CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
at UTENA COLLEGE

Expert panel:

1. **Prof. dr. Edoardo Patelli** (panel chairperson), member of academic community;
2. **Prof. dr. Tone Merete Muthanna,** *member of academic community;*
3. **Prof. dr. Toomas Tamm,** *member of academic community;*
4. **Prof dr. Dalia Štreimikienė,** *representative of social partners;*
5. ***Tadas Paukštys,*** *students' representative*.

Evaluation coordinator – Mr. Gustas Straukas

Report language – English

Vilnius
2022

Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	***Environment Protection Engineering*** *(until 2021)*	***Occupational Safety and Environmental Engineering*** *(since 2021)*
State code	6531EX042	6531EX042
Type of studies	First cycle higher college studies	First cycle higher education college studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)
Credit volume	180	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Engineering Sciences	Professional Bachelor of Engineering Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Not lower than secondary education, at least one state maturity exam passed	Not lower than secondary education, at least one state maturity exam passed
Registration date of the study programme	30-08-2011	16-03-2021

** if there are **joint / two-fields / interdisciplinary** study programmes in the study field, please designate it in the foot-note*

CONTENTS

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 13 December 2021.

Prof. dr. Edoardo Patelli, *professor at University of Strathclyde (United Kingdom);*
Prof. dr. Tone Merete Muthanna, *professor at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway);*
Prof. dr. Toomas Tamm, *professor at Estonian University of Life Sciences (Estonia);*
Prof dr. Dalia Štreimikienė, *Lithuanian energy institute (Lithuania);*
Tadas Paukštys, *student at Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences (Lithuania).*

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
1.	
2.	
…	

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

The Utena University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as - "Utena UAS"), established in 2000 became a legal entity operating as a public institution in 2012. Utena UAS is the only higher education institution in the Eastern Aukštaitija region of Lithuania that offers practice-oriented college studies.

Utena UAS offers first-cycle studies, with more than 1,400 students enrolled in the 21 study programmes from 17 fields of study. From 2001 until now, all study programmes have been accredited. The Department of Engineering and Technology implements 6 study programmes: Environment Protection Engineering (state code 653H17005) from 2010. From 2021 - Occupational Safety and Environmental Engineering, Clothing Technology, Foodstuffs Technology, Information Systems Engineering, Automatic Control Systems and Agricultural Technologies.

In 2011, the study programme was updated, switching to the ECTS credit system, introducing a problem-based learning system, developing e-learning opportunities for students, significantly changing the content of the study programme, and introducing elements of the modular framework. In 2014, the Environment Protection Engineering was evaluated and accredited for 3 years. Since 2017,, the Environment Protection Engineering study programme has been classified as a study field of Environmental Engineering, a group of study fields of Engineering Sciences (programme code: 6531EX042). In 2018, Environment Protection Engineering study programme were updated by unifying the scope of contact work in full-time and part-time study forms. In the academic year 2020-2021, the study programme was updated to meet the labour market needs by adding work safety to the field of environmental engineering.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Translation study field and **first cycle** at **Utena College** is given **positive** evaluation.
Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	23

*1 (unsatisfactory) - t*he area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies*;
2 (satisfactory) - t*he area meets the minimum requirements, and there are fundamental shortcomings that need to be eliminated*;
3 (good) - t*he area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings;*
4 (very good) - t*he area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings*;
5 (excellent) - t*he area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.*

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 studies of Environmental Engineering study field (hereinafter - EESF) at Utena University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter – Utena UAS) not only provide knowledge of environmental engineering but also develop the ability to monitor and assess environmental pollution problems, to plan and implement engineering measures for prevention of environmental pollution and improvement of the quality of the environment, to select and apply modern environmental protection equipment to improve the quality of human life. The Utena region has a well-developed, technologically advanced industrial sector in food, textiles, metalworking, plastics production, etc. There is an exceptionally high demand for skilled technology and engineering professionals. In 2017, the Utena Regional Development Council approved the following areas of specialisation for the region: 1) Metalworking, machinery, wood and wood products; 2) Light industry, food and beverages; 3) Modernisation of transport infrastructure, tourism and recreation; 4) Adaptation of nuclear energy and use of the infrastructure it creates. However, all activities have a permanent impact on the environment, and environmental protection strategies and measures are used to minimise the effects on components of the natural environment. Utena UAS trains the specialists required for the above specialisations with knowledge and skills in environmental protection engineering. In the EESF, Utena UAS has had a single EPE study programme since 2010.

The updated OSEE study programme is aligned with the education programme for work safety and health specialist working in enterprises of all economic activities (40 academic hours) approved by order of the Chief State Labour Inspector of the Republic of Lithuania No EV-84 dated 25 March 2019 (Order No EV-111 dated 27 April 2020). Upon completion of this programme, the person shall be entitled to test his/her knowledge in the field of occupational safety and health at the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI) under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. Passing the knowledge test at the SLI entitles the holder to work as an occupational safety and health specialist in enterprises of all economic activities and, as an employer or his/her authorised person, to perform the functions of occupational safety and health service in small enterprises of all economic activities in the cases provided for by law.

There are no college-level study programmes in Lithuania that combine the development of knowledge and skills in environmental engineering and occupational safety relevant to the labour market, so the updated OSEE study programme fills a niche for EESF quality studies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The committee was asked to review the Environmental Engineering program (EESF), In the SER and during the interviews it becomes apparent that the EESF is discontinued in favour of an occupational safety engineering program (OSEE). This is a very different program leading to a different occupation in the end. It is not clear for the committee how this change can be seen as a minor change in a study program and not a new study program entirely.

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 aims of the EESF programmes and the intended learning outcomes (Annex 2) are closely related to the mission of Utena UAS: to train specialists with a higher college education who meet the needs of the labour market in the region in the country, and in Europe, as well as to provide the conditions for continuous learning, by fostering the individual's ability to learn and to act in a digital society continuously.

The aims of the EESF programmes summarise the general requirements for a professional bachelor of Engineering Sciences and provide opportunities for a graduate to enter the labour market. The aims of EESF study programmes are designed so that students not only acquire specialised knowledge but also develop social and personal competencies. The learning outcomes defined in the programmes reflect the profiles of the programmes and relate to the activities for which the future environmental engineering specialists with the required skills and knowledge are trained (Annex 2).

The EESF programmes are oriented towards the UAS's strategic goals for 2019-2021 , 2022-2024: to train highly qualified specialists motivated to continuously improve their skills and work in the conditions of global digitisation and innovation growth; to develop applied scientific activities, research, and lifelong learning services relevant to the region and the country. It is also in line with the UAS's strategic priorities for 2019-2021, 2022-2024: attracting and retaining students; improving/enhancing the quality of studies; developing internationalisation; improving the UAS's organisational culture; developing applied scientific, consultancy, and research; and developing cooperation.

The learning outcomes of EESF study programmes envisage that they contribute to the development of a creative, learning society that is responsible for its actions and decisions. Students develop science applied research and its internationality by conducting applied research and presenting its results at conferences, preparing final theses.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is good alignment between the EESF study program aims and outcomes and the strategy of the HEI. However, it is difficult to assess the alignment of the new OSEE study program, as it is a completely different study area than the EESF. It is not possible to assess the current OSEE study program against the environmental engineering program aims and outcomes as it is a different field of study altogether. It appears strange to the committee how EESF can become OSEE in the same department as it requires totally different teaching staff.

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

(1) Factual situation

The structure of EPE and OSEE study programmes complies with the requirements of the following documents: the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Higher Education and Research (No XI-242 of 30 April 2009, effective edition 1 January 2021 - 31 December 2021), the Description of the General Requirements for the Conduct of Studies (Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No V-1168 of 30 December 2016), the Description of the Group of Fields of Study of Engineering (Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No V-964 of 10 September 2015), the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of the Classification of Science Fields and Art Fields (No V-93 of 6 February 2019). The compliance of the OSEE study programme with the specified legal acts is presented in Table 1 in the SER report.

The subjects of EPE and OSEE study programmes, their volume in credits, distribution in semesters, number of contact and self-study hours, and the form of accounting are presented in the study plans of the programmes (Annex 1). The preparation of the study plans is based on the consistency of the learning outcomes to ensure the logical links and sequence of the subjects taught. The description of each subject shall indicate the links between the subject and the study programme learning outcomes.

The study programme subjects' topics are presented in a logical sequence: from knowledge to understanding, from application to analysis. The fundamentals of the subject are taught first, followed by a more in-depth study of the individual fields of the subject. The studies are interdisciplinary, emphasising the integration of general education, fundamental and subject field subjects to ensure coherence in the content of the EESF programme.

The aims and learning outcomes of the EPE and OSEE study programmes comply with the provisions of the level 6 of the first cycle college studies of the Lithuanian Framework of Qualifications. The learning outcomes are divided according to the 5 learning outcomes' areas singled out in the description of study cycles (Annex 2).

The learning outcomes meet the aim of the current EPE study programme in the field of study under evaluation, and the updated study programme OSEE planned for 2021-2022, and they cover the levels of knowledge and its application and skills (abilities to conduct research, special, social, personal skills). The links between the aim of the study programme, the learning outcomes and the subjects are presented in Annex 2.

The total full-time study load is the same each semester - 30 credits (~800 hours). Full-time students have 1-2 hours of tutorials (consultations) per week for each subject. For part-time students, the number of credits per semester varies between 21 and 24 credits (545 and 655 hours per semester) (Table 2). Part-time students receive tutorials (consulting) on one Saturday of each month, with the number of tutorial sessions spread evenly throughout the study period.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert committee finds that there is compliance with the field and cycle study programme and legal requirements.

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 SER reports that the study outcomes, topics and links to the study programme outcomes, and assessment methods and student achievement are set out in the subject descriptions and ensure a systematic understanding of knowledge and the ability to apply it creatively in professional activities. The study methods provided in the subject outlines are related to the assessment methods offered, and are selected taking into account the specificities and needs of students: knowledge acquisition, information provision (academic lecture, engaging lecture, problem-based lecture, lecture-discussion, conversation, discussion, use of audio and video teaching materials, preparation of presentations, research activities, review of publications, laboratory work, exercises, teaching practice, lectures outside the UAS, visits to enterprises, organisations, lectures in the library, analysing specialised material, lectures in the classroom, working in databases, etc.), assessment methods used to evaluate knowledge - test, exam, interview, oral questioning, written questioning, etc.; to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills, to observe logical connections, to identify differences and similarities (brainstorming, arguments for and against, mind map, concept map), to assess critical thinking and reasoning skills - debates, problem-based interview, seminar, group work, etc.; problem-solving (problem-based learning, case study, discussion, projects, simulation, seminar); methods for assessing problem-solving skills: case study, debate, project work, etc. The links between the programmes aims, study results and subjects are presented in Annex 2

The study methods shall be coordinated by the subject teacher depending on the specificity of the taught subject, its scope, the subject learning outcomes, the studied topics, and the recommendations set out in the description of the field of study of General Engineering. In many subjects, teachers invite guest teachers-practitioners whose lectures are intended to share practical experience. Teachers also share good practises among themselves, e.g., dr. R. Meištė conducted a seminar on active teaching/learning methods and their application 23-01-2019; a seminar on "Engaging Students in Distance Learning: Best Practices" was held 16-04-2021.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The committee finds that there are alignments between the EPE learning aims and outcomes and teaching methods. However the committee would also like to comment that this review is somewhat irrelevant as there is no further admission to environmental engineering after 2021.
The OSEE study program offers ten subjects in occupational safety, but it is difficult to assess the alignment with the aims as the EPE and the OSEE are different fields of study all together. It is not clear to the committee why the EPE was discontinued rather than improved. The program has a growing market need national and international to meet the needs and requirements of the EU and UN Sustainable Development Goals. For example the committee questions why circular economy and resource recovery are not central part of the learning outcomes for the EPE.

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 program offers: Accommodation for students who cannot attend an examination session for justifiable reasons. , as evidenced by an appropriate document, may apply for an extension of the examination session (Paragraph 47.1 of the Study Regulations); Students may be given individual tutoring (consulting) on one Saturday of each month for repeated pass of their accounts (Paragraph 31 of the Study Regulations); Students, in agreement with the faculty practice supervisor, may choose the place of practice themselves; Students, after coordinating the content of their studies with the Dean of the Faculty and the Department, may go to foreign or Lithuanian higher education institutions to study in the framework of academic exchange programmes (Paragraph 59 of the Study Regulations); Students have the right to propose their thesis topic or to choose it from among the suggested topics The student proposing his/her topic must justify his/her choice and agree with the thesis supervisor.

Optional Subjects (further in the text - "OSs") in study programmes also allow for individualisation of studies. Students choose the OSs from the list of OSs according to the groups of fields of study (Procedure for the Organisation of Studies in Optional Subjects, approved by the resolution No AT-19 of 26 April 2019 of the Academic Board of Utena University of Applied Sciences (recast of the resolution No AT-57 of 4 December 2019 of the Academic Board of Utena University of Applied Sciences)). EPE and OSEE study programmes provide for 3 OSs (9 credits).

Students, if there are available places, may change the form of study, change the study programme (Description of the Procedure for Changing the Study Programme and the Form of Study, approved by the resolution No AT-20 of 26 April 2019 of the Academic Board of Utena University of Applied Sciences).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The committee finds that the students have a good selection of study program subjects and modules that ensures their development while giving flexibility for individual accommodation as needed.

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 possibilities of individualisation of studies are regulated by the Study Regulations of Utena University of Applied Sciences (resolution No AT-17 of 26 April 2019 of the Academic Board of Utena University of Applied Sciences (recast of the resolution No AT-24 of 10 September 2020 of the Academic Board of Utena University of Applied Sciences)), the Rector's Orders and other internal documents.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Students have the right to study at the UAS according to an individual study plan (at the student's motivated request, a personal study plan is drawn up that meets the student's needs and specifies the arrangement of the modules (subjects) to be studied and the timing of the examinations to be made during the semester), an individual study timetable (a particular timetable of module (subject) settlements is drawn up at the student's motivated request in the event of an extension of the session or when taking examinations and/or defending project works before the published date of the session), an individual study programme (a list of compulsory and optional subjects for a period of 1 to 2 years or a semester is drawn up following the programme of study), using a distance learning (Paragraph 77.2 of the Study Regulations).

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

(1) Factual situation

The list of final theses is provided in Annex 3 of the SER. 36 final theses are listed, 5 received the highest possible score (10/perfect) and 2 the lowest score (6/satisfactory). The topics of the final thesis are aligned and relevant for the study program and varying from "The Life-Cycle Assessment of the Chlorides Used for Road Salting'' to thesis in collaboration with industrial partner such as "The Management of Surface Wastewater of Tiko Automobiliai, UAB, territory. The full final theses submitted in 2020 are also included and they show a reasonable marking consistency.

The planning and organisation of the preparation, submission, defence and evaluation of final theses are regulated by the Procedure for the Preparation, Submission, Defence and Evaluation of Final Theses of Utena University of Applied Sciences, approved by the resolution No AT-40 of 31 May 2016 of the Academic Board of Utena University of Applied Sciences. 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the final theses were prepared and defended remotely under an interim procedure. Final theses of the EE field of study shall be prepared following the Methodological Guidelines for the Final Theses of the Environment Protection Engineering Study Programme, approved by the minutes No VT22-36 of 23 November 2018 of the meeting of the Department of Engineering and Technology, which are published in the Moodle environment of the UAS.

The student prepares the final thesis independently, in consultation with the thesis supervisor, following the timetable for preparing and submitting the final thesis. Interim reviews of the thesis are organised by the Department, the number and frequency of which are decided by the Department.

The preliminary defence of the thesis takes place at a meeting of the Department. After the defence in the Department, on the recommendation of the Head of the Department and by order of the Dean of the Faculty, reviewers of the thesis are appointed. The student shall upload the defended and fully completed thesis to the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library Repository (eLABa) no later than 5 days before the defence of the thesis at the Qualifying Committee.

In eLABa, the supervisor assesses the similarity of the thesis to other theses. The permissible level of similarity is a maximum of 30 per cent. A student whose thesis is found to be more similar to other theses than the allowable level of similarity may, on the recommendation of

the Dean of the Faculty and by order of the Rector of Utena UAS, be allowed to prepare a thesis on a different topic and to defend it not earlier than one year later.

The final thesis is defended at a public meeting of the Qualifying Committee (QC). The date of the final thesis defence in the QC and the composition of the QC shall be approved by Utena UAS Rector's order at least 30 days before the defence. The draft composition of the QC and the defence date shall be submitted to the Rector by the Dean of the Faculty. The composition of the QC shall be following the provisions of the descriptions of the field of study or its groups.

The final thesis is considered defended if the student demonstrates at least a typical level of performance in the thesis and its defence. During the assessment period, 36 final theses were defended in the EE field of study, with an average mark of 8.2 in 2017-2018, 7.73 in 2018-2019 and 7.72 in 2019-2020.

The content of the final theses defended during the assessment period meets the requirements of the field and cycle. The final theses address real problems of companies/institutions in the region and the country. Paragraph 76 describes how topics relevant to the region and the country are included in the final thesis topics, according to the field of study. The list of final theses is given in Annex 4.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds that the final thesis compliance with the requirements of the study programme. The topics of the thesis are relevant and varied. The assessment of the thesis seems to be fair and consistent. Unfortunately, more detailed assessment on this session was not possible since the thesis was provided in Lithuanian language and no additional comments/summary or judgement was added in the SER. The SER report mainly discusses the choice of thesis and how the student works with their thesis. However, the previous section, section 3.1.5 describes additional flexibility and options for the students that guarantees sufficient flexibility.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The new OSEE program appears attractive to students and should be further developed.
2. A possible good combination of OSEE and EPE if they kept both programs as a major/minor study track option.
3. The flexibility and adjustments the program offers is a strength that benefits the students and increases the possibility of a successful completion.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The OSEE is new program, and unclear who this can just substitute an EPE program, which has significantly different content all together
2. There should be a clearer plan for the switch to OSEE and why not a focus to revitalise the EPE program with up to date content on resource recovery and circular economy concepts as core parts.

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

5 scientific articles were published during the evaluation period, 1 collective monograph was prepared, 3 presentations were made at scientific conferences, 1 public seminar was held, 5 international conferences and 12 national events were attended.

Workshops, study tours are organised and held for students to provide up-to-date information on the reduction/management of pollution from different environmental components and application of new technologies.

The UAS's is part of the EC funded projects Erasmus + and Nordplus programme related to research and development activities. Continuous increase of the R&D performance (from year 2018 till 2020), as evaluated annually by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania.

Departments have a central role in selecting the aims and targets in research activities. For instance they decide the participation in international conferences and cover the associated expenses.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Few individuals seem responsible for all the activities in research and collaborations . The Panel finds that there is a good engagement in research activity and participating in international activities and research projects.

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

(1) Factual situation

Utena UAS is committed to developing public responsibility for the conservation of nature and other resources as shown by the cooperation with "Utenos Komunalininkas" ("Utena Utility Company"), UAB, and "Utenos Regiono Atliekų Tvarkymo Centras" ("Utena Regional Waste Management Centre").

The results of the study are published in a popular form in the region's media and social networks.

Visiting lecturers from companies and Erasmus exchange guest teachers present the results of their research and the latest technologies in practice.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is a strong cooperation with social partners and local business but at the same time participation in international activities. Relevance of the research activities is in accordance with the needs of the local society but also good attention to mobility and collaboration with other universities. The teaching material is continuously updated with the inclusion of the

latest technologies. Also excellent mobility of teaching staff, which helps teaching staff be in line with latest research from abroad.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students are encouraged to get involved in scientific activity via the Environmental Research Club, organising an international student scientific-practical conference "A Country that it is Good to Live in" alongside seminars, and research paper competitions.
The special session "*Insights. Young Researchers' Papers*" of the peer-reviewed UAS published journal "Insights" allow students to publish articles. Students are also encouraged to publish and present the results of their final thesis at international conferences.
Applied research is initiated as a complementary activity and an integral part of the study process.
8 students take part in intensive programmes (part of the Nordplus projects) together with students from the project partners from Latvia and Finland.
Students are rewarded for their active scientific activities with incentive scholarships and acknowledgements from the Rector of Utena UAS.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are a number of good effective incentive strategies to promote the participation of students in scientific activities. This has resulted in a number of published papers in peer-reviewed journals co-authored by the students and participation at international conferences.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Good involvement of society (public engagement and outreach)
2. Involvement in International research programmes
3. Mobility and exchange of staff supported by ERASMUS+ programme
4. Teaching material continuously updated and relevant.
5. Good support for students that wants to be involved in scientific activities

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Limited input from the practitioners into the study 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

Admission to Utena UAS is being executed under General admission to HEIs regulations of universities and UASs, following the order of Utena UAS Rector.
In 2017-2020, Utena UAS used the admission score set for all applicants, i.e., state-funded (sf) and state non-funded (snf) study places.
To help students wishing to enter Utena UAS, open days and school trips are also organised, during which prospective students are provided with detailed information on study programmes, their funding, programmes' aims, learning outcomes, the structure of the studies, mobility opportunities; an opportunity to meet the head of the department, teachers, students and graduates are provided.

The number of applications submitted in 2017 for first priority applications 26 on the rest priorities 86. Number of admitted students sf. 19 snf. 8. Average admitted student's competitive score was 4,23. Number of students admitted to higher year of study: 3.
The number of applications submitted in 2018 for first priority applications 23 on the rest priorities 72. Number of admitted students sf. 10 snf. 8. Average admitted student's competitive score was 5,19. Number of students admitted to higher year of study: 2.
The number of applications submitted in 2019 for first priority applications 12 on the rest priorities 52. Number of admitted students sf. 1 snf. 4. Average admitted student's competitive score was 6,12. Number of students admitted to higher year of study: 3.
The number of applications submitted in 2020 for first priority applications 19 on the rest priorities 53. Number of admitted students sf. 4 snf. 10. Average admitted student's competitive score was 5,24. Number of students admitted to higher year of study: 4.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The student selection, admission criteria and process are aligned with other Universities of Applied Science in the country. During the visit, the UAS student reported a fair admission system. There have not been any complaints related to the admission process.

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 of foreign entrants is regulated by the Lisbon Convention on Recognition.
At Utena UAS, partial studies abroad learning outcomes are acknowledged following Utena UAS Study Regulations, Recognition Procedure of Partial Studies, Teaching and Learning Outcomes. Evaluation and recognition of competencies gained by non-formal and informal learning are performed, following Description of the Evaluation and Recognition Procedure Students admitted to a higher year of study may take the missing credits on an individual basis.

Total number of students per study field who have applied for recognition of their study achievements in 2017-2018 was 87. Number of students who applied 3 (3.4%). Number of credits recognised 49.

Total number of students per study field who have applied for recognition of their study achievements in 2018-2019 was 76. Number of students who applied 4 (5.3%). Number of credits recognised 157.
Total number of students per study field who have applied for recognition of their study achievements in 2019-2020 was 55. Number of students who applied 3 (5.5%). Number of credits recognised 185.
Total number of students per study field who have applied for recognition of their study achievements in 2020-2021 was 48. Number of students who applied 1 (2.1%). Number of credits recognised 35.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds that the UAS provides recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies, non-formal and informal education methods on an individual basis. During the visit UAS students confirmed their awareness of such possibilities, however students per study field who have applied for recognition of their study achievements decreased since 2017.

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

(1) Factual situation

Utena UAS has signed 13 cooperation agreements with Erasmus+ partner institutions to exchange the *EESF* students. Students are provided with information about mobility opportunities, through meetings with students, at the annual international Erasmus+ weeks organised by Utena UAS, on the UAS's website, in VLE Moodle and on the Facebook account of Utena UAS.

During 2017 - 2021. Number of outgoing students under international mobility programmes decreased each year from 35 students to 0. Number of incoming students at the UAS decreased from 93 to 1.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds that although students seem to be interested in participating in mobility programmes there is limited evidence of the sufficient level of information and support provided to the students. During the interview students expressed their willingness to participate if the programme would be executed online, as it would be easier due to personal reasons.

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

UAS provides academic support for students including consultancy on subjects, recognition of study results, theses preparation, practises, participation in Erasmus + exchange programmes, career opportunities, etc.

The scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to the best-performing students, based on their level of achievement in the previous semester and a weighted average of their study results.

At the beginning of the subject/course, teachers introduce students to the subject's objectives, the intended learning outcomes, and the content of the subject, the assessment system, and the necessary sources of literature.

To ensure confidentiality, psychological counselling at Utena UAS was provided by an independent psychologist in 2018-2019. His services are paid for by a Lithuanian Students' Union project, financially supported by the State Fund for Strengthening Public Health, administered by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania.

Utena UAS provides accommodation services for students. Students can stay in 3 student homes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds the UAS Students satisfied by the level of organisation, training practice and job opportunities that are provided by the teachers. Students are also satisfied with the opportunities provided by UAS to meet potential employers, participation in different conferences, competitions and applied research activities. No information on student employment rate after studies and accommodation used was provided by UAS students.

The experts view positively that UC students have access to financial support: study, social, incentive, one-time and targeted scholarships, a state loan for tuition fees and a state-supported loan with a state guarantee to pay tuition fees, living expenses and partial studies under international agreements, a scholarship for partial studies under mobility programmes, tuition reimbursement for persons who have completed their military service, and for students with good academic performance. However the fact about providing academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support is not communicated adequately to students.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

At the beginning of the subject/course, teachers introduce students to the subject's objectives, the intended learning outcomes, the content of the subject, the assessment system, and the necessary sources of literature.

Each academic group is assigned a group mentor (a teacher working in the EESF) before the start of the academic year, who maintains contact with the student group, assists in their adaptation at Utena UAS, and provides updates and advice.

Students are made aware of study procedures, study and financial support opportunities, and are taught how to use the library's funds, databases, and the services of the Electronic Teaching and Learning Centre. Utena UAS offers wireless Internet access and a single sign-on system to all E-Systems.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds the communication of the study program is good. Electronic Teaching and Learning Centre, and the Student Academic Information System has a single sign-on process.

There is a counselling service provided for students with dedicated procedures. However there are no sufficient details and information provided to judge the effectiveness of such service.

UAS students are willing to get involved in anonymous surveys to leave feedback that is used for the improvement of the quality of studies.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Improved student mobility since last evaluation;
2. UAS has strong support in academic, financial, social, and personal fields for students.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Providing awareness about psychological support;
2. Unclear effectiveness of the student counselling procedures.
3. Limited number of outgoing students (international mobility).

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

EESF studies at Utena UAS are implemented in the full-time and part-time study form.
Students' performance is assessed in accordance with set Procedures. Learning outcomes are assessed at the levels of study achievements and by the ten-point score system, following principles of validity, reliability, clarity, usefulness, and impartiality. During the introduction lecture of the study subject, its content, the learning outcome assessment structure, the assessment criteria etc. are introduced to students. The final subject assessment consists of a cumulative point, whose composition is calculated according to the proportions provided in the subject description.

In EESF study programmes approximately half of the study time is allotted to the students' self-study. Independent tasks are oriented towards individual students' needs and students are introduced to the scope of the independent work, they are provided with the necessary literature etc.

Study methods are related to the assessment methods and they are: academic lecture, engaging lecture, problem-based lecture, lecture-discussion, conversation, discussion, use of audio and video teaching materials, preparation of presentations, research activities, review of publications, laboratory work, exercises, teaching practice, lectures outside the UAS, visits to enterprises, organisations, lectures in the library, analysing specialised material, lectures in the classroom, working in databases, etc.)

Electronic Learning Centre, which takes care of the digitization and accessibility of the study information as well as the documents and the study material, used in the study process, was established in 2011 at Utena UAS.

Study programme graduates can continue their studies at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, during 2-year part-time bridging studies, the Bachelor's Qualifying Degree in Environmental Engineering is granted. At the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Vytautas Magnus University, Utena UAS graduates can study 1-year additional (bridging) Environmental Protection Organisation study programme, and then apply at the same university for Master studies for the state financed study places. Additional studies are paid.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Study forms and methods are well selected to help students in the study process. The performance assessment methods that encourage students to be active are established like a cumulative assessment system consisting of the marks of intermediate assessments and final assessment are applied. Either way, the teaching methods are suitable for the students but the expert panel finds that the teaching methods could and should be more innovative.

The classical study methods and extensive internship practises are offered for the students. Students are offered practice placements at local institutions with which Utena UAS has signed cooperation agreements. The organisation of student's individual work and evaluation are well-described and are acknowledged by students. Further opportunities for graduates to pursue studies are well-described and are acknowledged by students.

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

(1) Factual situation

There are favourable conditions for access to studies of students with special needs. During the admission, the persons, for whom 0 - 25 percent level of working capacity is identified, are exempted from the registration fee and for the entrants, whom 30-55 percent level of working

capacity is identified, the registration fee is reduced by 50 percent. In addition, students with the disability and the identified 45 percent or lower working capacity and/or severe or moderate level of the disability, receive targeted benefits from the project "Increase of Study Accessibility", financed by the State Studies Foundation.

For students with a disability, study material and assessment forms are adapted according to their individual needs. For students with disabilities having limited opportunities to arrive at Utena UAS studies via Moodle and using a video conferencing system are offered.

Social scholarships are paid to the students who need some material support.

Students with a working capacity level of 30% or lower have priority to receive a place in the Student Home. Ramps for people with mobility impairments have been installed in the Student Home (at Aukštaičių st. 9).

Utena UAS material resources are tailor-made to the individual needs of students with disabilities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are good conditions in place to ensure access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs; however during the period under evaluation, there were no students with special needs among those enrolled in the SPs.

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 students' progress monitoring is performed systematically; twice a year, after the autumn and spring semesters, the analysis of the students' progress is conducted. Study Department provides the academic group progress summaries to the Dean's Office and the Department; they are analysed during the meetings of the Department and the Dean's Office.

At the end of the semester, during the Dean's Office and the Faculty Board meetings, the learning outcomes are analysed, the students' performance, problems of underdevelopment are evaluated; opportunities to solve the problems are foreseen.
In the students' academic base, the students can observe their progress results. Underperforming students are considered in the Department; the reasons for their underachievement are being explained.

The feedback on students' study experience is obtained by conducting surveys of students, graduates and teachers. Student surveys, conducted after the completion of each study

subject/ module studies, allow seeing the need to update the content, teaching and study methods; surveys of students, graduates and teachers allow to define the need for the study programme content, organisation improvement, etc.

Surveys of students and graduates are organised regularly, once a year (for the students - after the autumn semester, for the graduates - at the end of studies). Until 2018, the above surveys were conducted in the Faculties; and from 2018 onwards, Study Quality Committee implements the surveys, analyses the findings and publishes the results and recommendations of the surveys on Utena UAS website. The purpose of the above mentioned surveys is to ascertain students' opinion on the quality of the studies at Utena UAS. Also, subject teachers conduct the student surveys, having completed the subject studies.

Feedback analysis is performed by the Department and the Study Programme Committee, according to the obtained results, the study programmes, the subject content are improved, new subjects and topics are introduced. Feedback results are used during the teachers' certification.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds the student monitor process adequate. The students' progress monitoring is performed twice a year, after each semester and summaries are provided to the Dean's Office and the Department. Each student who intends to terminate the studies is interviewed individually, the real reasons are clarified and appropriate decisions are made (it is proposed to account in an individual order, suspend studies, etc.)

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

(1) Factual situation

The monitoring of graduates' employment is performed by the Career and Communication Department based on the data of Lithuanian Higher Education Information System (KVIS), the Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA), the Employment Service and of the students' survey results.

The monitoring results are made public on the Utena UAS website and in Utena UAS activity reports. In the KVIS system, it is possible to monitor the employment of graduates 6 months, 12 months, 36 months and 60 months after their graduation.
Employers' surveys are conducted on a regular basis, employers' feedback filled in after the student's completion of the professional practice. The employers' representatives participate in Study Programme Committee meetings, where the employment indicators of graduates are analysed.

Utena UAS has an Alumni Club, the Alumni Club Registration Information System, which allows the Faculty and Department management to contact alumni more quickly and conveniently. The registered alumni can provide work, practice placement, scholarships and other proposals to the students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Graduates often choose a job not according to the acquired profession because there are not enough positions of environmental engineers established in the companies and institutions of the region. The alumni and social partners are very satisfied with the competences acquired following studies.

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

(1) Factual situation

The principles of ensuring academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are documented in Utena UAS Code of Academic Ethics; Student Internal Order Regulations; Provisions of Academic Ethics Committee Activity; Utena UAS Policy of Equal Opportunities.

The Academic Ethics Committee of the Utena UAS is responsible for academic integrity; tolerance and non-discrimination are discussed and followed during the study process. It deals with the requests concerning violating academic ethics and makes decisions and recommendations on the issues under discussion. Applications must be submitted directly or electronically.

Before starting the studies, the students have to sign a "Declaration of Integrity", which obliges them to comply with the provisions of Code of Academic Ethics and other documents, regulating ethical conduct throughout the entire study period.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are all procedures in places to ensure the effectiveness implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. Students and teachers are well-aware about them. During the analysed period, there were no cases of violations of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination in the EESF.

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 submission and examination procedure are set in the following documents: Utena UAS Study Regulations (Paragraphs 48 and 90); Acknowledgement Procedure of Partial Studies, Teaching and Learning Outcomes, Chapter 6, Appeal Submission and Examination Procedure (Paragraph 34); Procedure for Assessment of Learning Outcomes (Paragraph 44); Organisation Order of Utena UAS Final and Qualifying Examinations (Paragraph 21); Utena UAS Final Thesis Preparation, Submission, Defence and Assessment Order (Paragraph 32).
Students have the right to submit appeals regarding the knowledge assessment score, violations of knowledge assessment procedures or disputing the imposition of penalties. Upon appeal submission a commission shall be formed to re-examine the student's learning outcomes. Appeals may be filed in accordance with Utena UAS Study Regulations.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are all procedures in place to ensure the effectiveness of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints. The students are aware about these procedures, however, there have been no complaint cases regarding the study process from students in the study field under evaluation in the last 3 years.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There are close relationships between alumni and social partners, strong Alumni Club and a well-functioning Alumni Club Registration Information System able to provide valuable information for students and graduates like job places, practice placement, scholarships etc.
2. The study process is well organised to satisfy students needs and a big emphasis is allocated for the practical skills development making alumni and employers satisfied with competences acquired following the studies and good preparedness for the work.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. More innovative teaching methods should be introduced;
2. The monitoring of the student study process should be more clearly established by providing clear linkages between monitoring and improvement of study quality.

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

According to the goal of EPE SP, the staff involved should cover social sciences, environmental protection, pollution of the environment, while OSEE SP is more focussed on occupational safety. There are 3 associate professors in the implementation of the basic and compulsory subjects of the EPE curriculum, and the rest of the lecturers have a master's degree or

corresponding diploma. When implementing OSEE SP, it is planned to hire a list of new lecturers whose main activity is outside the university, e.g. VGTU head of department, production director, company manager, etc. It is appreciated that they bring the most recent experience in practice, but there are risks associated with the longevity of the employment contract and didactic skills. The university acknowledges the existence of this problem, and both the dean and the head of the department check the success of the lectures from the lecturer and students. The teaching workload is rather high, e.g. 850 hours as a lecturer, 720 hours as an associated professor with a doctor's degree, 800 hours as an associated professor without a doctor's degree. The latter raises the question - how can a person without a doctorate become an associate professor? This is engineering, not an academy of arts. Despite the large lecture load, there are associate professors involved in science, but whose visibility in the world of science is low. Utena College has it's own Journal "Insights" (Įžvalgos) which seems to be a preferred by teachers, also conference proceedings are popular. In both cases, the visibility of the research results is very low. Legislation does not specify the optimal ratio of teachers to students (as stated in the SER), but 1: 4 is low and economically impractical in the long run.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Part-time teacher-practicians play an important role in both curricula. This is understandable because both SPs are labour market oriented. However, this means less time for research and more difficulties in participating in international mobility.

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 teaching staff participate in various mobility activities: involvement in international projects, ERASMUS+ mobility for internship, ERASMUS+ mobility for teaching. One of the conditions for the certification of the teachers is participation in the Erasmus+ programme. Interest in mobility has declined recently and the main destination has been Latvia, with 4 teachers in the period of 2019-2020. Incoming mobility in the same period was only 2 teachers from Latvia.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The international mobility of teachers has not been very active. The same goes for incoming mobility. Thus, this is an area that needs to be improved in the future.

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

(1) Factual situation

Information provided in the SER on the conditions to improve the competences at the university is limited. Indeed there are many regulatory acts in the university, but there is no clear understanding of how didactic competence development training is organised and who

(or which unit) is responsible. There are only a number of teachers who have improved their didactic and professional competences in 2017-2020, but there is no information about training (e.g. 'Problem-based learning', 'Innovations in studies', 'Teamwork empowerment', etc).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The information provided in the SER on the condition of competence development at the university is scarce. Participation in training is shown, but not very active.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Both SPs are focused on a specific area of the labour market and the involvement of teacher-practitioners brings the latest practical experience to the curriculum.
2. While assessing the situation in the labour market, especially Occupational Safety SP has its own niche, which nobody else covers (according to the data provided), so there is a good prospect of becoming popular with the target group of potential students if properly advertised. Therefore, teachers in this field also have a good opportunity to become leaders in this field.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Teaching staff is well-oriented in teaching, but international mobility and scientific visibility are somewhat lacking and need improvements.
2. It is not clear to whom (which unit) the development of didactic competencies of Utena College lecturers is ensured.

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

The rooms in which the studies are conducted are not large. The largest (elongated) theoretical study room has only a small screen (albeit a very high-tech) for presentations. Based on the videos shared and on the SER, there are 5 laboratories, of which the Environmental Research and Safety Laboratory is actually a typical small classroom that is not particularly suitable for wet and scent sensitive *activities*. These classroom laboratories should be improved. The rest of the laboratories are of much better quality. The number of workplaces for working with computers is sufficient; the software meets the learning objectives. Part of the study is an internship in environmental engineering and production companies, i.e. students gain additional practical experience not only from the university laboratories. An internship mentor is involved for OSEE SP. The University has a well-equipped, recently renovated library with a large number of specific publications for both SPs, including VGTU and KTU e-books.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are specialised laboratories, of which the laboratory of Environmental Research and Occupational Safety is the poorest. Internships in environmental engineering and other companies strengthen the ability to acquire good practical skills. The availability of textbooks, learning materials (Moodle included) and access to databases with scientific literature is good.

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

(1) Factual situation

The study infrastructure is updated and improved in accordance with the University's Strategic Action Plan. The department, the curriculum committee and the lecturers are involved in this process. For example, in 2021, the budget for purchases was 5,517 euros, which seems rather insignificant. It is planned to acquire the necessary personal protective equipment for the commencement of the OSEE SP. Thanks to a large investment (up to 800,000 EUR from the European Regional Development Fund), the quality of teaching, i.e. premises and equipment, will increase significantly.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Due to the large-scale investment planned in the near future, the shortcomings found in specialised laboratories and other premises are expected to be rectified.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Bilateral and trilateral agreements for student internship
2. Planned investment in infrastructure and equipment

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The classroom laboratory for Environmental Research and Occupational Safety is a little bit impractical for a wide variety of experiments commonly needed in environmental research.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The Study Quality Management System (SQMS) was implemented in 2013 based on ISO 9001 Quality Management Standard, EFQM Excellence Model and European Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulations and Guidelines (ESG). SQMS consists of 12 procedure groups and 44 procedures covering management positions, marketing and advertising, curriculum

development and improvement, study management, applied research management, non-formal adult education, project management, international and national cooperation, resource management, SQMS evaluation and improvement procedures.

They conduct annual reviews of the study programs involving the SQMS. This process also involves the stakeholders and social partners.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Panel finds that the university has good procedures in place for quality assurance, but encourages the study program to investigate new feedback methods beyond surveys.

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

(1) Factual situation

The stakeholders and social partners are involved in the quality assurance of the studies through many routes, including; employees of Utena UAS management and Faculties management, Career and Communication Department, students of the both faculties participate in the activity of Study Quality Committee responsible for SQMS implementation, systematic coordination of the study quality assessment, monitoring and improvement procedures; representatives of Utena UAS academic and administrative staff, appointed as the hosts of SQMS procedures, coordinate the procedures assigned to them, take actions to achieve the process result indicators, set in Strategic Action Plan; Academic Board, consisting of 6 lecturers, 2 students, representatives of Utena UAS partner HEIs (1 scientist), Utena UAS Management (1 member pursuant to the position – Utena UAS Rector) to mention some.

Cooperation with external stakeholders increases the efficiency, effectiveness and competence of the study programmes, as the stakeholders actively participate in the study quality assessment.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study program has a close and good relation to stakeholders and social partners. The only remark is that they seem to be involved in very many aspects of the university which could hinder independence and make for bureaucratic processes.

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 Utena University of Applied Sciences use their website to provide information to the stakeholders and community at large. Their primary method of information gathering is surveys and questionnaires.
The HEI have target methods for choosing media communication channels, e.g. :

When choosing a media channel, different media are selected: for example, for the founders, Utena UAS community - national and regional press (for example, magazines "Reitingai", " Aukštaitiškas formatas", newspaper "Utenos apskrities žinios", radio programs (e.g., LRT

"Dešimt balų", interviews in Utena Radio), for pupils - "Kur stoti", "Kuo būti", etc. Prospective students are provided with the information about Utena UAS studies during fairs, exhibitions (STUDIJOS, Fair of Higher Education Institutions, "Studfestas", "Einu, kur man įdomu"), in the joint student and pupil events (STEM Week, "Profesijų savaitė", etc.), in the meetings at schools and Utena UAS.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The program has a good communication channel on their website, but could investigate new avenues of feedback like round table discussions, student forums with more free input to mention a few.

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

There are annual end of semester surveys for all students with 10-20 % participation.
Most of the students who participate are satisfied with their studies. The listed suggestion from the previous evaluation is included and their actions taken to improve the program.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The annual survey for students has a very low participation rate which needs to be addressed. The fact that the majority of students who participated are content, has limited relevance with such low participation numbers. The format and system for collection feedback from the students should be improved.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The study program and all their partners see benefit of the collaborations

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Stiff and complex structures of which could hinder flexibility and slow change processes
2. Stakeholders are involved in many aspects and almost all steps of QA/QC which could hinder independent development.
3. The student feedback system with annual surveys needs improvement/redesign as it has very low participation.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	There should be a clearer plan for the switch to OSEE and why not a focus to revitalise the EPE program with up to date content on resource recovery and circular economy concepts as core parts.
Links between science (art) and studies	More support for students and staff with caring responsibility should be offered for supporting mobility and short international exchange/visits.
Student admission and support	Social partners and alumni should be more involved in the recruiting process.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	Innovative teaching/learning methods should be encouraged as some subjects rely on classical teaching/learning methods. The monitoring of the student study process should be more clearly established by providing clear linkages between monitoring and improvement of study quality.
Teaching staff	Lecturers must contribute to the development of the new curriculum, Occupational Safety, the need for publicity in the country and the visibility of research internationally.
Learning facilities and resources	An environmental research and safety laboratory should be set up where odorous and wet laboratory tests can be performed
Study quality management and public information	Stiff and complex structures which could hinder flexibility and slow change processes. Stakeholders are involved in many aspects and almost all steps of QA/QC which could hinder independent development, a simplification of this should be investigated while still preserving a good communication line. The student feedback system with annual surveys needs improvement/redesign as it has very low participation.

*If the study field is going to be given negative evaluation (non-accreditation) instead of RECOMMENDATIONS main **arguments for negative evaluation** (non-accreditation) must be provided together with a **list of "must do" actions** in order to assure that students admitted before study field's non-accreditation will gain knowledge and skills at least on minimum level.

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive quality aspects:

- The study programme is unique in Lithuania and with big potential. Occupational safety and environmental study is novel and not available anywhere else in Lithuania.
- The students are very excited about this new programme of study as shown by the interest from students enrolled in the old programme to take some classes from this new programme. Social partners are also very happy about this decision.
- The combination of such different research areas in one study programme is challenging. Good to see interdisciplinary but this does not seem to be the main driver for this decision.
- The quality of the study programme is recognised by the students and alumni. In particular the teachers seem to be very approachable, knowledgeable about the subject and able to provide good practical examples and applications for the different subjects taught.
- There is a good involvement of the society, public engagement and outreach activities.
- The availability of international exchange programmes is appreciated by the staff and students as well.
- The self-evaluation report is well written and clear.

Areas of improvements:

- The very small number of students is a real concern in particular due to the fact that environmental protection is a popular topic among the young generations. Perhaps involving employers and social partners in the recruitment process will help. There is a clear demand for engineers training in environmental protection.
- The research activities are dominated by only a few individuals although this is a common problem shared by other colleges and universities.
- For the final thesis, it is important not to disadvantage students that are not working in a company that are usualling scoring less than their colleagues that had such opportunity.
- There are some concerns about the coherence of the new study programme (the graduates might not be specialists in occupational safety nor in environmental engineering). Careful consideration is needed and in particular offering cohering and selected modules (sometimes less is more).
- There is more environmental science than environmental engineering.

Expert panel leader

Prof. dr. Edoardo Patelli