculty staff, one from the social partners and one from another HEI. At least 50% of the panel must hold a doctoral degree.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel is satisfied that the final thesis is compliant with the field cycle requirements for both cycle programmes. The monitoring of quality assurance around the preparation, production and defence of the thesis is guaranteed by compliance with the Universities own document General Order on the Preparation, and Defence of the Final Thesis, which is a very comprehensive document, the inclusion of an member of the social partners on the defence panel (verified by members of the social partners group meeting), a member of an external HEI and the quality and qualification of the internal panel members.

#### ***Recommendations for this evaluation area:***

The Panel feel that the linear coherency of the programmes may be problematic for students who join the programmes at an advanced stage from other institutions and it may be initially difficult for them to locate themselves within the established framework. The Panel therefore recommend that flexible structures be put in place to ease the transition for advanced entry students.

## 3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDY ACTIVITIES

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

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER outlines the internal and external assessments that have been made on the links between research and study activities, and how they relate to all three study programmes. For example:

‘External evaluation of the field of History and Theory of Art of VMU is performed in the course of annual assessment of scientific research and development of Lithuanian higher education institutions and in the course of Comparative Expert Assessment of R&D activities executed every three years. According to the results of the comparative assessment (2015, 2018) the research in the field of History and Theory of Art of VMU has been evaluated as the best in Lithuania compared with other higher education schools of the country that have programmes of History and Theory of Art.’

The qualitative assessment was performed by the Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (STRATA)) and the panel included foreign experts. The research and development (hereafter – R&D) in study field of History and Theory of Art research was evaluated according to three criteria: 1. The quality of R&D activities; 2. The economic and social impact of R&D activities; and 3. Development potential of the Unit of Assessment (the field of History and Theory of Art in VDU (VDU in quotation is abbreviated as VMU)). The evaluation that VDU History and Theory of Art received was respectively 4, 5 and 5 (where 5 was the highest possible score).

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

The panel is convinced that the quality of research activities is high and that these inform the curricula of all the study cycles. The panel also notes the recent very high scores achieved by the unit from STRATA which included international assessors as panel members.

### **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 demonstrates the Faculty of Arts has strong grounded business partnerships, leadership positions in the highest national bodies of cultural policy and membership in international decision-making bodies and is actively engaged in scholarly networks in Baltic

and Nordic regions as well as local projects, such as “Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022”.

The research of all the regular teachers of the programmes are directly related to the study field of History and Theory of Art and the results of their research activities are integrated into curricula of the study programmes through participation of researchers in Research Priorities. SER identifies two Research Priorities:

‘The Research Priority *Research on Intercultural Art Exchange in Eastern and Central Europe: Global Contexts and Local Practices* is focused on intercultural and transnational dimensions of artistic practices in Central and Eastern Europe. The reconstruction and analysis of historical developments of intercultural communication and transnational exchange of arts, their ideological premises, contemporary issues as well as challenges of the future frame the scope of this research. The Research Priority *Research on Lithuanian Art and Cultural Heritage: Identities, Memories, Policies* performs interdisciplinary research of Lithuanian visual art, architecture and cultural heritage in the context of European and global cultural processes.’

The SER states that the ‘results, methods, theoretical approaches of the research produced in the framework of these Priorities are directly integrated into the content of study subjects (through delivering lectures, moderating seminars, making lists of compulsory and additional literature etc.)

(2) *Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

Based on the SER, related documentation and the meetings with staff, students and graduates, social partners during the online visit, the panel agrees that a highly convincing case is made for the strong links between the content of the study cycles, the latest developments in research and professional practice and these links prepare students for related careers. The panel also notes the strategic plans for greater contact between user groups and the study programmes.

**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 and links to relevant documentation outline the ways in which students are involved with research activities. The SER states “during the period of analysis the research and applied research activities carried out by the teachers of the programmes in the field of History and Theory of Art have involved 90% of students of the second cycle and 50% students of the first cycle.”

(2) *Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel is very satisfied that students across all the study cycles have ample opportunity to be involved with research and professional activities at a range of institutions. The meetings with students, graduates and social partners during the online visit confirmed the excellent relations between the study cycles and partner institutions, and the value this brings to the programmes.

### 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*

During the Panel meeting with Staff Responsible for the Preparation of the SER, the panel were informed that the programmes engage in an extensive range of student recruitment activities. For the B.A. programme these activities include taking part in education and career fairs, various online and physical study visits to schools arranging public lectures, open-days, organising workshops on campus and online consultations. Recruitment for the M.A. programmes focuses on the use of the website, social media, and the creation of short promotional videos. The M.A. programmes also invite students from other universities and colleges for campus visits.

Admission to first cycle programmes are based on the highest competitive scores and carried out in accordance with the universal system's for admission to Lithuanian higher educational institutions (hereafter – LAMA BPO) regulations. A list of the subjects included in the competitive scoring calculations and their weighted values are available in the SER. Information for applicants on the requirements is available on both the VDU and the LAMA BPO websites. All these procedures are overseen by the VDU department of marketing and communication.

Admission to the second cycle programmes is conditional to applicants holding a B.A. qualification in Humanities, Social Sciences or Arts and meet the general admission requirements for entry to second cycle programmes. A description of the competitive scoring calculations is available in the SER. Entry to the second cycle only takes place in alternate years.

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

It is the view of the Panel that both the first and second cycle programmes are well advertised and application procedures and regulations are well explained. The programmes are compliant with both national and institutional regulations and structures for competitive admission and these structures are clear and transparent.

### ***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*

Recognition of foreign qualifications is carried out through the VDU's International Cooperation Department in compliance with standards set nationally by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. During the period covered by the self- evaluation there was just one foreign student (from Ukraine) admitted to the second cycle programme Theatre Studies and Management.

In the case of students engaging with mobility programmes and studying abroad, learning study agreements are drawn up between the VDU and the host institution.

Procedures for recognition of non-formal and informal education is described in the document "Vytautas Magnus University Description of Procedure for Assessment and Recognition of Competences Acquired through Non-Formal and Informal Education" a link to which is provided in the SER.

The document describes the preparation assistance given to the applicant followed by the assessment/evaluation procedure.

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

In the view of the panel all of the qualification recognition procedures used on the programmes are transparent, clearly explained and compliant with both national and institutional regulations. The document outlining recognition of non-formal and informal learning (provided in English) is particularly well explained and would be very helpful for those applicants wishing to avail of this entry route.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

Unfortunately, during the Panel online visit mobility opportunities were severely curtailed due to Covid 19 restrictions.

The SER provides a link to 35 partner universities with whom the VDU have Erasmus exchange agreements. About 15 students per year of the Faculty of Arts take advantage of these opportunities. Students from the programmes under evaluation compete with students from across the Faculty of arts for exchange possibilities.

Graduate students can avail of Erasmus+ internships which are between 2 and 12 months in duration. Students are also encouraged to take part in other exchange opportunities. They can apply for VDU mobility grants or scholarships to avail of exchange possibilities offered through the VDU's 211 bilateral agreements.

During the period covered in there were 25 students across the first and second cycle programmes who availed of mobility possibilities to external institutions and 53 students from external institutions who availed of exchange possibilities to transfer to VDU. The number of exchanges availing of bilateral agreements is higher than those availing of Erasmus schemes.

However institutional data shows that the number of students from the field of History and Theory of Art availing of mobility possibilities is proportionally lower than other areas.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel is satisfied that student mobility opportunities are available to students but need more encouragement to increase take up. During the meeting with Senior Management and Faculty Administration Staff the panel were informed of the faculty's ambition to grow international partnerships. At present relationships are strong with other Baltic countries extending relationships to Eastern Europe countries such as Belarus and Ukraine are already in progress and relationships with East Asian countries are growing. However, there are some financial constraints which need to be addressed.

Despite the current restrictions during the Panel meeting with students examples were cited where students had availed of mobility opportunities and reported positively on their experiences. First cycle students mentioned exchange experiences in Poznan and Stockholm. The experience in Poznan offered the student the possibility of meeting with students from practical art areas and this was seen as very positive. Another student was very positive about his study experience in Stockholm although the possibilities for choosing foreign programs from the Erasmus list were very limited. The second cycle students explained that they had been offered the possibility of attending a conference in Estonia but it was cancelled due to Covid restrictions.

***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*

Academic support is provided by various means on a personal level. According to the SER, each teacher allocates a number of hours each week for personal consultations during which the student may discuss any academic issues which they might be experiencing. Other forms of support: social, psychological and financial are provided officially through VDU structures and coordinated through the VDU Student Affairs Department. An outline of these

supports is given in the SER. The university also has a centralised Student Support Centre which can be accessed by students physically, by email or through various forms of social media. It was also mentioned at the Panel meeting with the teachers group that within Moodle there is a facility to monitor students' attendance and participation. If a teacher notices that a particular student's attendance or participation has dropped below an acceptable level they can notify the centre through Moodle and the student is contacted and offered support if necessary.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

During the Panel meeting with students, the students were generally positive about the level of support provided. However, one B.A. student questioned the level of social mentoring available. From the ensuing discussion it appears as though such support is available through informal rather than formal structures, but support is available when needed. Another student from B.A. had concerns about the internship in January that the students are not well informed how the internship is going to take place in the online environment. One of the teachers remarked that while formal institutional structures exist the teachers are not very well informed of what is actually available. Members of the M.A. student group expressed the valuable role played by the student association who help students with difficulties bring these issues to the vice-dean who in turn advises the students of both internal and external supports available. It is the view of the Panel that there are good informal supports available but that greater information on the systemic supports needs to be disseminated to both staff and students.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

According to the SER there are a variety of means by which study information and information on student support services are conveyed to the students. All of this information is disseminated. At the beginning of their studies, for all first year students there is a student event "Introduction to studies" which covers all aspects of study, student support and wellbeing services. During the course of their studies students receive support updates through various internal digital platforms, emails and social media.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

Following confirmation of these information dissemination processes during the Panel meetings with both teacher and student-groups the panel are satisfied that the information relating to study and student counselling is adequately conveyed to the students.

### ***Recommendations for this evaluation area:***

It is the view of the Panel that there are good informal supports available but that greater information on the systemic supports needs to be disseminated to both staff and students.

### **3.4. STUDYING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT**

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

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The teaching and learning processes across both first cycle and second cycle are varied and appropriate to the material under study. The methods used include lectures, seminars, practical classes, consultations and both individual and teamwork practices.

Use of VLEs is outlined in the SER and confirmed by both the teaching staff and the student groups at their meetings with the panel. During all of the lecture-based studies there are discussion and analysis opportunities which centre on analysis of practical examples, screenings and case-studies.

During the panel online visit pandemic restrictions had moved the use of the VLE to the fore and the existing use of platforms such as Moodle had been of particular advantage when moving to blended and online delivery. This was also having a negative effect on the engagement with practical elements of the programme and during the panel meeting with B.A. students, the opinion was expressed that the practical could be better 3rd year.

However there appears from the SER documentation to be a good mix of theory and practice and the experience expressed by the students may have been due to exceptional, pandemic related circumstances.

Annex 5 which accompanies the SER provides a tabular outline which matches the outcome with the content, the study/delivery method and the assessment methodology. It is evident from this alignment that the methods are appropriate in helping students achieve the learning outcomes.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

In the view of the panel, based on the information in the SER, in Annex 5 and from both B.A. and M.A. students' positive responses the teaching and learning processes are cognisant and appropriate to the needs of students in achieving the learning outcomes.

However as mentioned earlier, one of the B.A. students mentioned that the support of a mentor would be beneficial, particularly in the area of academic text submission. While some students said this form of support was available others felt it should be systematic and available to all.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER describes the VDU as a socially responsible university and cites a number of examples of how students with disabilities were facilitated to engage with the programmes and successfully complete their studies. This facilitation is achieved by individually tailoring the teaching and learning methodologies to the circumstances of the individual student involved. Where necessary blended / distance modes are applied in an appropriate manner. The success of this approach is evidenced in the recent graduation of an M.A. student with severe disability in 2018.

There are systemic supports available for students from socially vulnerable and disadvantaged demographics. Discounts are available for tuition and dormitory fees and there are also scholarships available.

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

The panel members are satisfied that adequate systemic and more personal flexible provisions are made for students with disability and also those from socially vulnerable demographics. The provisions outlined in the SER. were confirmed by the panel meetings with the Teachers, the B.A. and the M.A. students.

The Teachers' group confirmed that there was an open and positive attitude towards students with disability and that vulnerable students were accepted in a friendly manner by other students. Although the panel did not have physical access to the institution, members of the Teachers' group confirmed that disabled access is a feature of the building. Teachers also confirmed the successful use of VLEs in particular Moodle as a teaching / learning tool for students with disability.

Support for demographically vulnerable students was confirmed by one of the B.A. students who at a time of financial difficulty said that she was well supported by the University. A member of the M.A. Student group confirmed that the Student Association assists students to make representations to the Dean/Vice-Dean who in turn directs the vulnerable student to the most appropriate internal or external support body.

### ***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*

To aid planning of study progress, monitoring and feedback is a two-way exchange process, where staff through a variety of mechanisms offer feedback and opinions and students can in turn ask any questions or seek clarification. Among the processes used as described in the SER are:

- Group discussions;
- Private individual feedback provided online;
- Comments on returned essay papers;
- Regular individual consultations.

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

The panel acknowledges the potential for these feedback mechanisms to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress. The teacher and peer discourse created through group discussions coupled with the individual consultations provide ample opportunity for students to analyse and reflect on their performance. However, the B.A. student-group pointed out that the quality of feedback was dependent on the approach taken by individual teachers. This inconsistency may be rectified by the introduction of standardised feedback rubrics.

The Teachers' group confirmed the processes outlined in the SER citing that feedback was given once a week during meetings and also to groups during lectures. The teachers also confirmed that they each allocate hours on a weekly basis for private consultations where the feedback is of a more discursive nature. The use of Moodle as a two-way feedback mechanism was also discussed and members of the Teachers' group confirmed that the students responded positively to the use of Moodle.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The VDU has a number of mechanisms for tracking career information and retaining contact with graduates both at university and faculty level. These formal and informal mechanisms include:

- VDU alumni surveys;
- Employment statistics from the Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA);
- Yearly invitation to alumni to visit the faculty;
- Graduate participation on Study Programme Committees;

- Graduates invited to share their professional experiences in lectures and seminars;
- An informal faculty alumni club;
- Various forms of social media including a public Facebook group.

Faculty statistics on graduate employment from all three programmes were presented to the expert panel in an Annex to the SER.

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

Based on the statistics provided in Annex 7 and on information provided during a number of the panel meetings the panel formed a positive view of existing and potential future employment prospects for graduates of all three programmes.

From the statistical analysis collected by the Faculty one year after graduation the figures show that:

Over the period from 2017-2020 of the 49 graduates of the B.A. Art History and Criticism surveyed 21 were in either field related employment or in further (MA) studies.

Over the period 2017-2019 of the 13 graduates from the M.A. Art Curating 9 graduates were in either field related employment or in further (PhD) studies.

Over the period 2017-2020 of the 15 graduates from the M.A. Theatre Studies and Management 13 were in field related employment.

These figures are positive figures and the potential for future additional employment in field related areas will be given a significant boost by Kaunas European Capital of Culture 2022 and the planned legacy cultural developments in the city and region.

The Panel were informed by members of the SER working group that there are currently 8 new festivals at the planning stages in Kaunas which, through strong social partner links, will provide employment opportunities for graduates. There are also currently 64 organisations involved in the European Capital of Culture project in Kaunas. The wide range of skills including language skills possessed by graduates of the three programmes will increase the employability potential of the graduates among these organisations.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

Ethical issues are governed at University level by the Senate approved document The Code of Ethics of Vytautas Magnus University 2011. A link to this document (in English) was provided to the Panel in the SER. This document extensively covers the University's policy on tolerance and non-discrimination and any subsequent actions relating from breaches of same.

A link was also provided to the University's policies on academic integrity and plagiarism.

This document was available in Lithuanian only but a summary of its basic principles were included in the SER main text.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

Governed by extensive University-wide policies, which are clearly outlined, the panel members have no reason to doubt the reliability of their implementation.

***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*

Appeal procedures are governed by the VDU document Description of procedure for appeal investigation, a link to this document was provided to the panel in the SER.

This document was provided in Lithuanian only but a summary of its basic principles were included in the SER main text. All students may make an appeal against their assessment results. This appeal should outline the student's arguments against the results or show that there has been a procedural violation.

The appeal is dealt with within five days of receipt by an appeals commission established by the Dean of Faculty as described in the SER.

No appeals have been lodged during the course of this self-evaluation process except for a number of issues relating to emergency procedures for assessing distance learning during the quarantine period in 2020. These exceptional cases are outlined in the SER.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The Panel members are satisfied that the protocols, governed by University's wide documentation are sufficiently effective to ensure fair and open possibilities for student appeals. Their successful implementation in the extreme cases, brought about by emergency pandemic measures, evidence the rigor and robustness of the protocols.

***Recommendations for this evaluation area:***

An inconsistency in the quality of feedback was highlighted by a number of students. The Panel therefore recommends that to minimise inconsistencies in the quality of feedback, programmes should adopt the use of standardised feedback rubrics.

## **3.5. TEACHING STAFF**

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

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The SER links to related legal documents and the online visit have convinced the panel that the academic staff in the study field actively participate in high profile research activities in Lithuania and abroad. The results of their research and practice are disseminated through academic publications, scientific conferences, public lectures, and public media, and participate in projects with social partners and institutions. The entrance requirements and strategies for staff replacement are entirely appropriate. Staff student ratios are very good.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel is completely satisfied that the research and professional profiles of the teaching staff more than adequately meet all the necessary requirements. The panel also notes the ways in which staff research informs and enhances the curriculum and other student activities in the study cycles. The programmes clearly benefit from enthusiastic, committed staff who are given time to pursue their own research

***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 and relevant links outline the involvement of academic staff in the ERASMUS+ exchange programme and collaboration and partnerships with foreign higher education institutions, including visits by international scholars to the University. The strategy of attracting visiting lecturers from other higher education institutions in Europe and the world is mentioned and was explored further in the online visit.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel is satisfied that the conditions to ensure staff mobility are more than adequate and have potential to be developed further. The panel also notes the strong regional focus and are especially impressed by the orientation towards the East (e.g. Ukraine, Poland) as a geopolitically important initiative.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The SER gives details of the training offered to staff to improve their teaching competencies, financial support available for research activities, and the policies for the allocation of study leave or research time. At the meeting with staff during the online visit the panel learned that “the workload is too high especially for the young teachers. The more research you do the less you have to teach. Young teachers have too much teaching, it is difficult to develop their research careers.”

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel is very satisfied that more than adequate measures are in place to enable staff to improve their competencies in teaching and research. The panel notes the availability of funds to support activities and that internationalisation is a priority in line with institutional strategy.

***Recommendations for this evaluation area:***

The Panel recommends that special consideration should be given to junior colleagues in the allocation of study time to assist in the development of their research profiles.

### **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*

In the SER the sufficient data is provided on the premises used for the field of studies. The means and equipment lists are provided and adequate for the current number of students as well as adaptable for the students with special needs.

Facilities for practice outside VDU are described and a full list of institutions provided. The university library resources are well described. They are fully providing the field of studies and supporting the individual interdisciplinary research. Students are well informed regarding the resources available and generally satisfied and content. Although the programme is theory oriented, the students can freely use other studios such as photography and equipment studios. They also are granted free access to theatres and museums in the city of Kaunas and Lithuania.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The study program benefits largely on its material basis (infrastructure, research, practice) being part of the University. The number of material, library and digital resources, its relevance, recency and suitability is evaluated by the panel as very good and outstanding.

The students' feedback provided during the meetings is also confirming the excellence of the suitability and adequacy of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process. The library ensures perfect conditions for individual work; the quarantine situation on that matter was and is being handled perfectly, providing students with cleaned books, working hours with safety measures.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER describes the constant upgrading of the IT, library and infrastructure resources needed to carry out the field studies. The department recently moved to new premises, providing students with better conditions. The regular maintenance is providing great results. The modern newly built library is student orientated, perfectly providing for studies, research and practice. The SER hasn't provided any substantial plannings regarding upgrading of the resources besides regular maintenance, but presented a great concern with moving the studies online and proved the work to be well organized.

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

In expert judgement the institution showed impressive ability in moving to online systems and maximising the resources in response to covid-19 situations. During the meetings, the panel was convinced that the constantly updated modern VDU IT infrastructure allows teachers and students to collaborate smoothly in a virtual learning environment.

## **3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICITY**

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

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The structure of the field study management and decision-making responsibilities are described in the SER. The Council of the Faculty of Arts is responsible for the quality assurance of the whole study field. The Council approves the renewals of study programmes and their quality improvement plans.

Each programme has its own Study Programme Committee (SPC) which performs internal programme quality assessment every year and is responsible for preparation and implementation of quality improvement plans. The composition of the SPCs and responsibilities among its members are described in the SER. All stakeholders including social partners have an active role in the quality system.

All three programmes of the study field have been evaluated and accredited in 2012. Based on recommendations of the evaluation panel then, the 1st-cycle programme Art History, Criticism and Media (formerly named History and Theory of Arts) has been

significantly renewed in 2016. The 2nd-cycle programme Art Curating was completely renewed in 2013 and the 2nd-cycle programme Theatre Studies and Management has been changed on the minor scale based on constant consideration and quality evaluation.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

According to the SER, related documentation, and the interviews, the faculty has a strong quality culture. The panel was convinced that there are appropriate quality assurance measures in place in the study field. The internal assessment processes are systematically performed every year. The responsibilities of members in different bodies are clearly defined.

***3.7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies.***

*(1) Factual situation*

The means of gathering data and other information concerning the structure and delivery of the programmes are described in the SER.

There are periodic surveys aimed at gathering information from different stakeholders for decision-making and quality enhancement. Surveys of teaching and learning evaluations are conducted on the regular basis at the end of each semester.

The graduates are surveyed about the quality of their studies and preparedness for the labour market at the end of the studies. One year after graduation, the graduates are asked about their career and adaptation in the labour market.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The involvement of students and other stakeholders in the quality enhancement as described in the SER was ensured during the interviews. The students confirmed that their opinions concerning teaching and learning processes are regularly asked and taken into account.

The panel notes that means and processes of gathering information from students and stakeholders are adequate and beneficial and have led to significant improvements in programmes. According to interviews, some changes have been implemented based on research on Lithuanian cultural institutions.

***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 document describes how information about studies is gathered, analysed and evaluated in order to assure regular self-assessment and improvement. According to the SER, annual programme analysis involves the issues that should be assessed each year.

A more comprehensive analysis of the Programme is done for external evaluation in more detail to cover various issues of studies. Decisions regarding studies are publicized for stakeholders by different channels and information is delivered for the students, teachers, social partners and other stakeholders.

The SER presents several examples how external and internal surveys have improved the programmes. According to the SER, when surveys are organised, the feedback data analysis are presented to stakeholders who have provided feedback as well as other representatives of the University's social stakeholders. The results are publicized through the council of students' group representatives, on a website, emailed to students and teachers, delivered in social media, and shared by other channels. All decisions regarding studies (including issues on assessment and improvement) are publicized for stakeholders by different channels.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The panel was satisfied with the methods in use. There were clear examples in the SER, how the continuous monitoring of the programmes helps to develop the programmes. This was confirmed during the discussions in every meeting during the online visit. All relevant groups have significant roles in the evaluation process. This opinion was confirmed during the discussions with students, teachers, and stakeholders.

The SER includes clear examples of the changes caused by the internal quality assurance system. Teachers, students, and stakeholders were active actors in the process, and they were aware of their possibilities to effect on the programmes.

***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 describes numerous different methods for collecting students' views about their studies. The surveys for the evaluation of teaching and learning of the study courses are conducted at the end of each semester.

The survey of the graduates of studies (EXIT) about the studies, final theses, and the preparation for the labour market is conducted at the end of the studies. The SER includes comprehensive examples of the results of these surveys.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

Following the meetings with different groups the panel were satisfied that there were systematic and comprehensive methods for collecting opinions of the field students. There is clearly a strong quality culture within the university.



## IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Core definition: Excellence means exhibiting characteristics that are very good and, implicitly, not achievable by all.

Explanatory context Excellence enshrines one meaning of quality: a traditional view that associates quality with the exceptional.

- The programmes are run by an enthusiastic, committed staff who are given time to pursue their own research. This has resulted in impressive professional profiles among the teaching staff. The staff's research enhances both the curriculum and has great benefits for their students.

- The Panel are impressed by the suite of wide-ranging programmes that make a strong contribution to the field. The breadth of skills acquired by the students produces professionals who can operate in a wide social, cultural and economic context.

- The programmes are well equipped and well-resourced and work together to support each other. Equipment and facility lists provided in the SER, reveal programmes that are well serviced and that can also make use of cross disciplinary resources such as photography and equipment studios.

- The Panel noted the way in which programmes enable students to develop careers within and outside the academy and train doctoral students as university teachers. Meetings with staff, students and employers/social partners during the online visit provided a strong case to suggest that for the strong links between the content of the study cycles, the latest developments in research and professional practice and that these prepare students for related careers.

- The panel were impressed by the strong regional focus, apparent in the programmes This was also highlighted by current cooperation initiatives orientated towards Eastern Europe (e.g. Ukraine, Poland)

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Panel feel that the linear coherency of the programmes may be problematic for students who join the programmes at an advanced stage from other institutions and it may be initially difficult for them to locate themselves within the established framework. The Panel therefore recommend that flexible structures be put in place to ease the transition for advanced entry students.

2. An inconsistency in the quality of feedback was highlighted by a number of students. The Panel therefore recommends that to minimise inconsistencies in the quality of feedback, programmes should adopt the use of standardised feedback rubrics

3. The Panel recommends that special consideration should be given to junior colleagues in the allocation of study time to assist in the development of their research profiles.

4. It is the view of the Panel that there are good informal supports available. However, the Panel recommends that greater, formal information on the systemic supports needs to be disseminated to both staff and students.

## VI. SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the findings of the evaluation team based on the Self-Evaluation Reports and the interviews with the university administration (senior management and faculty administration staff), staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff and stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, social partners).

In general, the Panel formed very positive evaluation findings in the implementation of all three programmes in this evaluation process; “Art History, Criticism and Media” (BA level) “Art Curating” (MA level) and “Theatre Studies and Management” (MA level).

In general programmes at the VDU are cognisant of European and Lithuanian strategic documents, including Lithuania 2030, which highlights Lithuania’s commitment to creativity, culture and Cultural Heritage. Commitment to these areas is reflected in the breath of the programmes and helps to embed them within wider Lithuanian socio-cultural strategies. The learning outcomes relate to society and the labour market across all three programmes and the broad skills acquired by students coupled with management and communication skills make the graduates highly employable.

The Panel is convinced that the quality of research activities is high and that these inform the curricula of all the study cycles. The Faculty of Arts has strong grounded business partnerships, and is actively engaged in scholarly networks in Baltic and Nordic regions as well as local projects, such as “Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022”. These partnerships ensure that students across all the study cycles have ample opportunity to be involved with research and professional activities at a range of institutions.

In terms of student recruitment, the Panel members are satisfied that that the programmes engage in an extensive range of student recruitment activities. The Panel is pleased with the standard and rigour applied to admission policies. In the view of the panel all of the qualification recognition procedures used on the programmes are transparent, clearly explained and compliant with both national and institutional regulations. The document outlining recognition of non-formal and informal learning is particularly well explained and would be very helpful for those applicants wishing to avail of this entry route.

The Panel feel that the linear coherency of the programmes may be problematic for students who join the programmes at an advanced stage from other institutions and it may be initially difficult for them to locate themselves within the established framework. The Panel therefore recommend that flexible structures be put in place to ease the transition for advanced entry students.

The panel is satisfied that student mobility opportunities are available to students but need more encouragement to increase take up. At present relationships are strong with other

Baltic countries extending relationships to Eastern Europe countries such as Belarus and Ukraine are already in progress and relationships with East Asian countries are growing.

Despite the Covid 19 travel restrictions prevalent during the online Panel visit examples were cited where students had availed of mobility opportunities and reported positively on their experiences. These examples were primarily from first cycle students. The second cycle students explained that they had been offered the possibility of attending a conference in Estonia but it was cancelled due to Covid restrictions.

During the Panel meeting with students, the students were generally positive about the level of support provided. Information relating to study and student counselling is adequately conveyed to the students. However, it is the view of the Panel that while there are good informal supports available greater, formal information on the systemic supports needs to be disseminated to both staff and students. Members of the panel would like to acknowledge the valuable role played by the student association who help students with difficulties, bring these issues to the vice-dean who in turn advises the students of both internal and external supports available.

In the view of the panel, the teaching and learning processes are cognisant and appropriate to the needs of students in achieving the learning outcomes. During the panel online visit pandemic restrictions had moved the use of the VLE to the fore and the existing use of platforms such as Moodle had been of particular advantage when moving to blended and online delivery. Tabular examples which matches the outcome with the content, the study/delivery method and the assessment methodology show evidence that the alignment of content and teaching methodologies are appropriate in helping students achieve the outcomes.

The panel members are satisfied that adequate systemic and more personal flexible provisions are made for students with disability and also those from socially vulnerable demographics. The provisions outlined in the SER were confirmed by the panel meetings with the Teachers, the B.A. Students and the M.A. Students.

To aid planning of study progress, monitoring and feedback is a two-way exchange process, where staff through a variety of mechanisms offer feedback and opinions and students can in turn ask any questions or seek clarification. However, it was revealed to the Panel during the online visit that the quality of feedback was dependent on the approach taken by individual teachers. This inconsistency may be rectified by the introduction of standardised feedback rubrics

From statistical analysis collected by the Faculty one year after graduation the figures show positive employment results for graduates and the potential for future additional employment in field related areas will be given a significant boost by Kaunas European Capital of Culture 2022 and the planned legacy cultural developments in the city and region.

The Panel was very impressed by the knowledge and enthusiasm displayed by the teaching staff. It is completely satisfied that the research and professional profiles of the teaching staff more than adequately meet all the necessary requirements. The panel also notes the ways in which staff research informs and enhances the curriculum and other student activities in the study cycles. The programmes clearly benefit from enthusiastic, committed staff who are given time to pursue their own research. The Panel however, noted one shortcoming in this area the workload appears too high, especially for the young teachers. The more research you do the less you have to teach. The extent of young teachers teaching-workload, makes it difficult to develop their research careers, and this situation needs to be addressed.

Despite the lack of a physical visit, the written documentation and verbal reports received by the Panel confirmed the excellence of the suitability of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process. It is also obvious that a continual system of renewal and upgrading takes place within the Faculty ensuring a strong learning environment. The Covid 19 emergency measures tested the adequacy of the Virtual Learning Environment, which proved to be flexible and robust.

The involvement of students and other stakeholders in the quality was confirmed to the Panel during the online visit. The panel notes that means and processes of gathering information from students and stakeholders are adequate and beneficial and have led to significant improvements in programmes. Information relating to studies is gathered, analysed and evaluated in order to assure regular self-assessment and improvement. The results are publicized through the council of students' group representatives, on a website, emailed to students and teachers, delivered in social media, and shared by other channels. All decisions regarding studies (including issues on assessment and improvement) are publicized for stakeholders by different channels. The Panel is pleased with the standard of involvement of the social partners All relevant groups have significant roles in the evaluation process. This opinion was confirmed during the discussions with students, teachers, and stakeholders.

Based on the contents of this report the panel are pleased to positively endorse all three programmes under review.

**Expert panel signatures:**

1. Prof. dr. Dana Arnold (team leader) *academic,*
2. Dr. Michael Fox, *academic,*
3. Lect. Hannu Apajalahti, *academic,*
4. Ms Monika Lipšic, *representative of social partners'*
5. Mr Justas Žemaitis, *students' representative.*