



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION



EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of BUSINESS

at Kaunas Technology University

Expert panel:

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2. Prof. Dr. Eric Waarts, *academic*;
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6. PhD. Matthew Kitching, *students' representative*.

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Report language – English

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Study Field Data

I.

Title of the study programme	Business and Entrepreneurship
State code	6121LX020
Type of studies	University
Cycle of studies	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time, 4 years
Credit volume	240 ECTS
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary
Registration date of the study programme	19 May 1997

II.

Title of the study programme	International Business
State code	6211LX029
Type of studies	University
Cycle of studies	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time, 2 years
Credit volume	120 ECTS
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Master of Business Management
Language of instruction	English
Minimum education required	Higher (or equivalent)
Registration date of the study programme	19 February 2007

III.

Title of the study programme	Executive Master of Business Administration (MBA) (together with ISM University)
State code	6285LX001
Type of studies	University
Cycle of studies	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time, 1 year
Credit volume	60 ECTS
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Master of Business Management
Language of instruction	English
Minimum education required	Higher (or equivalent)
Registration date of the study programme	19 April 2017

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on 4th May 2022.

Prof. Dr. Peter A. Jones (panel chairperson), academic, an independent consultant in the field of higher education, director of „Wensworth Jones Limited“ (U.K.);

Prof. Dr. José María Gil Roig, academic, professor in Business and Economics at Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain);

Prof. Dr. Eric Waarts, academic, professor at Business Management School, Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands);

MSc Nicholas Coleman, academic; head of study programmes in Management in London Metropolitan University (U.K.);

Ms. Ugnė Bartašiūtė, representative of social partners, head of Communication at Modus Group, (Lithuania);

PhD. Matthew Kitching, students' representative, a PhD student at Lancaster University, ESU expert and member of the Steering Committee.

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 the site visit:

No.	Name of the document
1	APPENDIX 1 Alumni Employment Data
2	APPENDIX 2 Staff List – teaching on the programmes
3	APPENDIX 3 Employees Opining Surveys
4	APPENDIX 4 A Student Satisfaction Surveys – Teachers
5	APPENDIX 4 B Student Satisfaction Surveys – Module
6	APPENDIX 4 C Student Satisfaction Surveys – Actions

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

Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) has origins from 1920 when higher education courses were established in Kaunas. It currently has slightly in excess of 8000 students with over 5,500 on bachelor studies, 2073 on master studies, 366 doctoral students and 56 students following professional pedagogy studies. There are currently 660 enrolled international students. The University mission highlights the provision of research based studies at the international level, with the vision to be a technological University competitive in the international arena.

The University is mindful of the need to consider all stakeholders involved in supporting the University mission and strategy, as the university community of; staff and students, social partners as well as the wider national and international economic and social needs. It has a focus on adding value through a proactive relationship with those stakeholders.

The School of Economics and Business, one of nine faculties, has the responsibility for the field of business studies, where the first cycle programme, Business and Entrepreneurship is taught in Lithuanian and the second cycle postgraduate programmes are taught in English. The number of students enrolled in first cycle programmes is currently 106 state funded (SF) and 60 non state funded, (NSF) with second cycle enrolments at 181 NSF. For the years 2019-2020 these accounted for 18.4% (1st Cycle) and 12% (2nd Cycle) of the school enrolments.

Three study programmes are currently being implemented in Business Study Field: Cycle 1, Business and Entrepreneurship. Cycle 2, International Business and Executive Master of

Business Administration conducted in conjunction with ISM University of Management and Economics (ISM).

In July 2013 following the Order no. SV5-126 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment, both cycle I and II Business programmes were accredited for a maximum period of 6 years. The 1st cycle study programme Business Administration was evaluated with 19 points out of 24, and the 2nd cycle programme International Business with 18 points out of 24.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Business study field and **first cycle** at Kaunas Technology 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.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	27

*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies.

2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, and there are fundamental shortcomings that need to be eliminated.

3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings.

4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings;

5 (excellent) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

Business study field and **second cycle** at Kaunas Technology 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.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	27

*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies.

2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, and there are fundamental shortcomings that need to be eliminated.

3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings.

4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings;

5 (excellent) - the 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 first cycle study programmes in the field of business have been established for over 30 years which has allowed the development of a strong understanding of the field and the role of business within the labour market and the wider political and economic frameworks of society. The relevant literature on the emerging trends and needs of the labour market is kept under review to provide a global and international perspective, and to form the basis for ongoing discussion with industry and the social partners.

The change of focus of the study programme from Business Administration to Business and Entrepreneurship indicates a proactive and practice orientated programme resulting in a more ambitious mission to foster the creation and development of new businesses. Additionally, the focus on the competence model for both the first and second cycle study programmes provides a good basis for both reviewing the context and currency of the programme and in the development of new modules.

The second cycle programmes, now taught in English, have an international focus and context of developing a greater depth of understanding in the development of critical thinking and solutions to business problems. The recruitment of international students and faculty, support the intercultural understanding in the development of new business models appropriate to an international environment. The Executive MBA study programme is a joint award with ISM and draws on the expertise of both institutions both in the development, continuous improvement and delivery of the programme.

Graduates develop a practical understanding of the requirements of the industry and are able to be productive on entering the workplace through the experiences and knowledge gained from the programmes. This includes the internships and wider industry engagement throughout their student experience. Many students in both first cycle and second cycle are in employment whilst studying and this enhances the relevance of their programmes and the important network and connectivity with the industry.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

These programmes have a long history and have maintained their relevance to the changing dynamics in each of the industries they seek to serve. The focus on enterprise is well recognised and supports the national and international strategic needs of both the country

and its wider business environment. For example, the SER references strategic documents issued by the Lithuanian government for guidance with Higher Education (p 11 SER).

The panel expressed confidence that the study programmes are meeting the needs of the labour market, as evidenced through graduate employment outcomes and feedback from industry and social partners. The aims of the programmes are subject to annual internal review and wider consultation which ensures their continuing relevance to the labour market, the changing business trends, and operational models.

The University is working towards international accreditation through the AACSB, including the study fields and programmes the subject of this evaluation. Membership was granted in 2019 and subsequently an initial self-evaluation to ensure it meets the AACSB standards has been internally approved for submission.

The use of case studies and the focus on "real world" engagement provides opportunity for industry involvement to observe the educational dynamics and student engagement, and the practical outcomes. This also provides opportunity to influence the thinking in relation to the development of the competencies of graduates, and input new understanding on the changes in the labour market.

The panel recognised the importance of developing international and national collaboration and the networking between institutions and the wider industries. This is evidenced in a number of different areas, including teaching and learning, with guest lecturers from business partners taking direct roles in case studies, lectures and seminars, using communications technology to minimise disruption to the business activities.

The adoption of the competence model highlights a degree of innovation especially in the area of leadership which can also be seen in some of the added value opportunities available to the students. These include the "career mentor programme" the career centre support for internships and the use of the entrepreneurial "Start up Space".

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 HEI's mission focuses on the provision of research-based studies at the international level; and the creation and transfer of knowledge and innovative technologies for sustainable development. The mission also goes on to include creation of an open and creative environment that inspires talents and leaders.

The School of Economics and Business (KTU SEB) is internationally recognised through its membership of the European Foundation for Management Development, Baltic Management Development Association as well as holding accreditation from several Professional Bodies and Associations. The school mission is articulated as *"the contribution to sustainable development of the national and regional economy and society by educating leaders and*

professionals..... By creating, transferring knowledge and innovation needed to overcome the forthcoming challenges for business and society". It then includes an aim to educate talents and personalities capable of solving the relevant economic, social and political issues of the present and future.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel recognised the synergy between the KTU mission and that of the school but would observe that at the school level the mission and aims focus on the professional outcomes and makes no specific reference of the nature of the study. This is not to suggest that there is a dichotomy between the two but that the contribution of research is not mentioned at the school level.

It is clear that at the institutional and school level there is a strong focus on internationalisation and highlighting the strategic importance of the business studies field in terms of the further development of the industries within Lithuania. It also recognises the important role that the institution plays in developing further collaboration and stakeholder engagement to ensure the contribution the institution can make is rooted in reality and has an appropriate social and economic focus. Of note is the role of the Partnership Development Office as referenced in the SER (p8) and the role of HEIs in the context of economic growth and social development for the country.

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

(1) Factual situation

Business and Entrepreneurship has 240 ECTS credits which conforms to the legal requirement for courses of this nature. It exceeds the requirement of 120 credits allocated to achieve the outcomes of the field of study with a credit value of 220 ECTS. The total value of the planned internship has a minimum value of 15 credits and in this programme 30 credits are obtained for the final internship and the thesis (final project) exceeds the minimum requirement of 15 credits with 18 credits allocated.

The second cycle study programme International Business exceeds the minimum requirement of 90 credits with a total credit value of 120 ECTS. The 75 credits allocated to the specific study outcomes of the field exceed the minimum of 60. 15 ECTS credits are allocated to subjects chosen by the student which should be not more than 30 credits. The thesis carries not less than 30 ECTS.

The second cycle Executive Master of Business Administration meets the requirements of 60 ECTS credit where those 60 are allocated to the outcomes of the study field. The final consultancy project carries 10 ECTS credits.

All the programmes of study are described as full time and meet the requirements of the newly approved Business Studies Description (2021) with regard to the coverage, general and special study outcomes, teaching, study and evaluation.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

All of the programmes of study within the study field meet the ECTS, contact hours and overall structures to meet the legal requirements. Of note is the adherence taken of international and national standards required of higher education, and the legal requirements as referenced in the SER (p8-11).

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

For the first cycle programme the learning outcomes are grouped to facilitate specific knowledge skills and competencies. For example, knowledge and its application, research skills, special abilities, social skills, and personal skills. The modules identify the relationships between learning outcomes, study methods and assessment methods. This to ensure that the learning outcomes are compatible with the aims whilst allowing the appropriate assessment methodology to be implemented in testing the validity of the outcomes, and student performance against those outcomes.

An annual review takes place of the field and study cycle programmes to ensure the modules fully cover the learning outcomes of the programme. This also ensures consistency and continuity in achieving the learning outcomes. Knowledge and its application are to provide an underpinning and understanding of the theories of social sciences and humanities with an interdisciplinary integrated approach to business analytical methods and their applications. The research skills group focuses on the analytical skills to analyse the business environment and intensify business problems and opportunities along with the ability to plan and conduct qualitative and quantitative research. The special abilities include the ability to work independently, to conduct research on the external and internal business environment, to analyse the results and recognise the complexities of the business environment whilst considering business improvements and recommendations. The social skills develop team working skills, communication and self-reflection to assess the quality of performance and take responsibility for the results. Personal skills are related to self-directed learning and the development of critical creative and innovative practices, whilst recognising the moral and ethical responsibilities of an activity in relation to business and society.

The learning and teaching is focused on a variety of approaches including lectures, active methods of case analysis, group work, guest lectures, role-plays and the encouragement of experiential learning. Flexibility and support for new methods in developing the relationship between theory and practice is encouraged.

There are various assessment methods applied including the common approach for examination, either as oral, written or computer based. The use of project reports and practice reports, oral illustrated reports and portfolios of work are also used. Self-reflection, self-assessment, and peer assessment also feature.

The second cycle programmes use the same grouping in applying the learning outcomes in the context of the individual modules. These are also reviewed and tested on an annual basis to ensure that all learning outcomes are appropriately covered across the range of modules offered.

In the second cycle programme the focus of the learning is based on experiential learning in the "real world" with the use of problem-based learning, creative workshops, simulations and opportunities for reflection. Group working provides opportunity for collaboration, critical argument and taking responsibility for the common outcomes.

The assessment profile has similarities with that of the first cycle programme but with the addition of the requirements of a Master's thesis.

The joint Executive MBA with ISM has the aim of preparing leaders with an advanced understanding of business management, to lead organisations through uncertainty and complexity. It also has a focus on ensuring responsible ethical behaviours and the development of lifelong learning and personal leadership skills. Students have individual mentors with regular interactions for coaching sessions, discussions and consultative opportunities. The very practical approach of case based learning with real life problems provides an opportunity to enhance the student learning experience supported by field visits and a consultancy project undertaken with a partner in South Africa. There are a wide and varied inputs into the programme from well recognised international business schools as well as industry experts in their fields.

The programme is jointly delivered between KTU and ISM with faculty from both institutions contributing to the programme. The SER whilst referring to the nature of the joint award makes little reference to the operational and practical considerations in delivering the programme, especially given the importance of developing leadership skills and competences in the learning outcomes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Evidence from the discussions with students, faculty, senior management, the alumni and social partners confirmed the stated aims correlate with the learning outcomes and that the teaching learning and assessment methodologies provide opportunity for those outcomes to be appropriately measured and evaluated. In particular the panel noted the annual review to ensure that the outcomes were current and addressed in the appropriate module within the overall programme structures.

The panel noted the nature of the descriptors used within the learning outcomes and would suggest that during the next review these are considered against the current iterations of Bloom's taxonomy. This will ensure that they are comparable with international best practice.

In the discussions with the faculty the panel noted the flexibility and support provided to encourage new learning and teaching approaches and the integration of research data within the teaching. They further noted involvement, especially at Master's level of students, in active research leading to publication. The overriding culture in the development of the learning outcomes and related learning and teaching, suggested a degree of flexibility and an openness for change.

The development of hybrid approaches, where the recent pandemic acted as a catalyst for these developments, indicated a creativity and flexibility that now should be maintained. The ability to include business partners within the routine learning and teaching using technology is encouraged. Continued investment in hybrid approaches with international partners could create new opportunities to expand the universities reach and reputation.

The panel noted in discussion with the students that the majority of the students on both first and second cycle programmes were in work and the need to achieve an appropriate balance between the scholarship required in meeting the needs and outcomes of the programmes and their need to work created some tension when trying to meet sometimes conflicting requirements. Hybrid approaches can help in resolving some of these tensions.

Consideration should be given to the opportunity for the development of interdisciplinary based assessments that could cover one or more modules. This integrated approach provides opportunities for students to recognise and develop the complexities and inter-relationships across areas of study as would be found in the real world.

The panel noted that the SER provided little background nor evidence as to be operational issues of learning and teaching for the EMBA programme, that would have been helpful in better understanding the relationships between the two institutions, the ultimate ownership of the award and how day-to-day issues that may impact on the student experience were considered and resolved.

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 design and development of the programmes of study within the study field, leads to a consistency in ensuring the learning outcomes are appropriate and implemented across the modules of the programmes.

The study programmes meet and often exceed the legal requirements in terms of ECTS credits and the study field credits making up the appropriate volume of the programmes. The study fields are reviewed and updated on a regular basis with appropriate input from external agencies, and social partners. The practical and experiential focus ensures that the students have an appropriate and realistic view of the industries whilst encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel evidenced the very positive relationships created in support of the programmes that leads to a sense of co-creation between all of the stakeholders. The development of the key competencies supported by the underpinning knowledge and understanding was well recognised as a significant strength within the study fields. This is supported by the comprehensive mapping of competencies linked to modules and learning outcomes/assessments (SER Appendix 1,2,3,4).

The internationalisation through wider networks and connectivity are to be encouraged as all the added value offered especially to 1st cycle students through the career mentoring programme, internships and the start-up space opportunities.

The panel would encourage the further development of hybrid learning and teaching approaches which encourage greater degree of flexibility and wider support and international collaboration. Such approaches create new opportunities especially regarding the interaction with business partners and the development of real time real-world learning.

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

Personalisation of the study programmes is achieved through the approach to electives in both the University and the specialist modules, and the further added value in the range of opportunities offered to enhance the student learning experience.

Bridging courses are offered in the first semesters, for the first cycle programme, to allow students to fill any identified gaps in their knowledge and understanding and to ensure that they can succeed in meeting the outcomes of their chosen programme of study. The general university study modules provide additional opportunity for pursuing areas of interest outside the study field, whilst within the study field there are opportunities for specialisation and optional study modules. For semester projects and the final degree projects, students are presented with a wide range of options, but they also can generate ideas and suggest project topics. There are also opportunities for additional summer internships to gain a wider experience and personalise their learning experiences, in achieving personal goals.

Second cycle studies offer a range of personalisation opportunities including study pathways, and an extensive list of options that include, data analysis, language, project management, law and so on. There are alternatives within the study programmes designed to respond to business trends and needs enabling students to expand the relevant competencies in areas of specialism and choice. The range of topics for projects in the final project provide additional opportunities for personalisation.

For the Executive MBA programme no elective modules are offered but students personalise their studies by bringing their own case studies into the classroom. The consultancy projects

can cover a wide range of different business specialisms to suit the personal development goals of the individual student.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel noted the range of personal choice available to the students as well as the international mobility opportunities available. This is considered an appropriate opportunity for students to personalise their learning, whilst ensuring that the key learning outcomes on the aims of the programmes are being met.

The panel suggests that the added value components including the use of the entrepreneurial start-up space were further developed with a view to potential inclusion within the overall core curriculum.

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

(1) Factual situation

The development and presentation of the final thesis is an important capstone of all of the programmes. There is an element of choice in the topics and these were deemed to be relevant and current in addressing a range of contemporary business issues. Topics may be presented by a member of faculty, which could relate to their own individual research activities, as well as topics proposed by social partners, industry and business institutions. There is a study programme committee who approves the projects and the supervision arrangements. The projects are made available to the students by the University academic information system. Students are able to consult with the appropriate academic staff mentors or social partners in developing the project.

The structure presented for the thesis appears to be rigid with all final reports following the same structure, and the panel suggests that more flexibility could be provided to encourage creativity in analysing and responding to the relevant business issue under examination. Moreover, conversations with master students indicated a limited degrees of freedom to select their own masters topics.

Appropriate support and training is provided throughout to ensure the students conform to the requirements of the thesis in terms of preparation and presentation. This includes academic writing, use of information sources, referencing and advice on style. Checks for plagiarism are made using Turnitin. The initial evaluation is carried out by the project supervisor who submits the project to the reviewer to ensure it meets the appropriate standards. The final projects are defended in a public meeting of the study field qualification commission. This consists of at least five members from the study field, including an external expert, practitioners and representatives of employers. The students are required to substantiate the conclusions, participate in discussions and provide a sound and comprehensive oral defence.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is of the view that the compliance within the fields of study is achieved throughout the process by ensuring the relevance to the field of studies, the compliance of the content and the role of the supervisor and the external assessors involved in the presentation and defence.

In reviewing the theses the panel noted the evidence of close cooperation with industry in reviewing and providing solutions to business related problems. The input from the social partners is clear which provides more realistic issues and problems with similarly realistic solutions. This applies equally for the first and second cycle programmes.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The study field programmes are meeting the needs of the labour market.
2. The adoption of a competency model, and the annual review, provides confirmation that the learning outcomes remain relevant to the changing needs within the business environment.
3. The adoption of a hybrid model of learning and teaching delivery that meets the changing needs of the learner.
4. The curriculum design integrating the competency model ensures the consistency and coherence between the programme aims, learning outcomes, module content(s) and the means of assessments.
5. The development of the entrepreneurial start-up space as a opportunity to enhance the student experience.
6. The development of the leadership theme throughout the study field.
7. The scale and nature of the international and national connections through education and business.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The EMBA does not seem to enjoy parity between the partners in terms of ownership, marketing and promotion and the lack of clarity in the operational ownership of the programme.
2. The need to recognise the tensions and pressures on students, many of whom are working, in achieving an appropriate work life balance.
3. The rigid structure of the final thesis that does not allow flexibility for students to develop their own interests within their thesis topic.

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

KTU is aiming to address an international research audience, with increasing attention to scientific journals that are included in the lists of Association of Business Schools (ABS), and with high global citation ranking, e.g. Technology forecasting and social change, Sloan Management Review, and Journal of International Business. Further, KTU is active in international networks, has membership of recognised professional associations, and participates in scientific conferences. In addition, KTU is actively involved in national and international research projects in the field of entrepreneurship and business internationalisation.

The formal evaluation of scientific achievements, according to study fields for Lithuanian universities and research institutes in 2020, reveal that KTU ranks second in Lithuania in terms of the weighted sum of points awarded, and ranks first in terms of researchers in the field of Management. In addition, formal evaluation of research output according to research fields in 2020 show that KTU researchers in the field of Economics are among top three Lithuanian universities in terms of their productivity. The school is partnering with other, foreign universities, including prestigious ones like CUHK, HSG, and UC Berkeley.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is of the opinion that KTU faculty is adequately and increasingly involved in research in the fields of Management and Economics, both fundamental research, as well as applied research and consultancy. On average, nearly one peer reviewed article per FTE per year is produced, which the panel considers substantial. However, only few publications find their way to high level academic journals, while a large portion of the other papers are published on open access platforms, academic, and business conferences.

The University and the School are actively facilitating faculty to achieve their self-determined goals with a special eye on productivity. The panel is of the opinion that productivity is of course an important dimension, but that, moving forward, the quality and scientific impact of the research should be more and more considered, This should lead to a larger fraction of the research being published in high level scientific journals, without losing sight of the business implications in practice.

All in all, the panel considers the R&D function at KTU well developed, producing a good level of output, while there is still opportunity for conducting more excellent research that will find its way into top journals, and also further into the classroom.

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 reviewed programmes all have compulsory modules on research achievement and academic skills development, such as “Recent Research in Business and Management”, Scientific Research Design, and Data Analysis Methods. The general content courses are linked to recent developments in science through up-to-date literature, contemporary case studies, staff research, and invited guest teachers and speakers. Students have free access to all available literature provided by the University library. Faculty develops teaching cases on the basis of their own research, which in turn are used in the classroom. All programmes end with a research based thesis (or a final-project in the case of the EMBA) addressing a real world business issue.

(1) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is of the opinion that the KTU SEB programmes under review meet the criteria of being scientifically well-developed. Connections to the scientific world are developed and fostered. In addition, connections to the real business world are plentiful, showing students how and to what extent theory and practice go together. Having said that, moving forward the school should be aware of the delicate balance between rigour and relevance, keeping its university status and academic values in mind very cautiously.

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 actively involved in academic and applied research throughout the programmes through various assignments and projects that connect science with practice. Most courses in the programmes include real life assignments as a didactical approach to experiential learning. Students are stimulated in finding their own scientific knowledge and testing it in the real business world. The final projects and theses are meant to serve as a concluding assessment to test how the students are able to perform independent scientific research in a real business context. The topics of the theses cannot be chosen freely though, but are determined by the faculty producing a list from which students can choose.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Academic Research skills are sufficiently embedded in the curricula through courses and projects. The Bachelor theses of the IBC programme are of sound quality, although somewhat standardised and to some extent overrated regarding the grading.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Highly productive R&D function in Management and Economics, well- incentivised by the school.
2. Closely networked with industry thereby actively connecting theory and practice.
3. Students trained to think and act both from a scientific as well as an practical perspective.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The majority of the research does not yet lead to publications in peer reviewed high level journals.
2. The international connections with international research business schools should be further strengthened.
3. Although the synergies of theory and practice are evidently addressed, the school needs to keep a keen eye on striking the right balance between rigor and relevance, science and practice.

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

KTU provide admissions information to students through the website, study fairs, open days and in other virtual spaces. The University has Regulations for Student Admission to Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) in place. These are approved by the institution's Senate on an annual basis. The rules contain information pertaining to the admission process, registration of required documents and the competitive score calculation for prior academic qualifications. They also address the admission process for international students. In order to be admitted to a state-funded place in the first cycle of study, students must have passed three final state exams; at a level higher than B1. The average of their five best grades must also be at least 7. Applicants for non-funded state places must pass one final state exam and their average must be at least 5.4. The competitive score is calculated according to the procedure approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania, using a ten-point scale. The University's website has a score calculator for prospective students to assess the extent to which they meet entry requirements. Applicants may also secure additional points for their participation in a series of ancillary activity, such as military training of service, elite sports participation and national and international volunteering schemes. First cycle students can access admissions guidance for any queries from the

Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions (LAMA BPO) information system, website or consultants, as well as from the Admissions Department at KTU.

Admission to the second cycle of programmes and the MSc International Business is managed through the KTU Master's Admission Information System and, as with first cycle programmes, managed in accordance with the Regulations for Student Admission to Kaunas University of Technology. Students must submit an online application, which includes submission of a motivational letter. Applicants must hold Bachelor's or Masters qualification in Business and Public Management and be proficient in English to at least B2 level. Applicants may also be admitted with professional experience or where they hold an unrelated degree. However, in these instances they may be required to undertake bridging programmes. Similar to first cycle applications, prospective students may enhance their competitive score through additional factors, such as speaking a second foreign language.

Applications for the Executive MBA are assessed by the joint ISM-KTU Admissions Committee, in accordance with the joint programme agreement between the two institutions. Applicants must have a related bachelor or equivalent degree. Where prospective students have a degree from another field of study, they may be admitted with a minimum of 3 of management experience. The institution informed the team that information about the programme is available on both the ISM and KTU websites.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel found that the institution has comprehensive and robust admissions processes in place which are well understood by staff. Students confirmed that information for prospective students is clear and accessible. Although, the panel found that while the University claimed information about the joint Executive MBA was available on the KTU website it was actually far more prominent on the partner (ISM) website.

The BSc Business and Entrepreneurship and MSc International Business have benefitted from modest but relatively stable enrolment between 2018 and 2021. The International Business programme, in particular, witnessed a reduction in enrolments in 2020 (21), which KTU attribute to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the fact the programme attracts a higher proportion of international students. However, the position appears to have rebounded well in 2021 (32). Finally, the Executive MBA enrolment fluctuated between 27 and 32 students, with low dropout rates owing to the blended nature of the programme.

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

(1) Factual situation

The University has established Guidelines for the Inclusion of Learning Outcomes and Guidelines for the Acknowledgement of Competencies Acquired via Formal Education. Where prospective students wish to have prior academic credit recognised KTU has explicit

requirements relating to the proportion and level of earlier qualifications and credit that can be accredited. These are closely mapped to module specifications, academic aims and learning outcomes.

KTU also have procedures to assess non-formal and informal learning outcomes and the recognition of competencies that are guided by KTU Guidelines for the Evaluation of the Learning Achievements Acquired via Non-Formal and Informal Education and the Recognition of Competencies. Under these guidelines, applicants can request to have work activities, non-formal adult educational system, unpaid work and volunteering, traineeships, courses, seminars, projects and independent learning recognised.

The institution also has processes in place to ensure partial studies, conducted at other institutions, under bilateral and other mobility opportunities are recognised. This involves the Head of Programme and International Relations Coordinator assisting the student to map modules to KTU programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

KTU itself recognises that procedures for accrediting prior formal and informal learning are not widely recognised or used and that the institution could do more to disseminate this information to applicants. The institution does closely monitor credit awarded for prior learning. Between 2018 and 2021 credit was given for 23 modules on BSc Business and Entrepreneurship and on the MSc International Business 41 modules afforded credit. Students confirmed that where they had applied for credit to be recognised or attended partial studies at other institutions the process had been clear, fair and staff had supported them to ensure that the modules they were taking were suitable and aligned with their programme at KTU.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

(1) Factual situation

KTU have a range of physical, remote and mixed mobility opportunities in place. The institution has bilateral cooperation agreements in place as well as mobility possibilities funded through Erasmus+. Under Erasmus+ students have access to a wide range of opportunities, which must last for a minimum of 3 months, alternatively students can go on a one or two semester exchange or seasonal programme, for instance during the summer. The University's funds for the development of international relations are used to finance academic mobility studies, and the amounts of financial support are determined by the decree of the Vice-Rector for Studies.

In order to undertake studies abroad the student must organise a study plan with the foreign institution and ensure, through liaison with the Vice Dean of Studies that this aligns with KTU requirements. These arrangements are set out in detail in the Description of the Procedure for Crediting Study Results at KTU.

Mobility on the Executive MBA is achieved through the bespoke study visit to Cape Town, South Africa. This aligns with the part-time nature of the programme and exclusively employed cohort. Participation in the trip remains high between cohorts.

The full range of mobility opportunities are promoted through the KTU DISCOVERed International Student Exchange. Information is also included on the institution's website, in newsletters and across social media and other KTU publications, as well as the Go Abroad Fair, WANTED Career Days and virtual equivalents. KTU use Welcome Week to highlight the range of opportunities as well as the communication means used to promote them.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The number of students electing to participate in Erasmus+ scholarships and other forms of mobility has been relatively low. Between 2018 and 2021, 9 students from the BSc Business and Entrepreneurship benefited from a mobility window and 28 from the MSc International Business. Across the same programmes only 12 undertook partial studies abroad and 4 elected to take an internship. These numbers were influenced by the pandemic, the number of students who already hold jobs in Lithuania and the high number of international students on the BSc. Students confirmed to the panel that they are aware of the opportunities available to them but that frequently, other commitments make it difficult to participate. Despite this, some students provided examples of undertaking periods abroad, including in Croatia and South Korea. In these instances, students had felt well supported, credit had been transferred effectively and the experience was viewed as having been beneficial.

Given the acknowledged difficulties in this area and the fact KTU recognise the low overall participation, the panel found that KTU would benefit from doing more to encourage and support students to participate in mobility, especially physical mobility as the pandemic eases. In particular because graduate outcomes are enhanced by the acquisition of relevant practical experience.

3.3.4. Assessment of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students of the field

(1) Factual situation

The University provides a wide range of effective academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support to students. For example, academic support is provided through the GUIDed Mentorship Programme, GIFTed Talent Academy, bridging courses and consultations between students and their lecturers. Information about these services is housed on the institution's website and through individual departments such as the KTU Career and Service Center.

The Mentorship Programme enables students to gain insight from a range of mentors who have more experience and competencies. KTU informed the panel that mentors help to inspire, encourage, and provide the student with support, that helps them to succeed in their studies and ultimately further their career upon graduation. Mentors can come in the form of

a peer mentor, an academic mentor, a career mentor, a research mentor or a tutor. Peers mentors assist students to settle in at the start of their programme of study, whereas academic mentors address students' scientific and research questions. While students can be assigned peer and academic mentors on request only those students successful in a competition are assigned a careers mentor, which is exclusively for first cycle students.

The GIFTed Talent Academy allows business students to apply their learning in professional settings by helping to support Lithuanian and international business to overcome challenges within their organisations. Students may also make use of the Kaunas Startup Space for new enterprises and take a series of free, self-study briefing courses to augment the curriculum. All these arrangements are in addition to supportive consultations with Faculty, which students can book through the Academic Information System.

Information about financial support is available on the institution's website and provided to new students as part of induction. Support includes talent scholarships and tuition fee exemptions for high performing students and the Foundation for International Scientific Events, which supports staff and students to attend international conferences, seminars and other activities. Students with disabilities may also request support to help meet special needs where these are not covered by state funding. The KTU Student Association and organised student representation within SEB play an active role in the distribution of financial scholarships.

The KTU student association help to organise co-curricular and civic activity on campus. In addition to a wide range of co-curricular activity, including some of the initiatives mentioned above, the association programme a wide range of social clubs and events including academic societies (debate clubs, doctoral students' society etc.) as well as arts groups, sports and wellness activities and groups designed to empower female leaders.

An extensive package of psychological and personal support is available. Students can request appointments with tutors, mentors, one of two permanent psychologists, the KTU chaplain and coordinators of pastoral care. Students can also access personal healthcare free of charge. The institution's psychologists offer individual and groups appointments, including sessions to tackle anxiety and stress. Students with disabilities may request an adaptation to their studies and must complete a survey and consultation with the Social Welfare Coordinator in order to assess their needs.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel found that the University has an appropriate range of effective support arrangements in place. KTU monitors the use of its support services. This includes the scholarships that it issues, with a significant number of business students receiving one-off financial incentives between 2018 and 2021. It also includes the number of support consultations provided to students, although the data provided to the panel was at the university, rather than cluster, level. Nevertheless, students informed the team that there is clear signposting in place to a wide range of support services. Students judge these to be of

high quality and have enabled them to succeed in their studies. Specific examples were provided, for instance of students who had received assistance relating to their disability.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

One week before the start of studies, students participate in the Introductory Week event, during which they are introduced to the study procedure, information systems, academic schedule, scholarships, library services, mobility opportunities, mentorship programme and the SEB Student Representation activities, among other things. This information is complemented by meetings between with Vice-Dean for Studies and the heads of student programmes. Following enrolment, programmes include a course on Introduction to Business, which helps contextualise the study field for new students. In addition, during the first class of each study module, the teacher introduces students to the programme of that particular study unit, including objectives, expected study outcomes and assessment structure and criteria. These are reinforced by module handbooks and detail provided on the Academic Information System and virtual learning environment.

The student intranet also provides a wide range of information including introductory videos to systems such as IT. On arrival students are provided with campus tours and opportunities to familiarise them with laboratories and other resources.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel found that students are familiar with key programme information and know where to find further guidance. Information contained on the KTU website, virtual learning environment, intranet and other platforms is accessible, relevant and up to date. Overall, students were pleased with the quality of study information and counselling they receive.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Clear and explicit procedures in place to manage admissions consistently and fairly.
2. The wide range of accessible and effective support services available to students.
3. The comprehensive mentor system that provides holistic support and guidance for students.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Lack of information about the Executive MBA on the KTU website.
2. The need to strengthen the dissemination of information on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning among applicants.

3. The need to enhance the support arrangements designed to encourage greater levels of student 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

It is evident from the site visit that KTU has a very engaged academic staff who clearly wish to push the boundaries of their programmes and make them a meaningful experience. This requires excellent alignment between the institution, the academic staff, the learning outcomes, and linkage to the business world. This is all in the context of the identification of competencies for sustainable careers which is highlighted in Appendix 1 of the SER. This can only be achieved by high levels of attention to detail in the development of programme content, assessments, feedback, and programme development.

This is a process of co-creation which is evident from the involvement of previous students in the orientation of the programme and the efforts to maintain links with the business community that employs graduates from KTU. An impressive aspect is the support from social/business partners in the development of appropriate learning and teaching opportunities such as guest lectures etc. The site visit provided very positive observations of a sustainable ecosystem which links current staff with industry partners and former students in a 'virtuous circle' of reinforcing the aim to produce sustainable careers for the graduates of KTU.

The SER provides a great deal of information to understand the processes that allow the University to link student aspirations to employment in the real world. This was a constant theme of discussions with current staff, senior managers, students, and former students. The role of Business Schools should be to prepare students for the world of work and employment and there is no doubt that KTU has invested a tremendous amount of time in this endeavour.

The competencies for a sustainable career (SER Appendix 1) are highlighted in a mapping approach which includes a focus on the key competencies under the headings of entrepreneurship, interpersonal, leadership, cognitive, digital, communications, functional efficiency, and learning. This is a commendable analysis to identify how to breakdown the complex requirements of the needs of students to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the programmes.

According to the SER (p59) the content and structure of the study programmes allows students to consistently deepen their knowledge and strengthen their competencies. Each study module contributes to the achievement of the goals of the study programmes and most appropriate study methods and assessment methods for the acquisition of student knowledge. This is supported by detailed mapping of competencies to modules in Appendix 2,3 and 4 of the SER and shows that the institution has a clear idea of exactly how to develop value from the teaching of these programmes. For example, under the agenda of 'leadership' the links to driving change, integrity, emotional intelligence, inspiring and empowering, reliability and tolerance (SER Appendix 2).

Of note is the module in Entrepreneurship (cycle 1) of Business and Entrepreneurship which is based on students' actual business ideas and work experience and involves innovative study methods. The module allows students to identify business problems and apply theory and solutions in a commercial and academic partnership approach.

The SER Provides a very detailed overview of the breakdown of independent work and contact hours for the modules. To encourage the active participation and creativity of students there are several innovative inclusive study methods including experiential learning which are applied to the study progress and are selected based on the specifics of the module and the learning outcomes.

The teaching methods in the Executive MBA correspond to the strategy of learner centred teaching that focuses on the participants' learning process, their active involvement in class and the emphasis on using and communicating knowledge effectively to address emerging issues and problems (SER p62). Thus, in the programme learning is imparted more through experience than through lectures and the process is to allow students to understand and experience business problems and find their creative feasible solutions. There is a detailed overview in the SER of the approach which is linked to the focus on achieving the learning outcomes specified for each programme.

A clear message from the staff and senior management is a belief in the concept of lifelong learning and the development of different skills to work individually and within a team. Students can also choose a company or organisation for an internship according to their area of interest and this is a very important benefit of the programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel felt there is evidence that the teaching and learning process enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the programmes. At the heart of this is high levels of engagement from the staff and students to ensure the success of the programmes as was evidenced by the site visit and should be commended. Also, the practices to involve business partners into the shaping of the study process are present as well as the alumni network that is encouraged to actively contribute to the university's community.

It is noted in the SER that the active participation and creativity of students is encouraged by the study methods deployed and this includes concepts such as reflective learning,

experiential learning, collaborative learning, simulations of real-life situations, problem based learning, design based learning, challenge based learning (SER p61). The most used traditional study methods are lectures, group work, group projects and individual projects. This suggests that the programmes have plenty of different styles of teaching and learning and this is linked to the assessments which enables different student skills and strengths to be exposed.

The traditional classroom environments were adapted as a result of the COVID pandemic and there was a successful transition to distance learning which lasted until the end of spring 2019-20. This has been a very positive outcome which was commented on in the site visit. Some of the study modules integrate lectures by business practitioners and foreign lecturers and some modules have teams of teachers, for example International Business Organisation is taught in part by partner universities and business practitioners as well as KTU staff, this is to be commended.

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

(1) Factual situation

As mentioned in the site visit, flexible forms of achievement evaluation are applied while assessing the learning achievements of candidates with special needs (visual impairment, hearing disabilities, reduced mobility, etc.). There is an active survey for the students with disabilities and or learning difficulties in the emotional and physical health of KTU (SER p64). 77% of the students who use these services in 2020 were satisfied with the adoption of studies with regards to disabilities or individual educational needs. During the site visit a current student explained the facilities available at the University for students with disabilities and the support provided to such students and this was very positive.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel felt that the University was well focused on the needs of students with special needs. A social welfare coordinator acts as a mediator providing consultations if a student has issues related to their studies, financial support, adoption of studies etc. This is very positive as it provides recommendations and guidelines to ensure that students have a comprehensive integration into the programme of studies. There is also a constantly active survey for students with disabilities and all learning difficulties linked to the KTU website, this is good practice. It is clearly important to have access to the student voice of such students and this is evident from the site visit and from the SER.

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

There were some very positive aspects to KTU in this area including the fact that the University is ranked globally in terms of cooperation between students and employers, and as this is the bedrock of a Business School, this is extremely positive. Employment and career development of students is constantly monitored and the data on employment of graduates is collected regularly, this data informs the success of programmes to achieve outstanding employment prospects.

The Field Studies Programme Committees monitor the students' achievements and data is added to the Academic Information System which provides an overview of the overall grade averages, data on the assessments, within the semester. The university is keenly aware of the signs of student non-engagement and a key feature is student attendance in classes, and staff can mark students who are systematically absent in the information system. The data is to understand attendance in classes and progression with assessments designed to act as an early warning system to understand if students are liable to terminate their studies. A key feature with such students is to anticipate drop-outs and offer support to successfully maintain their academic studies. The extra support are the academic mentors.

To improve retention there are also bridging courses for the general study modules and additional self-study programmes to strengthen the skills of independent learning. Feedback for all assessments is provided either in writing or orally based on the assessment criteria. Feeding forward or pre-defined criteria allow students to self-assess the results achieved, with a clear understanding of the validity of the assessment.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The site visit provided strong evidence of student engagement with their studies, and this can only be achieved by having an enlightened assessment environment with feedback that allows students to feel equally valued and directed appropriately.

The SER provides information on the process for monitoring student progression and assessment performance and highlights the Annual Report which is used to monitor students' learning outcomes and students' progression. Indicators of the progression of students linked to examinations and assessments of the course are monitored. The Field Study programme committee is constantly monitoring the students' achievements in the academic information system (SER p66). Data on student attendance of classes and students who do not attend classes are contacted as part of the culture of the university. Feedback on all methods of assessment is provided to students orally or in writing according to the assessment criteria or assessment rubrics (SER p66). However, there was no data on student progression provided for the evaluation and this in future should be provided in tabulated format.

During the site visit students commented on the number of assessments that can take place for each module and this could be reduced potentially as there is always a danger of over assessment. This should be considered as an issue going forward linked to student retention and progression.

The panel is of the opinion that the University applies appropriate measures to ensure that students assessments and progress is adequately monitored, and that feedback encourages reflection. There is no doubt that there were very high levels of engagement between staff and students witnessed at the site visit and that the energy from this contributes to a very positive environment for progression and enhancing student capabilities.

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

(1) Factual situation

The University encourages a very open conversation between former students and the academic staff of the University to ensure that the outcomes of study programmes are appropriate to the global business environment. A good example of this is the 15-credit compulsory internship first cycle programme and the fact that remarks made by graduates and employers led to improvements of the structure of the programme, changes in the content and restructuring of competencies provided during the studies (SER p68). This is excellent and highlights a very high level of engagement between the academic programme and the world of business.

The global QS employability rankings announced in 2021 highlighted that KTU graduates are among the most successful in the world, KTU ranks among the world's top half in this respect. KTU graduates are especially valued by employers because of hands-on approach and practical skills. While students strongly agreed that the studies in KTU prepares them for the rapidly and constantly changing business world. Some of the data for the collection of career information is presented in the SER (p66) can be improved. The University has a good focus on the competencies required of the graduates because of the close working relationship with the business representatives and the co-creation of the programmes, this is very positive.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel was very impressed with the efforts to maintain links with former students and track their careers. According to the graduate survey, 80% of the surveyed employers indicated that KTU graduates meet the needs of companies surveyed. In addition, much attention is paid to maintaining contacts with programme graduates currently holding key positions and there is a feedback loop to the programmes of study from such successful former students, which is very positive.

Compulsory internships (15 credits) in companies allows students to apply the knowledge and understanding and the skills acquired in studies and practical decision making in a business environment. Feedback made by graduates and employers allows improvements of the structure of the business and entrepreneurship programme, and changes in content and structuring of the competencies as a result.

Continuous updates of both undergraduate and graduate business programmes in recent years have had the goal of creating value for employers as well to ensure that students are

ready to meet future challenges. The panel was very impressed with the efforts to maintain links with former students and track their careers and also the virtuous circle of business interaction with the programmes of studies through guest lecturing and mentoring of students and staff.

It is noted that the University launched a new graduate questionnaire in 2020, which provides information on graduates' employment and or occupation. However, the SER does not provide a very clear breakdown on student employability which is disappointing. The fact that 80% of surveyed employers indicate that KTU graduates meet their needs is clearly very positive but a clear analysis of exactly what is going on with graduate employment would be valuable.

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

(1) Factual situation

KTU operates with a code of ethics which covers such areas as impartiality, freedom of speech, non-discrimination, academic solidarity, assurance of teaching etc. The evidence from the site visit was that the University has an excellent focus on academic integrity and tolerance and non-discrimination.

There have been cases of violations of academic rules in the period of this evaluation. For example in the case of second cycle business students in 2020, reprimands for violations were given to four students, and nine students were penalised during the whole period under review with one student removed from the programme. This does indicate that the University has appropriate policies and actions in place for these circumstances.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There were no cases of appeals recorded during the period under review. The university clearly has policies principles and procedures to manage the process of academic integrity, tolerance and non discrimination, however there is a reasonably high number of violations occurring in the programmes and this should be a focus for the management of the programmes.

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

During the evaluation for the study programmes there were no cases of appeals or complaints recorded in the Business School. The University has written guidelines for the submission and processing of students appeals and complaints if required to and obviously this is very

rare. A complaint is transferred to the head responsible for the area of activity who sets up an interim board of appeal or a complaint settlement commission. Processing times for such events are within 10 working days after the date of the receipt of the properly recorded and submitted appeal or complaint.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institute clearly has the appropriate processes in place for such issues. They occur rarely, but the appropriate processes are actioned when appropriate.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The focus on a sustainable career as a powerful methodology to attain appropriate results for the students.
2. The linkage between the University and the business community outside is robust and allows an exciting ecosystem whereby both communities (academic and social/business partners) can work together and ensure business ready students are produced.
3. The attempt to ensure that students get appropriate assessments and feedback on the assessments is critically important and this is done to a high standard.
4. The focus on technology and in particular the digital revolution of the 21st century is appropriate and has tremendous potential as the world is changing very quickly as a result.
5. Co-creation of material and experiences that allows students to have internships within the business community and return to academic studies is extremely positive.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Improved data on student's career development/activities post-graduation should be developed with more robust research tools to highlight gaps in the programmes for a sustainable career.
2. Over-assessment may be an issue for some programmes particularly for students with busy lifestyles including having to work and this area should be monitored.

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

All members of the academic staff team have the necessary qualifications and experience for the different programmes offered. Among the permanent staff, 90% hold a PhD. There is also a good equilibrium between experienced and younger researchers although research productivity levels are unequally distributed in favour of the younger. Additionally, there is a good combination of permanent and part-time staff. The latter are hired for specific topics and used to work in real business, providing students a complementary view to the theoretical content in the different topics. Most of the lecturers have excellent contacts with social partners, which was found extremely positive by students.

The SER provides evidence of increasing quality of research activities by KTU staff. In fact, KTU ranks first in Management and third in Economics among Lithuanian Universities. In our meeting with the staff, they declare that it is common practice to use results from their research in teaching activities.

Amongst the positive features are the ratio of lecturers to students, the age distribution of lecturers and the practical skills and experience. However, in spite of the good relationships with social partners and the outstanding research skills, little evidence has been found about contractual/consultancy relationships between real business and KTU staff. The impression the panel got from the meetings was an excellent collaboration in teaching but not in research.

In spite of the high research standards among Lithuanian universities, looking at the information provided in Appendices, there is still a deficit in the quality of research work undertaken by members of the academic staff. Staff publications and the participation of teachers in conferences (including the presentation of scientific papers) are adequate.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel suggests that the research performance of KTU staff should be focus on two main issues. First, there is a need to generate more collaboration among permanent staff and social partners to conduct research/consultancy as a way to measure the impact of their research in society. The second should be to increase the research quality by:

- 1) increasing the papers published in journals with high impact factor (Web of Science ISI or SCOPUS) (currently, less than 30% of the publications are in journals with Impact Factor (and among them, there is a high percentage published in open access and the so called predatory journals));
- 2) Improving the position of KTU authors in scientific publications. In around 35-40% of the publications mentioned in the SER, KTU authors are not placed as the first or the last author. KTU should develop a system of incentives to stimulate high quality research (the SER does not provide any information on this).

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 provides some information about international mobility but it appears that the only financial support is based on ERASMUS+. In 2019, around 20% of the staff were on international mobility, although most of the visits were of short duration (one week). This suggests that there is a commitment to mobility but this obviously decreased in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. There is a significant collaboration with international experts in teaching, however, this internalisation is less significant in terms of research outcomes. The SER does not provide information on international projects (i.e. H2020 projects). Additionally, the number of publications with international authors is very limited (less than 20%).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert Panel suggests that the staff should be more proactive in looking for international mobility, not only for teaching but also for research. The international dimension is still at its early stages. The panel also suggested providing better and more detailed information about international proposals or projects in which KTU staff are involved, as well as to increase the international co-authorship in published papers. Finally, it would be helpful to provide more evidence about the engagement of master students in their research projects.

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

(1) Factual situation

KTU provides a significant range of facilities to staff to develop teaching materials and pedagogy. Of particular note is the quick reaction in changes to teaching conditions due to COVID. The process has been smooth and students are happy with how the situation has been managed. As the report indicates in the next section, the infrastructure is more than adequate. A very positive aspect is the staff involvement in the professional development and training courses with 80% of the permanent staff have participated in such courses. KTU is clearly investing in this area and in particular in improving staff teaching skills.

Notwithstanding the scope for improvements identified in this report, it can be stated from the evidence available that staff qualifications, knowledge and skills are appropriate to ensure the attainment of programme aims and learning outcomes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As mentioned above, the SER does not provide information about specific research incentives. The panel suggests that KTU should develop a research incentives system based on performance indicators. Moreover, it is also advisable that KTU provides some training to staff to increase participation in international projects: mapping of financial opportunities, grants to participate in consortium meetings to develop research proposals, and so on.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Flexibility to accommodate content and students' assessments to changing conditions (new business challenges, COVID, and so on).
2. Good performance in research activities among Lithuanian universities.
3. Satisfactory incorporation of research skills and results in teaching.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Research productivity needs to improve in outstanding journals.
2. International mobility is not yet related to an increase in the participation of international projects.
3. Need for the implementation of research incentives.
4. Need for providing global performance indicators. Most of the SER is a good description of how the system works but does not provide enough KPIs to monitor performance.

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

KTU campus is modern and well equipped with the latest technologies and other facilities that allow to ensure an effective learning process of the evaluated Business and Entrepreneurship and International Business, and Executive Master of Business Administration programmes. The University has invested a significant amount to modernise its facilities with up to date IT solutions in order to run a smooth learning process online and offline, as well during the pandemic. This in addition to the continuous investment into renovating facilities. Investments are allocated both ways - to the renewal of the physical environment and acquiring new equipment. As mentioned during the meetings with students and staff from the evaluated programmes, this allowed the University to ensure a smooth learning process during the pandemic as well as combine hybrid learning practices afterwards.

As can be seen from the video material provided by the University, classes and work spaces are modern, designed for both - group and individual work. KTU has also integrated the Bloomberg Financial Market programme that can be used by students in the learning process that is especially valuable for gaining international and practical business related experience. The facilities can be accessed by people with special needs. The University also has established a self-studying room in a partnership with business representatives.

According to the University, it has the largest library in Lithuania with the newest material, digital books and databases. Its library quality was also mentioned by graduates that still use access to the material provided by the library. The resources are adequate for the study programmes evaluated as it allows students to access the latest academic and business cases material. KTU has also a well developed online studying platform that was mentioned positively by students and teaching staff during the meetings. That also allowed to attract lecturers from business to online courses.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

From the material provided by the KTU, it can be said that the University has adequate resources to ensure required resources for smooth learning processes of the programmes evaluated. The University should keep high standards in the future as well and seek for continuous improvement in order to ensure that needed resources to develop the study field are in place.

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

(1) Factual situation

As outlined by KTU, it is constantly investing into the renewal of infrastructure. The key ongoing projects at the time of evaluation process include laboratory centre M—Lab and multifunctional centre. At the heart of these projects - collaboration and sustainability principles are outlined in the SER document. It can be stated that the University puts strong efforts while strengthening resources and infrastructure needed for business field studies.

The University pays a high attention to constantly changing needs of students and teachers. Therefore, the process of updating resources needed in the study fields is carried out at the beginning of each semester, and accordingly purchases are planned. The library staff ensure communication with academic staff to exchange the information on the latest relevant material and the constant updating of the relevant databases. Therefore, the process of cooperation between the teaching staff and library staff is ensured.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It can be outlined that the KTU has vision and strategy while planning and upgrading facilities in order to fit evolving needs, as well as focusing on modernising its campus with adding the latest technologies. Also, a strong commitment to constantly renewing library resources was identified.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. KTU has modern facilities with the latest technologies that seems well fitted for the individual and group studying.

2. Big library with the latest material and databases; smooth cooperation between library and academic staff in order to have the most relevant content for studies.
3. Remote (online) learning programmes that allowed to run a smooth learning process during pandemic as well as it opened new opportunities.

(2) Weaknesses: No weaknesses identified during the evaluation process.

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 University internal quality assurance system is described in the quality manual. The system has been developed in line with EU policies for higher education and complies with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance as found in European higher education.

The mechanisms for ensuring and improving quality include specific instruments for regular and occasional monitoring and are conducted at three levels, university, faculty and individual study programme's.

The principles adopted by KTU are:

- Quality improvement is related and based on the vision, mission values and objectives of the University.
- The model for the system is based on the guidelines for quality assurance found throughout the European higher education and excellence framework of the European Foundation for Quality Management.
- It uses a combination of various approaches from compliance to recognising excellence to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders. All stakeholders both internal and external have a responsibility and accountability for the quality assurance of studies, the stakeholders including social partners are involved in the quality assurance and improvement processes.
- A systematic approach is applied ensuring links between research and studies, equal opportunities for all students and that the study process is based on a student centred approach.

The University has well developed internal procedures and reporting lines to ensure that the systems are robust and appropriately implemented and that the outcomes of assessment and monitoring are properly considered and actioned. This is overseen by the Department of Academic Affairs and the Vice Rector for Studies. Periodic reviews, assessment and analysis of the study fields are undertaken as part of the internal quality assurance process which provides opportunity for the update of study programmes, considering trends and proposals

from students, faculty and other stakeholders. Marketing and Business Studies Study Programme Committee is responsible for the compliance with the quality assurance processes and work with the head of study programmes and their wider stakeholders to ensure that the internal quality assurance measures properly considered and continuous improvement are made. This results in a school plan for quality improvement, in addition to the annual school review of study programmes.

For the Executive MBA Programme which is a joint ISM KTU award there is an advisory body and separate programme committee that meets at least once per semester to undertake the appropriate monitoring and quality assurance processes.

KTU is currently seeking the AACSB international accreditation in the business field which in itself requires and determines quality improvement as part of that accreditation process.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The evidence presented indicates a robust, systematic and effective system of internal quality assurance that would be considered to be in line with the European guidelines and reflects International good practice.

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

(1) Factual situation

The internal quality assurance system takes a holistic approach that involves all of the stakeholders in the educational experience. This includes students, faculty, staff responsible for the administration of the programmes, graduates, employers and social partners. This is documented in the internal quality assurance system and is a component part in the processes of improving study quality, seeking continuous improvement and developing the appropriate dialogue between all of the stakeholders.

Students have a participatory role in the governing bodies and operating committees of the universities at all levels including; Council, Senate, and Field Study Programme Committees. Social partners are involved as members of the Fields Study Programme Committees, Qualification Commission, and the Council of the School. Additionally industry either as employers or its partners contribute case studies, field trips and contribute to the teaching on relevant study modules.

The school's network of industry partners of over 30 companies and associations who have signed formal cooperation support agreements to foster closer relationships and to provide opportunities for students and faculty within real-world business environments.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In discussion with all of the stakeholders it is evident that there is a wider and active involvement in the internal quality assurance processes and that the contributions of the stakeholders are noted, discussed and actioned as appropriate.

The formal agreements with stakeholders at the school level would be considered to be examples of good practice and the level of current contribution clearly supports the school in its continuous improvement 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 University website provides the appropriate publicly available information for individuals to make informed choices as to their study programmes. The information is accessible, and well-presented. The website also provides publicly available results on the surveys of the field of studies, and opinions of stakeholders.

At the school level there is a systematic approach to the collection, analysis and review of surveys and other feedback mechanisms including a review of that data collected centrally. This includes, data from roundtable discussions, formal assessments of the students study modules and of staff, through the "Survey and Study Models and Teachers" undertaken at the end of each semester. In addition there is an assessment of the mandatory internships and students contribute to the University wide annual student voice survey. Survey trends including those from the annual survey Student Voice, are noted and collectively discussed including at roundtable events with students. Areas of improvement are considered as are any specific negative issues requiring intervention.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The publicly available information is easily accessible and provides the appropriate information for all interested stakeholders including potential students.

Whilst it is clear that the data collected in relation to the fields of study is comprehensive and provides the basis for improvement, it is was not clear how a formal feedback loop is established with all of the stakeholders, to ensure they are made aware of how their contribution has been acted upon. In particular this was remarked upon in discussions with the students who felt a more formal process of providing descriptions of how their feedback was being acted upon would be helpful.

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 processes and procedures for the collection of student opinion are well documented and include student surveys, the processes of formal meetings as well as informally in discussion with students at the study field and module level.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Discussions with the students, faculty and social partners confirmed that it was a systematic process for collection as well as evidence that the feedback was appropriately considered and acted upon although a more formal feedback to explain how the feedback was being used would be helpful.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

The well developed, robust and comprehensive policies and procedures for the establishment, maintenance and continuous improvement of the quality of the programmes

1. The formal agreements signed with stakeholders is an example of good practice.
2. The systematic approach to the collection, analysis and review of survey another feedback mechanisms
3. The formal and informal processes for the collection of feedback are extensive and ensure wide participation.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The more systematic review of feedback to ensure that all of the stakeholders are made aware of how their contributions to the quality assurance process has been acted upon.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a review of the learning outcomes is undertaken to better reflect the current iterations of Bloom’s taxonomy with the use of more active phrases. 2. The panel would encourage the further development of hybrid learning and teaching approaches which encourage greater degree of flexibility and wider support and international collaboration. Such approaches create new opportunities especially regarding the interaction with business partners and the development of real time real-world learning. 3. That consideration should be given to the opportunity for the development of interdisciplinary based assessments that could cover one or more modules. This integrated approach provides opportunities for students to recognise and develop the complexities and into relationships across areas of study as would be found in the real world. 4. That the ‘added value’ components including the use of the entrepreneurial start-up space were further developed with a view to consideration of the potential inclusion within the overall core curriculum. 5. That consideration be given to the wider marketing and promotion of the EMBA.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the school be mindful of the need to maintain a delicate balance between rigour and relevance in the further development of the synergies between theory and practice. 2. That consideration be given to supporting the development of peer reviewed publications in high-level journals. 3. That consideration be given to the further development of the relationships with international business skills to pursue collaborative research.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To address the lack of information about the Executive MBA on the KTU website 2. The need to strengthen the dissemination of information on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning among applicants. 3. The need to enhance the support arrangements designed to encourage greater levels of student mobility.

<p>Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the school maintains oversight of module assessments to ensure no over assessment is taking place could impact on student retention and progression, given the student needs to establish an appropriate study and work balance. 2. That more comprehensive data on graduates career development would provide valuable feedback on any skills gaps in the programmes.
<p>Teaching staff</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the research performance of staff should focus on; the need to generate more collaboration between academic staff and social partners in the conduct of research and consultancy, to seek to increase the number of papers published in journals with high impact factors, improve the position of academic staff as authors in scientific publications. 2. The University consider developing a system of incentives to stimulate high quality research. 3. That the academic staff be more proactive in looking for international collaboration opportunities for both teaching and research which in turn would lead to more international proposals and projects and increase international co-authorship. 4. That the master students research projects be further developed to create opportunities for further collaborative research. 5. That the University considers developing staff training opportunities on the opportunities for international collaboration projects, grants and participation in the development of international research proposals. 6. That the development of global performance indicators would provide useful KPIs to monitor overall research performance.
<p>Learning facilities and resources</p>	<p>That the new approaches to hybrid and online provision be further explored especially in enhancing the overall student learning experience.</p>
<p>Study quality management and public information</p>	<p>That a review of the feedback mechanisms is undertaken to ensure that all of the stakeholders including social partners are made aware of how their contributions to the quality systems are acted upon.</p>

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field *Business at Kaunas Technology University:*

The review and evaluation of the study field of business studies has evidenced how the University and the school have responded very quickly, creatively and innovatively to the changing external factors, especially over the period of the pandemic.

The study programmes through the development of the competency based model ensure that the industry skills needs and the needs of the labour market or being met through these study programmes. This ensures that the graduates have a rigour in their skill sets that makes them valuable to an employer and also supports the closer collaboration and integration with industry, and the opportunity to bring the "real world" of practice directly into the courses.

There is evidence of a culture that is forward-looking and that is focused on improving the student experience through the wider collaboration of the different stakeholders, including industry and social partners. The development of a strong leadership and entrepreneurial theme is a good example of the responsiveness of the study programmes to the changing 's business needs of the national and international level.

The evidence of the rapid development and embracing of technological innovation in learning and teaching, especially in the development of hybrid models, is to be commended and encouraged. This especially in facilitating the further development of industry directly engaging in curriculum delivery, and in facilitating national and international research collaboration and projects.

The opportunities for further development of research and consultancy with both industry and international business schools would enhance the research culture whilst providing greater opportunity for recognition through publications in higher rated journals. Such developments could include developing a range of performance indicators that reflect the wider contributions the study field makes especially in the areas of innovation and change.

International opportunities, including further staff and student mobility, would enhance the multicultural and internationalisation of the study field, which would in turn enhance and contribute to the better cultural understanding in dealing with international business opportunities.

The faculty and the students demonstrate that they're engaged, energetic and diverse. The focus on enhancing the student experience is very positive but there is a need to ensure that the pressure on the students should be mindful of the need to achieve an appropriate balance between their studies and their work. The staff also need to have time to reflect and develop their own interests that contribute to the wider study field and in developing the pedagogic opportunities to enhance the student experience.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Prof. Dr. Peter A. Jones