



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**STUDY FIELD of BUSINESS**  
at LCC International University

**Expert panel:**

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6. Mg. Carla Harold, *students' representative*.

**Evaluation coordinator – Ms Natalija Bogdanova**

Report language – English

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## Study Field Data\*

Title of the study programme	International Business Administration
State code	6121LX005
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	English
Minimum education required	Secondary
Registration date of the study programme	30 August 2000

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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 28 April 2022.

1. **Dr. Brenda Eade (panel chairperson)** *an independent consultant in the field of education, a reviewer for the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), U.K.;*
2. **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bohumil Stádník**, *lecturer at Faculty of Finance and Accounting, University of Economics, Prague, Czech Republic;*
3. **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Malcolm Brady**, *associate professor at Business School, Dublin City University, Ireland;*
4. **Prof. Dr. Pedro Pablo Cardoso Castro**, *senior lecturer at Business School, Leeds Beckett University, U.K.;*
5. **Dr. Natalija Norvilė**, *expert consultant at ADDELSE consultancy agency, Lithuania;*
6. **Mg. Carla Harold**, *a recent student-graduate in English, Philosophy and Psychology, University of Vienna (2021), a student-expert of ESU, Austria.*

### 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.	Admission Interview Questions
2.	Summary analysis of course evaluations
3.	Recruitment and Student Progression and Retention data
4.	Minutes of Academic Council
5.	Annual Research Reports

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

LCC International University (LCC) is a Christian liberal arts University located in Klaipėda, Lithuania. The Institution was founded in 1991 as the first private provider of higher education in Lithuania. LCC gained recognition from the Lithuanian Ministry of Science and Education as a Bachelor's degree granting university in 2000, through a resolution of the government of the Republic of Lithuania (July 21, 2000, No. 868, Licence No. 002017). During the 30 years of its existence, the Institution has grown to a student body of 725 undergraduate students, 56 graduate students, and has more than 2200 graduates. The institution offers six Bachelor's degree programs, as well as two Master's degree programs.

As a university, LCC is committed to a model of education which builds discipline-specific educational content upon a broad foundation in the liberal arts and humanities. LCC is a Christian university that emphasises a values-based approach. Over 60 percent of LCC instructors are expatriates; non-Lithuanian students from 55 countries comprise approximately 80 percent of LCC's student population. LCC intentionally follows a North American model for Christian liberal arts education with a focus on students' active engagement in their own learning, using problem solving and interactive participation rather than passive reception of information.

LCC International University provides one first-cycle study programme (Bachelor of Business Management degree) in the area of business: the International Business Administration (IBA) programme. The programme was registered on August 30, 2000 by Order #1082 of the Minister of Education and Science. The programme was re-accredited on August 17, 2009 by Order #1- 73 of the Director of the Study Quality Evaluation Centre, as well as on March 10, 2016 by Order #SV6-9 of the Director of the Study Quality Evaluation Centre. The accreditation was temporarily extended on April 19, 2018 by Order #S-632 of the Director of the Quality Evaluation Centre.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Business* study field and **first cycle** at LCC International 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	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	21

\*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 Self Evaluation Report (SER) states that the IBA programme will prepare students either for further study in the functional areas of business and management or for the workplace in business or in non-business organisations including government and not for profit organisations. In particular the SER states that students will have undergone a broad-based liberal arts education and will have developed broader competences such as ethical decision making, creative thinking and critical thinking to enable them to move on to leadership roles within organisations. Students will be prepared to work in home country organisations or in more pan-global type roles.

The social partners confirmed that graduates are well prepared for the labour market having been given a good and broad base education on which future employers can build.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

This indicator is well met. Both the course content and the student oriented teaching process effectively prepares students for the needs of the labour market and society more generally.

*3.1.2. Evaluation of the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI*

*(1) Factual situation*

The SER states that students taking the IBA programme will have developed competences in areas that are in line with the mission of the organisation itself i.e. to transform people for servant leadership. As well as taking specialist business courses students will take courses in the liberal arts. These liberal arts courses comprise 84 ects of mandatory courses and 24 ects of elective courses i.e. a total of 108 ects of courses in non-business subjects.

A specific course in leadership is not listed among the courses set out in the SER, and does not appear in the course structure provided on the LCC Website. However during a meeting with the teaching team, a course in leadership was discussed.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The IBA programme conforms with the mission and objectives of LCC. Students take courses and carry out assignments that prepare them to meet the LCC mission of 'servant leadership' and a North American style liberal arts education that emphasises Christian, international, relationship and philanthropic features.

Given the university's emphasis on servant leadership, the view of the Expert Panel is that a course on leadership should be part of the programme.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The IBA programme comprises 240 credits which matches the legal requirement that a programme must comprise either 240, 210 or 180 ects. The number of credits for business field courses is 132 ects which exceeds the minimum legal requirement of 120 ects. The number of non-major credits is 108 which is within the legal requirement of a maximum of 120 ects. The three options for the final project are each weighted at 15 ects which matches the legal requirements.

In respect of the legal requirements for business and management programmes, the IBA programme comprises 240 ects which is in line with the minimum legal requirement of 210 credits and a maximum of 240 ects. General education within the programme comprises 108 ects which exceeds the minimum legal requirements of eight per cent of study volume.

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

The IBA programme comprises 240 credits in total, of which 132 are for business field courses and 108 are for non-business field courses. Students choose one of three final projects - a thesis, a business plan or a client-based project. All three options have the same learning outcomes and are weighted at 15 credits. The Expert Panel confirms that the IBA programme conforms to national legal requirements.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER states that LCC requires that all course syllabi demonstrate direct connections from the programme aims (PAs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs) for each course to the specific instructional and assessment methods used. The SER states that LCC takes a North American high-engagement approach to teaching and learning, an approach that fosters internalisation of the content and the stimulation of the higher order thinking processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The SER indicates that a variety of assignments are provided to students with no single assignment counting for more than 30 percent of the



course grade. LCC recognizes that high staff turnover poses a challenge to maintaining the consistency of academic programming and policy over the years (65).

The LCC document entitled Academic Catalogue, referenced in the SER document and provided to the expert panel, does not appear to show details of course syllabi nor details of how courses are connected to programme aims and student learning outcomes. Individual course syllabi show correspondence between PAs and SLOs and course study methods and assessment methods.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

Course syllabi show broad correspondence between SLOs and course study methods and assessment methods. However, a more precise link between each SLO and a specific piece of student assessment would make this correspondence clearer and may lead to better assurance that each SLO has been met for each student.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The SER indicates that students take foundational courses in business and management functional areas in earlier years and in later years students take further courses that build on these foundational courses. The SER states that final year courses such as Entrepreneurship, Business Research Methods and Practicum draw the students' learning together.

Members of the student panel and the social partner panel spoke highly of the 'roundedness' of students who have graduated from the programme. Members of the social partner panel spoke strongly of the broad base of knowledge that students have obtained, the high level of skills in communication and teamwork that students have attained and that students were well prepared for work and for life.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

From the information in the documentation provided, which was reinforced during meetings with teaching staff, management, students and social partners, the Expert Panel confirms that competences of students are consistently developed during their studies on the IBA programme.

*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*

Students are free to select two additional elective courses within the IBA programme, as well as four elective courses from the LCC curriculum as a whole. The SER points out that students

frequently have the opportunity to choose their specific topics for research papers and class presentations and to choose the topic of their final year project.

Elective courses for students comprise 36 ects out of a total of 240 ects amounting to 15 percent of total student learning. Of the 36 elective ects 12 are from the business field and 24 are from outside the business field.

Members of the student panel said that they have freedom to choose electives and special topics.

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

Students have a considerable level of choice regarding elective courses and appear to have the opportunity to choose research topics and special topics. Also, the IBA programme draws on courses from other departments within LCC and, overall, quite a wide range and variety of courses are taught in the programme.

In the opinion of the expert panel sufficient opportunities exist for students to personalise their studies.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER states that students may take a thesis, business plan or a client-linked project for their final year project. The SER points out that all final projects must apply concepts and analytical methods from the foundational content areas of business — mainly management, marketing, and/or economics. The SER states that this conformity is assured by the protocols used by readers and juries in assessing the projects, business plans and thesis.

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

The Expert Panel confirms that final year theses and/or major projects appear to comply with field and cycle requirements. These documents appear to be competently executed, well formatted and well written given that English is generally not the students' native language. The subject matter of these extends over a broad range within the business field. Standard research techniques and approaches are adopted. The assessment process discriminates between stronger and weaker theses.

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

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. Students take a wide variety of courses in the business area but also more broadly in the liberal arts arena.

2. The IBA programme has a distinctive emphasis that is in line with the clear mission of the university.
3. Students are well prepared for the workplace and graduates are attractive to employers because of their wide base of knowledge, their communication and teamwork skills, and their continuous learning abilities.

## ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Formal demonstration of how learning outcomes have been achieved by each student could be improved.

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

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

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

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

The SER does not provide a clear consolidation of R&D results for the last 1-3 years. However, the meetings with staff and the SER team confirmed that R&D reports are generated on an annual basis. Also, in these meetings it was confirmed that relevant metrics for research activity are produced and reported as a requirement in applying for external funding (e.g. Ministry of Education).

The adjunct documentation of the SER related to publications and research activity, together with the results of the interviews with Teaching Staff, Students and Social Partners, provided evidence that research activity is integrated in the studies. This research includes - but is not limited to - the development of Thesis work (as a requirement for graduation), and participation of students in research projects (with national and international scope) led by research academics. It is evident from the interviews and the titles of some dissertations and published papers that a practical and applied approach to research is part of the academic culture in LCC, and that this activity informs teaching and is frequently used to update the content of the modules (e.g. MAIM, and ERASMUS+ / DIGIur / IBA. SER, p.16).

The SER reports some activities that evidence close interaction with external partners. The interview with social partners confirmed the close link of LCC with local government and the business community. Particularly for activities related with Knowledge Transfer (either via Thesis, capacitation (?) or consulting).

Regarding the strategic planning of research activity and its financial viability, the SER provides a two year plan (2018-2020). The interview with Administration, Teaching Staff and the SER Team made evident the existence of a Research Council as the main mechanism

to consolidate and provide direction to all R&D initiatives. Also, decentralised instances of coordination and control exist, for instance faculty meetings.

The funding of R&D activities is supported by different sources: Internal budget to promote the development of R&D capacity (e.g. writing workshops, presentation in conferences, publication of papers); and external grants, mostly via the Ministry of Education, whose funds are allocated based on productivity records.

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

There is evidence of R&D production relevant to the academic programmes, but it needs to be reported and consolidated following a formal/standard structure, including the report of R&D metrics - perhaps following the metrics and forms used by the assessment of the Ministry of Education.

Applied R&D initiatives are present, with impact on teaching, and important knowledge transfer (KT) with practical implications to teaching, local business and society. For instance the work made on limits to career advancement for professional women in Lithuania - with immediate impact in the teaching of HR, Organisational Behaviour, and Foundations of Leadership; the R&D in cybersecurity and KT to local social partners; and the R&D on social entrepreneurship with KT to the local municipality and impact on teaching and student involvement.

Further plans to increase applied R&D are present in topics related to leadership. However, this R&D activity must be contextualised and integrated in a R&D strategic plan that needs to be updated and formalised.

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

### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER provides evidence of the inclusion of the latest developments in science in the content of the programmes. The interview with Academic (Teaching) Staff made also evident the existence of a cultural practice for a constant, accurate, and relevant update of contents via research and frequent interaction with social partners.

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

The Expert Panel confirms through the information presented in the SER and the meetings with faculty, administrators, management, social partners and students that LCC provides evidence of the constant adoption of the latest development in science in the content of the programmes. However limited to applied R&D, a clear example of this is the project on limitations of professional progression for women in Lithuania and its immediate impact in the content of HR related modules. Also, the participation in the DMAP with direct influence

on the content and teaching of digital marketing; and the cybersecurity boot camps based on R&D in that area, and with direct influence both in teaching and KT to social partners.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The SER reports some examples of involvement of students in R&D projects. The interview with Students and Academic (Teaching) Staff confirms such activity and clarifies that in addition to the development of the dissertation/thesis - research paper (as a requirement for graduation) students are encouraged to present their work in conferences (funded with internal grants), and to participate in research projects led by Academic staff. However the number of students involved in this activity as reported in the additional information is just around 1%.

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

The presentation of a Research project is compulsory as a prerequisite for the graduation of students. However, there are not clear metrics to assess the participation of students in other research activities. It would be useful to provide a framework and guide for the R&D activity of students in alignment with a strategic plan. (see comment in section 3.2.1 regarding the need to define and update a R&D strategic plan), perhaps adopting practices like the inclusion of participative research in some modules.

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

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

1. Strong culture of R&D with emphasis on the practical use of knowledge.
2. Active development of collaboration with other HEI and Social Partners.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The University does not have a formal and detailed R&D strategic plan which indicates clear goals, milestones and checkpoints for R&D activity.
2. At the time of the review there is no evidence of formal and standardised metrics which could be used to guide and control the R&D activity. Ideally these should be aligned with the R&D official reporting standards (to simplify data analysis and management).

### 3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

*Student admission and support shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:*

#### *3.3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process*

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

The majority of students recruited by LCC are international (i.e. non-EU and from outside Lithuania) and consequently they are not eligible for state funding. Lithuanian students who have applied for funding have not been successful. The majority of students apply directly through LCC's admissions office. As a private institution, LCC does not use the LAMA BPO common admission system, but conducts a large part of its admission procedure directly. However, it is noted in the SER that students from Lithuania and other EU countries are encouraged to apply through LAMA BPO, since it enables them to apply for government funding.

A three-way system is used for assessing a student's ability to successfully complete the programme. Fifty percent of this assessment is based on the average high school grades for the last three years in Mathematics, History, their Native Language and English Language; twenty percent on their English Language test grades (eg. TOEFL) and thirty percent on the interview. The normal standard for admission is 70%. However, those with a lower score may be considered on the basis of evidence of previous studies (at a university) or may be asked to take the LCC skills and knowledge test which was introduced in 2020.

Over the past three academic years the average admissions score has been 64%, the highest 98.1% and the lowest 63.4%. As the admissions office expands, LCC hopes to raise its lowest admission score to 75%. Applications have risen from 91 to 226 and enrolments from 65 to 80 between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

Detailed Information on submission criteria, selection procedure and tuition fees are available on LCC's website.

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

LLC has provided detailed information on their application process and selection procedure, which is also available on the University website. The website also provides information on tuition fees. However, more information on possibilities and procedures for obtaining scholarships could be provided, in order to grant possibilities for access for students from socially vulnerable groups and to increase the University's attractiveness to prospective students from these groups.

#### *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*

Since January 2018, LCC has been legally permitted to use its own procedures for recognition of qualifications achieved at other universities. These procedures are in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Students applying for recognition of prior learning are required to submit transcripts and the registrar consults with the head of department on the suitability of the candidate. LLC's admission office makes information on criteria and procedures for recognition public. Students applying for recognition of non-formal prior learning from the workplace are required to take an LCC assessment based on the 2017 Order of the Ministry of Education and Science.

LCC does not keep its own statistics on decisions made regarding recognition of prior learning, but reports to SKVC who evaluates the decisions. In 2018 62 decisions were made in 2019 165 decisions were made; in 2020 202 decisions were made.

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

The procedures for recognition of prior learning at LLC are clearly outlined. As LCC has a large number of international students, the procedures for recognition of foreign qualifications appear to be effective. However, the Expert Panel considered it would be beneficial to LCC to maintain its own statistics about prior learning and to monitor how effectively students with prior learning experience and foreign qualifications meet the learning outcomes of the programme currently under evaluation.

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

### *(1) Factual situation*

LCC's Center for International Education (CIE) is intended to provide students and faculty members with possibilities to study abroad. LCC has 78 partner universities through which it can offer international study as well as teaching and training exchanges for teaching staff and students. The majority of exchanges (71) are through the Erasmus+ programme, but in addition the university has 7 Memoranda of Understanding with universities in China, Chile, Georgia, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and North America. The exchange process is managed through the LCC Centre for International Education (CIE) which interviews students and prepares them for their study abroad programmes. On average 87 LLC students take up study abroad opportunities each year. In the IBA programme, between 4.9% and 0.8% of students left for study abroad programmes and between 0.4% and 3.0% of students left for Erasmus+ practicums abroad. At the virtual site-visit, the SER-team reported that the number of students applying for study abroad programmes is low, because a large number of students are international students (already studying abroad) and that the funding opportunities through the Erasmus programme are limited.

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

LCC is part of the Erasmus programme and has a large number of international partner institutions. Consequently, students are provided with the opportunity to study abroad. However, at 0.8- 4.9% for international studies and 0.4-3% for Erasmus+ practicums, a fairly small number of students leave LCC to spend time abroad as part of their studies. The Expert Panel consequently sees some potential for LCC to provide further encouragement and support for students to study abroad.

#### *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*

LCC describes its understanding of student success as going beyond professional skills and including fostering an understanding of community engagement and global citizenship.

In terms of academic support for students, LCC listed three initiatives: PRIME (Prerequisite Intensive Module in English), two compulsory programmes to assist first-year students' transition into the university context and LCC's SCC (Student Success Center). PRIME provides a one to two semester English language course for students prior to attending their regular courses at LCC. SCC offers individual support for students, which includes tutoring in mathematics, writing and language skills. Tutoring is offered by student peers as well as trained volunteers.

Between 2018-2021, between 62-65% of students have received financial aid for up to 40% of their tuition fees. LCC also financially supports students in participating in the US Department of State Work and Travel USA programme.

For students' personal and social development, LCC provides programmes on residential life, intercultural education, leadership development and spiritual life, which aligns with the Christian mission of LCC.

For psychological support, LCC provides individual counselling through two professional counsellors and workshops on different aspects of mental-health wellness. LCC also provides career counselling and employment support, as well as support in obtaining and maintaining student migration status in Lithuania.

Accessibility for students with different types of disabilities appears to be limited at LCC. At the site visit, the panel was informed of planned building renovations, which should provide more access to students with physical disabilities by the summer of 2023. However, no accommodations or measurements to support students with other forms of disabilities were addressed in the documentation or at the site visit.

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

Overall, the support provided for students at LCC appears to be extensive, as the university provides academic, financial, social and psychological, as well as practical support for its students. The availability of different forms of support was also confirmed by students at the



virtual site-visit. However, there appears to be a significant lack of support for students with disabilities. The panel commends the efforts of LCC to make its facilities more accessible for students with physical disabilities with the planned renovations, and recommends that LCC clearly communicates the accommodation and support which is available to current and potential students.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

According to the SER, students following the IBA programme at LCC obtain information through the LCC website and publicity events organised by the LCC Admissions Office. At the site visit, students confirmed this was the case and also indicated that LCC had been personally recommended to them. In the SER it states that upon enrolling, students are assigned an academic advisor, who compiles an individualised four-year study plan for them and meets with them each semester to discuss classes for the following term, as well as study abroad and practicum options. Students may also be assigned advisors who are not faculty members, who are provided with guidance through the LLC Academic Advising Handbook and the Business Department Advisor Guide. Between 2018-2021 9-13% of IBA students have switched to another programme at LCC and between 2-9% have left LCC entirely.

At the site visit, students confirmed the various methods of support they receive from faculty members as well as the close connections they have with their advisors. Students also stated that they are provided with an adequate level of choice in terms of course selection.

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

Through the process of allocating academic advisors, LCC appears to provide adequate support for students throughout their studies and assists them in their course selection process. However, as indicated by LCC, the selection procedure and the materials provided appear to be quite focused on academic advisors, rather than directly providing students with information. The panel therefore recommends that LCC introduces a student handbook, containing information on course content, which is aimed at students rather than advisors.

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

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. The close support provided by faculty members in terms of guidance on the subject areas and assessments together with effective support on a social and personal level.
2. The study programme appears to be attractive for students in a broad region and attracts a significant number of international students.

## ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. There is no clear policy for social inclusion which encourages students to study on the IBA programme at LCC.
2. The facilities for students with disabilities is currently limited and may inhibit their studies at LCC. However the planned renovations should address this with enhanced access to all buildings.

### **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***

As it is presented in the SER, the teaching and learning process includes theoretical, practical, and independent work. Teaching/learning methods within the IBA include lectures, extensive readings, discussions both during class and in online forums; group problem-solving exercises and case studies, individual problem-solving exercises and other homework; individual book reviews, discussion papers, and research papers; in-class presentations (by individuals and groups); practical work (practicums); and final research projects.

Assessment methods are usually selected by teaching staff (except for the final project). These methods include marks assigned to individual and group assignments, mid-semester and final examinations.

Information obtained during the Expert Panel's online site visit confirmed that the classes can be provided in a virtual learning environment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the quarantine, lectures were given remotely, and both teachers and students confirmed that the process was organised efficiently.

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

The information contained in the SER and discussions with students, staff and other stakeholders during site visit confirm that the learning process takes into account the students' needs and enables students to achieve the course and programme learning outcomes.

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

### *(1) Factual situation*

As is stated in the SER, LCC seeks to create equal access for all students, including those with special needs, to the University's programmes and activities, and has developed a policy that provides the framework for admission practices, academic assistance, and the provision of services and support. For example, every year, LCC is acquiring equipment from the State Studies Foundation for students with disabilities; in the preceding years LCC received keyboards for students with vision impairment and ergonomic chairs. In Spring 2022 LCC acquired an ergonomic table with adjustable height that can be used by students with special needs.

LCC offers individualised academic support, as well as technical support and other services, based on the needs of students. This support is coordinated and managed by the Registrar and the Student Success Centre.

The WeCare team was built for early intervention in dealing with various student concerns in a confidential manner. It coordinates the existing network of resources, provides support to students, and continues to monitor at-risk students. Support for mental health wellness of students includes workshops on stress-management, mindfulness, dealing with anxiety, depression, and building resilience. Students have psychological support available, if they experience emotional difficulties, difficulties in learning, anxiety, loneliness, sadness, lack of motivation, disagreements with others, difficulties in making decisions, etc.

In terms of socially vulnerable students, LCC's counsellors, Student Life personnel, as well as the Director for the Dialogue and Conflict Transformation Center have vast experience in helping students from war affected countries and/or to those exposed to psychological trauma. That includes counselling services, as well regular resiliency strategy building programmes, run by Centre of Dialogue and Conflict Transformation, including listening circles that respond to the needs of students on campus and provide opportunities for skill building and supporting the resilience of vulnerable students.

LCC also provides need-based aid (LCC Need Based Aid, Global Grant, Middle East Scholar Aid) for socially vulnerable students. Due to the current geopolitical situation in Ukraine, LCC has also established an emergency fund for war affected Ukrainian students.

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

Based on the information provided in the SER and the evidence obtained during discussion with the faculty management regarding individualised study plans for students with special needs, the experts believe that the conditions ensuring access to study for students with special needs are sufficient.

### *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*

According to SER, all students receive feedback about the results of the completed assessment in their courses. The evaluation scores are posted by the lecturer onto Moodle, which allows students to see their progress with their learning/courses.

Student progress is systematically monitored within each semester for the purpose of identifying problems and seeking to resolve them. For example, at mid-semester, teachers report preliminary grades for all first-year students as well as for later-year probationary students. If grades in any courses indicate that a student is in danger of failing that course, those results are sent to the Student Success Centre, which then contacts the student in an effort to guide him/her to successful completion of the course. Additionally, teachers can send an email alert to the “WeCare” support system about students (particularly first-year students) who do not submit acceptable assignments, participate in class, or respond to emails, or who are seen to be struggling in areas of wellness (physical and emotional health, etc.). The “WeCare” team then seeks to reach out to these students with the necessary support before they fail academically or in other ways.

Students are given the criteria for evaluation of progress in each course, including percentages of the course grade dependent on each assignment, at the start of the semester in the course syllabus. Teachers post grades for each assessed assignment in LCC’s Moodle within two weeks of submission of each assignment. Moodle’s integrated gradebook keeps a running average of grades visible to the students.

During the site visit, students confirmed that the feedback is provided systematically. They also stated that teachers are available for individual consultation with students during regular weekly office hours, as well as by email, Moodle and Teams.

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

The Expert Panel confirms that the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress is systemic and sufficient.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

As stated in the SER, the employment of graduates is analysed every year in order to assess the need for trained specialists. The information about the employment of graduates and their careers is collected using surveys, sent to all LCC graduates, and also by including information received from Lithuania’s official education management information system, ŠVIS. However, a high proportion of programme students leave Lithuania after graduation, so this statistic offers little information on the employability of IBA programme graduates.

The opinion of LCC graduates on the vocational training and competences that they had acquired at LCC is reflected in answers to the question on how important the LCC name was for their employability. Social partners, who participated in the site visit, confirmed that LCC has a good reputation in the Klaipėda region. Employers have a positive opinion about LCC

graduates and their competences. However it is worth mentioning that the process of involvement of social partners, students or other stakeholders in curriculum development should be formalised.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

During the experts' site visit, graduates confirmed that they are satisfied with knowledge they have obtained and that their studies have ensured high employability. Former students confirmed that they have sufficient practical skills and knowledge to enable them to have successful careers in various working areas of the business sector. Many graduates also successfully continue their studies at Lithuanian or foreign higher education institutions. However the University does not have statistics which clearly identify the career prospects and progress of IBA graduates as this information is not collected for specific courses and many graduates move abroad following graduation so do not complete the surveys.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

Based on information given in the SER and virtual meeting with alumni, LCC follows the principles of transparency of the study and research processes, academic integrity, equality, non-discrimination, justice, intellectual property protection, and other universally recognized principles. Each member of the LCC community undertakes to comply with the Code of Academic Ethics and to not tolerate its violations. The measures on tolerance and non-discrimination are included in the policies of LCC.

LCC is using the Turnitin plagiarism detection service which checks assignments in many courses, as well as all the business final projects, for authenticity.

During the past three academic years, teachers reported instances of cheating by 20 IBA programme students and instances of plagiarism by 30 IBA students. All cases were investigated by the relevant academic department (including cases where IBA students took courses in other departments) and upheld in disciplinary meetings with the Academic Vice President.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

In the Expert Panel's opinion, there are sufficient policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. LCC focuses attention on the issues and consequences of plagiarism, fraud, and academic dishonesty. Students are informed about disciplinary measures, tools for detection of plagiarism, and accepted practices. There is evidence that these policies are effectively implemented.

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The process and the procedure for handling appeals is established and clear. Students have an opportunity to appeal course grades, for final examination retakes as well as decisions of the Committee on Academic Standing to suspend or dismiss a student. Students may appeal any course grade in writing to the teacher. If not satisfied, students may then submit an appeal to the Academic Vice President.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The Expert Panel confirms that procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process are in place and are working effectively.

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

***(1) Strengths:***

1. Students get effective individual counselling and their progress is closely monitored.
2. Student support systems reach out to struggling students and those with special needs.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The unclear nature of student employment, as LCC assembles graduates' employment data only in aggregated form for all graduates, not for IBA programme graduates in particular.
2. The process of involvement of social partners, students and other stakeholders in curriculum development should be formalised.

### **3.5. TEACHING STAFF**

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

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

*(1) Factual situation*

The documentation supplied by LCC for the review, states that for the International Business Administration programme (IBA) there are 2 professors, 1 associate professor, 7 assistant professors, 3 instructors and 2 visiting instructors (15 altogether). Four out of 15 of the teaching staff do not have a doctoral degree. The University states that the staffing structure is derived from the US system.

Courses within the programme are currently taught by 8 "permanent" faculty members who have taught at LCC for at least 3 years and whose current workload is at least 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent), as well as five full-time faculty members who have worked at LCC for less than three years or whose workload is less than 0.5 FTE. This means that 53% of current IBA teaching staff (8 out of 15) have taught in the programme for at least 3 years with a teaching load of 0.5 FTE or more. Of the remaining 7 teachers, 2 will reach at least 3 years after the spring semester of 2022, the other 2 are full faculty members with 1-2 years of experience at LCC, and 2 are visiting or supplemental faculty members for 2021-2022. The remaining member of the teaching staff is a long-time permanent faculty member working mainly in another programme within LCC, with a teaching load within the IBA department of 0.25 FTE. The percentage of permanent teaching staff among core curriculum instructors is about 44%. This reflects the number of core curriculum instructors who have been teaching at LCC for a relatively short period of time. In addition, IBA programme courses are taught by several visiting or assistant instructors.

The university invites teachers from North America (auxiliary faculty) to teach on the programme but also cooperates with several faculties from European countries and recruits a substantial number of expatriate faculty, most of whom stay for periods ranging from a single semester to three years. This is of benefit to students in view of the range of expertise they bring to the programme and their multi-cultural backgrounds.

However LCC states that the high turnover of staff has posed a challenge to maintaining the consistency of academic programming and policy over the years. For example, only one member of the IBA programme self-study group from 2015 is still a faculty member. This has affected institutional memory, including for matters related to the previous programme evaluation. As a partial response to this challenge, LCC sought a potential longer-term replacement when the departmental chair returned to the United States in 2017 and a long-time economics instructor retired in 2018. The replacement departmental chair and economics instructor expects to remain at LCC until his own retirement. In addition former expatriate faculty members often continue to play a role in the institution.

The university has been trying to hire more full-time employees over the past years and continues to do so at the present time. In the past LCC has employed local faculty members who may be in a position to remain for several years and bring extensive experience in research, local and regional practice, and university teaching. However, these faculty are attractive to other academic institutions and have not always remained for any length of time at LCC.

In the Autumn of 2021, exactly 50 percent of IBA programme courses were being taught by instructors holding PhD degrees which is just within the requirements of the Ministry of Education. However, if other courses which are part of the core curriculum are included, this rises to 55 percent. Both numbers were higher in the 2020-2021 academic year. The number of PhD holders is likely to rise as four faculty members are currently enrolled on PhD programmes.

All IBA teachers, with the exception of a mathematician, have worked as practitioners outside of academia in economics, management, marketing, or other business disciplines. The majority remain active as part-time practitioners while also teaching full or part-time.

As LCC International Universities studies are conducted in English, the University upholds high standards of English language proficiency for faculty. More than half of faculty members are native speakers of English. Others are checked for English proficiency during a job interview that includes participation by a native speaker—the department chair and/or the Academic Vice President

The student staff ratio is 20:1 for courses specifically within the IBA programme. This compares with 13:1 for LCC in general, where small class sizes are the norm.

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

The Expert Panel confirms that there is an adequate number of qualified staff with relevant competences to teach in the field of study. However, LCC's heavy reliance on adjunct (expatriate) faculty, although strengthening the international experience for students on the programme, has disadvantages in terms of academic planning and maintaining consistent standards. Programmes are dependent on a small number of faculty members. Contingency plans may need to be put in place to ensure continuity of programmes should key faculty members leave. In addition, several faculty members teach a wide range of courses and may become overstretched. Staying abreast of developments in a wide range of courses may be unsustainable for an individual faculty member in the long term. This may lead over time to a deterioration in course quality.

LCC recognises this weakness and is attempting to recruit more permanent staff.

### *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 information provided for the review process indicates that LCC is involved in academic mobility through the European Union's Erasmus+ programme and also uses a wider network of contacts with foreign partner institutions and with many individual faculty members. As an institution, LCC considers faculty mobility to be important for individual professional development as well as for supporting LCC's identity in creating an international, multicultural learning environment.

Participation in the Erasmus+ programme is managed through the LCC Centre for International Education (CIE). At the beginning of each academic year, the CIE informs LCC's network of Erasmus+ partner institutions of potential teaching opportunities at LCC and at least twice a year publishes opportunities for LCC faculty members to visit partner institutions and offer workshops, seminars, lectures and consultations with colleagues. CIE also conducts an application and selection process for LCC faculty, with priority given to



faculty members who have not participated in the Erasmus+ programme for at least three years. In recent years, CIE has also successfully applied for additional Erasmus+ funding for faculty exchanges with LCC partner institutions in North America. Some of this funding has been used by the IBA programme, which has led to fruitful exchanges of ideas and opportunities for collaboration. Faculty and visitors to the IBA programme also participate in virtual – internet - mobility measures through courses taught simultaneously to students at LCC partner institutions and North America via an Internet video connection.

The number of IBA faculty participating in the mobility is low with 3 out of 20 staff participating in the scheme in 2017-2018; 2 out of 17 in 2018-2019; none in 2019-2020; and 2 out of 19 participating in online teaching as part of the international week in an Erasmus+ partner in Belgium in 2020-2021.

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

The Expert Panel confirms that the conditions at LCC for ensuring teaching staff's academic mobility are suitable to facilitate exchanges through the Erasmus+ scheme. However, take-up of these opportunities within the IBA teaching faculty is low, and the Panel would encourage the university to motivate IBA staff to participate more extensively in the opportunities available.

### *3.2.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff*

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The staff development policy for LCC is set out in the Faculty Handbook. Numerous opportunities for professional development in research and teaching are provided. These include financial support for participation in seminars, conferences and research activities; sabbatical leave and release from teaching for research. In addition, LCC organises its own professional development seminars on such issues as Excel training and "fresh ideas for teaching freshmen," as well as opportunities for faculty members to share their research results with the rest of the LCC community.

Information about staff development opportunities is presented at faculty meetings, sent by email, and posted on the Moodle professional development page. This addresses all the expectations in the June 2020 regulation of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport: "Guidelines for improving the competencies of university teachers".

LCC provides a number of developmental activities to improve the competencies of faculty, as set out in the above regulation. These competencies are divided into three groups: teaching, research and general.

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

From analysis of the documentation provided, and through meetings with teaching staff, administrators and management, the Expert Panel confirms that the conditions to improve

the competences of teaching staff are fit for purpose. Staff confirmed that they are supported in staff development activities both financially and through release from teaching. However, the Panel found that research is limited within the University, with only a small number of staff publishing in high impact journals.

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

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

1. As LCC's programmes are conducted in English, the University maintains high standards of English language proficiency for faculty. More than half of the faculty members are native English speakers.
2. The strength of teachers, as a whole, is their multiculturalism, which gives students a greater international experience and social prowess.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Low numbers of full time staff and few associate professors and the related staff turnover problems which impact on the continuity of teaching for students.
2. The wide range of courses taught by each member of faculty may inhibit teachers keeping up-to-date with their subject areas.
3. The small number of publications in journals with a higher impact factor.

## **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***

LCC University campus comprises four buildings. The main teaching area is in DeFehr Centras which has 12 classrooms, the Neufeld auditorium, a library, 2 computer laboratories, and a Student Success Centre as well as offices for faculty and administrative staff. The Michaelson Centras has a sports hall and fitness centre as well as an auditorium and is available for use by residents of Klaipeda. Neumann Hall and Enns Hall are residential centres for student accommodation. Teaching areas are equipped with smart boards, computers, sound systems, web cameras and microphones to support interactive teaching and learning. The 2 computer laboratories are equipped with Microsoft software including teams. SPSS is used for statistical work.

There are two web-based portals, one with restricted access as it contains students' personal data including grades. The student learning portal (Moodle) is used for disseminating information about the courses currently being taught. The campus is equipped with access to the internet and wifi.

The library is stocked with over 46,500 books which includes multiple sets of key text books for core modules which are loaned to students taking that module. 3,000 texts are relevant to the business field.

Through the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium (LMBA), and by participating in an EU sponsored project, LCC has gained access to a range of online databases which includes Source Complete, Regional Business News, Emerald Management eJournal, JSTOR, SAGE and Taylor and Francis. The library catalogue is on the University intranet and can be accessed remotely. LCC is a member of the Lithuanian Library Association eLABA through which it has acquired a search tool enabling researchers to search the Library holdings and databases.

The main classrooms and student areas are accessible to students with disabilities and some special equipment has been installed in the library. Recently installed elevators have improved access for students in wheelchairs.

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

In general the physical, informational and financial resources of the field support an effective learning process. Students and academic staff confirmed that the learning resources are fit for purpose and adequate for the current number of students. Students commented on the sense of community they felt within the campus. Students benefit from the leisure facilities in Michaelson Centras which are shared with residents of Klaipeda. Student satisfaction rates, over the past three years in respect of the quality of classrooms, library facilities and library resources are high, with 95% of graduating students who completed the 2021 Senior Class Survey indicating a satisfaction level of 4 or 5.

One area for immediate improvement is the capacity of the wifi system which was found to be inadequate during the pandemic when students were trying to learn via zoom from their dormitories. This has improved with the return to face-to face teaching. LCC recognises the need to improve the wifi system and is preparing a major upgrade to the system across the campus, raising the capacity from 300 to 1,700 Mbps for the next academic year. The expert panel recommends that the wifi system is upgraded to meet the needs of distance and hybrid learning.

Access to facilities for students with disabilities is variable. LCC overcomes this by timetabling students with disabilities in rooms which are accessible by wheelchairs. A major capital investment project is planned for 2023 which will greatly improve access for all students. (see section 3.6.2 below for more detail)

Although the provision of individual copies of key textbooks for students is commendable, it does have implications for resourcing and keeping up-to-date with current developments in

the business field. The Expert Panel found that some key texts were dated 2017, and to renew these with later editions would require significant expenditure by the department, which may be a barrier to their renewal. The Expert Panel recommends that LCC ensures that all key academic text books are up to date, especially where multiple copies are held in the library.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

The planning of upgrades and resources is the responsibility of the President's cabinet and ultimately the LCC Board. Information Technology upgrades are made by the IT department in consultation with faculty and administration. Decisions about library acquisitions are the responsibility of the IBA department, which has an annual acquisition budget of Eu3,000.

In 2019, the Leadership Team undertook an assessment of the resources at LCC, in consultation with faculty, students and administrative staff. This was based on the growing student population, and resulted in the "Flourishing Community Capital Project. This project includes a new student centre, cafeteria, a library with "learning commons" renovated classrooms and office space. Fundraising for the Eu6 million project is underway and construction is planned for 2023.

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

LCC has effective processes for the planning and upgrading of resources for the IBA programme, and recognises the need to continually improve facilities and extend access for all students. The planned upgrading of the wifi system should ensure that students have secure and fast access to the internet from all areas of the campus.

The planned capital investment programme will greatly enhance the current facilities and improve the overall student experience, especially for those with physical disabilities.

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

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

1. Well stocked library.
2. Ambitious plans for capital investment in the campus.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The current Wifi does not support remote learning.
2. In the current infrastructure, access to learning facilities for students with disabilities is limited.

### 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*

Overall responsibility for quality lies with the LCC President's Cabinet and Academic Council. Quality management of all academic programmes is overseen by the Academic Vice President. Departmental Chairs are responsible for managing the quality of programmes in their departments. They are responsible for hiring staff and managing the appraisal process. They evaluate student feedback. Monthly departmental meetings are held to discuss operational matters relating to quality and the development of programmes.

There are a number of internal working groups (ad hoc committees) which manage quality within specific areas of the bachelors programme. These include marketing, economics, management, information systems, finance and accounting, mathematics and research methods. These groups report to the departmental committee meetings.

Procedures for quality management are well documented in the Faculty Handbook and policies and processes for quality assurance are set out in the "Internal System of Quality Assurance"

The Director of Institutional Effectiveness plays a supportive role in quality assurance by monitoring Lithuanian and European legal requirements, participating in training, forums and conferences and interpreting these to the Departmental Chairs.

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

The Expert Panel met with the Academic Vice President who confirmed his role in quality management of all academic programmes including the IBA. The team examined the minutes of the Academic Council which meets regularly and noted that decisions relating to quality management are made by the Council. This includes promotion routes for staff, the ethics policy, student progression and the academic catalogue.

The Panel also examined the notes of departmental meetings which had occurred on a regular basis both face to face and online during the pandemic. The notes indicated that matters relating to quality and programme development are discussed at the departmental level. However, the notes are brief and there does not appear to be any formal follow up on matters discussed at previous meetings. The Expert Panel recommends that departmental meeting notes consistently and effectively record decisions taken and that action plans are monitored and followed-up at subsequent meetings.

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

#### *(1) Factual situation*

Students can provide feedback directly to their instructors on an informal basis at the end of lectures, during office hours or via email. They can also contact the Departmental Chair during office hours. Course evaluations take place for each course at the end of each semester. The form had been specifically adjusted to take account of online learning during the pandemic.

Students and other stakeholders are represented on the Academic Council. The IBA programme currently has 7 social partners, most of whom are from the Klaipeda area.

The Departmental Programme Committee which is in the process of development will include student representatives, a graduate and a social partner.

Students confirmed that the small class sizes and the generally supportive ethos at LCC enabled them to give feedback directly to their tutors on an informal basis.

The Departmental Chair confirmed that he receives feedback from students several times each year and that each case is investigated and action taken where necessary. However, issues raised and action taken have not been documented. The Department recognises that records of these incidents should be kept and the action taken more widely disseminated

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

Although the informal methods of quality assurance, and in particular feedback from students, appear to work well, there is a need to formalise the processes and procedures for receiving and responding to feedback.

The development of the Programme Committee, (recommended by the previous team of experts) has been delayed due to the pandemic, but needs to be established so that it can meet regularly during 2022. The Expert Panel recommends that the Study Programme Committee is established with clear terms of reference and membership so that it can effectively represent the views of students, academic staff, management and social partners.

Feedback and concerns raised by students via the Departmental Chair are not formally recorded and the action taken is not widely disseminated. The Expert Panel recommends that action taken is recorded and actions plans are monitored through the committee structure.

### *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 LCC website contains general information about the University including its vision and mission. Reports from External evaluations are published on the website, together with data on student retention and achievements and the type of employment entered by graduating students.

Information about the IBA programme course is available on the LCC website and includes the programme aims, the course structure and the entry requirements. The academic catalogue, which was provided by LCC as part of the self evaluation process, contains information about policies and procedures including grading, and penalties for plagiarism. It also contains further details of the modules available for students.

The student virtual learning environment (Moodle) is used to provide information about the lectures for modules which are currently being delivered. This includes presentations, recommended reading, assessments and any changes to hand-in dates or lecture times.

LCC uses the Major Field Test to compare the achievements of students on the IBA programme with those on similar programmes in the business field.

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

The information available for students is accessible and detailed, and students confirmed that they had been provided with the necessary information to select their courses and succeed in meeting the learning outcomes of the programme and individual modules.

The outcomes of the Major Field Test in 2018 indicated that LCC students score above the global average in all aspects of their programmes with the exception of quantitative business analysis where they were fractionally below the global average. However in 2019 participation rates were low and the average scores also decreased. Due to the pandemic, the Test was not administered during 2020 and 2021. LCC indicated that the Test will be reintroduced during 2022. However, it is recognised that low participation rates are problematic and LCC intends to provide incentives to encourage students to take the Test.

As this is LCC's main metric for measuring the success of students completing the IBA, the Expert Panel recommends that the Major Field Test be reinstated.

#### *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*

As indicated in 3.7.2 above, students complete end of course surveys where they provide feedback on the delivery of the module.

Graduating students complete the Senior Class Survey which covers all aspects of their experience. This survey is generic for all students at LCC and therefore does not identify issues which relate directly to the IBA programme.

The information collected is reviewed by the Departmental Chair, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Academic Vice President.

*(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

LCC evaluates the opinion of students through surveys, however participation rates are low, and the views of students on individual programmes cannot be identified through the centrally managed surveys.

Results of the internal survey for all LCC students indicate high levels of satisfaction overall, and in particular with the instruction provided and the preparation and support given for assessments. There is also a high level of satisfaction with the facilities and resources. Lower satisfaction levels are identified for participation in research with faculty members and the availability of desired courses.

LCC recognises that their internal survey needs to be refined so that student satisfaction with individual programmes, such as the IBA can be identified.

Although the results of the surveys are published, and overall satisfaction levels are high, there is no documented evidence of the outcomes being considered by Departmental Meetings or the Academic Board, and any necessary action being taken.

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

***(1) Strengths:***

1. An effective informal system of responding to student feedback in a timely and appropriate manner.
2. Student satisfaction levels are high, and comparisons with the achievement of students in other institutions, made through the Major Field Test, are favourable.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Low participation rates in surveys.
2. Action required, and taken, as a result of student feedback is not formally documented.
3. The Study Programme Committee, recommended by the previous Expert Panel, has yet to be established.



#### **IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE**

The Social Partners emphasised the wide base of knowledge and strong transferable skills especially communication and team-work which graduates of the IBA possess.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confirm that a course on leadership is part of the programme.</li> <li>2. Ensure that faculty do not become overstretched by the breadth of courses that they teach.</li> <li>3. Ensure that a clear audit trail demonstrates that each learning outcome has been met by each student. (Consider linking each SLO with a specific piece of work. Perhaps also consider reducing the number of learning outcomes under PA4.)</li> </ol>
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a detailed R&amp;D strategic plan which is documented and formalised. This strategic plan should be used as reference to assess the results of annual reports of R&amp;D activities.</li> <li>2. For all reports of R&amp;D use standard metrics and KPI in line with the reporting criteria used for national statistics (this will standardise and simplify the consolidation of information and the creation of reports for official and internal use.</li> </ol>
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement clear policies for social inclusion, in order to encourage students to apply for the IBA programme at LCC.</li> <li>2. Evaluate and update facilities for students with disabilities and make a clear plan and accommodations for students with different types of disabilities.</li> <li>3. The panel recommends that LCC introduces a student handbook, containing information on course content, which focuses on students rather than advisors.</li> </ol>
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that LCC gets graduates' employment data for IBA programme graduates in particular, not only in aggregated form for all graduates.</li> <li>2. Formalise the process for social partners, students and other stakeholders to be involved in curriculum development.</li> </ol>
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find means to address the relative high turnover of staff which may impact on the continuity of teaching for students, and increase the number of full time staff and Associate Professors.</li> <li>2. Encourage staff to develop their research and publish in journals with a higher impact factor.</li> </ol>

<p>Learning facilities and resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Upgrade the wifi system to meet the needs of distance and hybrid learning.</li> <li>2. Ensure that all key academic text books are up to date, especially where multiple copies are held in the library.</li> </ol>
<p>Study quality management and public information</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formalise the processes for quality assurance by establishing a Programme Study Committee, and clearly recording and monitoring action taken in response to feedback from stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Reinstate the Major Field Test.</li> </ol>

## VI. SUMMARY

### **Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field *Business* at LCC International University:**

LCC provides a broad based business first cycle programme within the ethos of a liberal arts university and with emphasis placed on transferable skills such as communication and team-work. Employers and social partners have high regard for graduates of the programme and in particular for their interpersonal skills. Learning outcomes are clear but could be tied more closely with specific pieces of student work to ensure that each student achieves each learning outcome and that a clear audit trail exists. Faculty are very committed to the programme but as a small faculty with responsibility for a wide range of courses of study they could become over-stretched.

Within LCC there is a strong culture of R&D with an emphasis on the practical use of knowledge, and the University is actively developing collaborations with other HEIs and Social Partners. However, there is no formal R&D strategic plan to provide clear goals, milestones and checkpoints for R&D Activity.

Students appeared to be satisfied with the support provided by LCC and they indicated that they receive effective individual counselling. Their progress is closely monitored and the University support systems reach out to struggling students and those with special needs. Access for students with physical disabilities is currently limited by the infrastructure of the University buildings, but will be greatly improved when the planned renovations are completed.

At the time of the review, LCC assembled graduates' employment data only in aggregate form and not specifically for the IBA programme which means that information of student employment is unclear. The Expert Panel is of the opinion that LCC could formalise the involvement of social partners and other stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum fully prepares students for the workplace.

LCC's programmes are conducted in English, and consequently, the University maintains high standards of English language proficiency for faculty. More than half of the faculty members are native English speakers. The main strength of the teachers is their multiculturalism, which gives students a greater international experience and social prowess. However, the number of full time staff is low and there is a high staff turnover which may impact on the continuity of teaching for students. Staff are not regularly publishing in journals with a higher impact factor.

The current facilities appear to be adequate for students and the University has ambitious plans for a capital investment project which, when complete, will greatly enhance the campus facilities. This will include upgrading the current wifi system to support remote learning.

LCC has an effective informal system for managing quality and in particular responding to student feedback in a timely and appropriate manner. Student satisfaction levels are high.

However the participation rate in surveys is low and the University does not, at the present time, fully document action taken as a result of student feedback. It has also delayed responding to previous recommendations to set up a Study Programme Committee, however this may be due to interruptions in University processes as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

**Expert panel chairperson signature:**

**Dr. Brenda Eade**