



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD OF DEFENCE

AT GENERAL JONAS ŽEMAITIS MILITARY ACADEMY OF LITHUANIA

Expert panel:

1. **Prof. dr. David J. Galbreath** (panel chairperson), member of academic community;
2. **Major Koen Troch**, *member of academic community*;
3. **Col dr. Alin Bodescu**, *member of academic community*;
4. **Ms. Meda Vaitonytė**, *students' representative*.

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Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	National Security and Defence	Defence Studies
State code	6121SX001	6211SX001
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years)	Part-time 2 years
Credit volume	210	90
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of public security	Master of public security
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian, English
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Bachelor's study program completed
Registration date of the study programme	2016-09-01	2019-09-01

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

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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 remote visit to the HEI was organized on the 6th of May, 2022.*

1. **Prof. dr. David J. Galbreath**, *professor at University of Bath (United Kingdom)*;
2. **Major Koen Troch**, *Royal Military Academy (RMA) and Vesalius College (Belgium)*;
3. **Col dr. Alin Bodescu**, *Chairperson-Sectoral Qualifications Framework-Military Officer Profession Executive Group EU Brussels (Belgium); Advanced Distributed Learning Department National Defence University (Romania)*;
4. **Ms. Meda Vaitonytė**, *student University Institute of Lisbon (Lithuania)*.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	
...	

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

The Lithuanian Military Academy (MAL , Academy) is a higher education institution which prepares officers and other security specialists according to the needs of the state. The overall goal of the Study Field is to train officers and develop their leadership qualities by providing them with professional competencies necessary to serve in the army in different situations.

The Academy is a unique higher education institution in Lithuania being directly accountable to the Ministry of Defence. Being a constituent part of NDS, the Academy strategically follows the guidelines of the Minister of National Defence and the doctrines of the Lithuanian Army. However, the Law on Education and Science and other regulations of higher education are followed as well.

The Academy Commandant has the authority and the rights of the Rector and traditionally heads the Academy. The Academy Commandant incorporates the functions of the commander of the military unit and the authority regarding university studies and research, and is the most important leader at the Academy, influencing the development and direction of the organization, responsible for the distribution of resources and employment of personnel. The Vice-Rector for Studies and Research leads the university studies and research.

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II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Defence field study and first cycle at General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (GJŽLKA) 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	5
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	29

*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.

Defence field study and second cycle at General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (GJŽLKA) 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	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	28

*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 Academy offers first cycle and/or second cycle studies in four fields of study in Social sciences: Public Security, Political Science, Management field and Public Administration.

Although these fields may include disciplines that directly contribute to the achievement of general and specialised competences for the military officers, the SER acknowledges that military science is quite common as field of study for the education of military officers from the outset of their career. It is through the direct and early exposure to the scientific apparatus of the military science that future military will get familiarised with the principles, methodology and context of a universal repository of knowledge acquired and applied at global scale by militaries.

The first cycle Bachelor's Degree Programme in National Security and Defence was developed to satisfy the needs of Lithuanian Armed Forces to prepare in a relatively short-term officers able to lead subunits. The characteristic that differentiates this programme from other programmes (e.g., Liberal Arts studies) is its capacity of accommodating interlinked modules and sequences of academic studies and professional military training, specific to military officer.

The aim of the *second cycle Defence Study Programme*, as derived from the SER has multiple dimensions. Its main goal, which also gives the unique character of the study field, is the development of officers' managerial competences to complement the skills acquired during military training with research work, critical thinking and leadership competences.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The programmes contain both transversal learning outcomes (e.g. research or communication skills) but also specialised skills (e.g. ability to analyse threats to national security). If the transversal skill are not necessarily unique by their universal character, the specialised skills, which are key for the programmes, are definitely unique. The learning outcomes are unique in that they are formulated with due consideration of the field of study and focused on defence dimension in an appropriate manner. For example, in case of *National Security and Defence Programme*, learning outcomes for "Knowledge and its application" include the awareness of "history of warfare, war theory, and the legal and economic contexts of relevance to the military officer's profession". In case of *Defence Study Programme* learning outcomes for

“Knowledge and its application” require awareness of the „political and legal contexts in which armed forces are operating at the national, NATO, and global levels“.

The programmes have as primary audience professionals in the field of military and defence (ISCED 1031 - Military and defence). Moreover, the *National Security and Defence Programme* is conceived to be taken by the students in parallel with vocational military training, a mandatory requirement to graduate and be promoted in the military officer corps of Lithuania. However, even those unable to attend the military training programme, due to medical conditions, for example, can be employed by the defence sector, reaching the maximum rate of employment at the end of study for the graduates. The *Defence Study Programme* provides competences and offers opportunities for a broader range of audience, but it constitutes for military officers who started their career with a degree in defence studies field a logical continuation of studies. Those officers will not only be promotable to the rank of lieutenant-colonel but also Lithuanian armed forces will benefit of officers with a high level of competences acquired in the national military education system.

The Lithuanian armed forces commissioned the development of a programme for each cycle: the *National Security and Defence Programme* at bachelor level (LTQF level 6) and the *Defence Study Programme* at master level (level 7 LTQF). They are imagined to serve the purpose of education for most of the military officers in the armed forces in a complementary and synchronised manner with career vocational professional training.

The plans are to further develop the defence study field as a separate field, distinct from the current public security fields of study. This should allow in the future for a specialisation of higher education for military officers although that will not exclude the organisation of joint programmes with civilian universities in the field.

When it comes to society and the situation nowadays not only at the border of Lithuania, but in all Europe, security of citizens and defence of territory are existential; this need is obvious from the organisation of the programmes. The proposed study field is all the more relevant and needed to the society by offering timely and opportune products – highly skilled officers, able to lead defence and military institutions in the coming decades. Given these considerations, we conclude that the aims and learning outcomes of defence study field programmes are unique in line with the needs of society and the labour market.

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 presents the aims (objectives) of the programmes in the defence study field. For example, the *National Security and Defence Studies Programme* aims to educate and expose national security and defence professionals to the context of internal and external threats and challenges faced by the modern state. The *Defence Studies Programme* is aimed at educating middle chain managers and enable them to „plan, organise, and control the activities of the units of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and the units of other institutions that are part of the Armed Forces in peace, crisis, and war “.

The mission of the Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) is enshrined in its Strategy 2018-2024¹. This document states that: „MAL is an exceptional national institution of higher education, which *harmoniously combines university studies and military training, qualitatively prepares and trains fully educated and responsible officer leaders*, conducts research, and ensures the implementation of lifelong learning principles in accordance with the needs of the Academy “. The vision also makes reference to the ambition to become a „*modern, internationally-recognised national security, defence, and military studies university for training military leaders and centre of excellence* “.

The mission and vision are to be accomplished and met by pursuing two objectives which are defined in the Statutes of Academy. These objectives focus on creating condition to educate military officers, warfare and national security specialists and develop scientific knowledge in the fields of warfare and national security.

Specific and measurable progress indicators for each objective are developed by the Implementation Plan for the Strategy 2018-2024. These indicators are formulated to support and facilitate the education act and provide decision makers with proper tools to ensure the programmes in the defence study field serve the overall strategic ambition of the academy.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

We can conclude that there is a clear and direct link and coherence between the aims of study programmes, their learning outcomes with the strategic mission, vision and objectives of the MAL.

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

1) Factual situation

The first and second cycle study programmes are performed in compliance with the Description of Study Cycles (Order No. V-1012 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2015) and the Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016).

Table No. 1. Compliance of the program National Security and Defence with the general requirements for first cycle study programmes.

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	210 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	155 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	20 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	20 ECTS

¹ <https://www.lka.lt/strategy-of-the-academy/>

ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 15 ECTS	15 ECTS
Contact hours (including distance contact hours)	No less than 20 % of learning (unless otherwise stated in the descriptor of study field)	1399 hours

Table No. 2. Compliance of the program Defence Studies with general requirements for second cycle study programmes.

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	60 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	not specified
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	35 ECTS
Contact hours (including distance contact hours)	No less than 10 % of learning (unless otherwise stated in the descriptor of study field)	446 hours

The study plans of the field study programmes are presented as an annex to the SER and the curriculum design complies with the legal requirements of Lithuania.

2) *Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The learning outcomes of these two programmes are developed in line with national directives as captured by the Description of Study Cycles (Order No. V-1012 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2015) and the Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016).

The SER describes the *learning outcomes* as *results*, a term that reflects the spirit of the outcomes: what the learner should be able to do and how they should behave at the end of the study programmes. In this context, the learning outcomes are equivalent to the learning domains employed by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility). Specifically, the learning outcomes of the two programmes are grouped by knowledge and its application and skills detailed for research, special, social and personal.

The descriptors are aligned with the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (LTQF)² and the levels of education required for the acquisition of the competences for each

² https://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/LTQF_official_translation.pdf

qualification (levels 6 and 7 respectively). Moreover, in the *National Security and Defence Programme*, the following disciplines are aligned to the corresponding learning areas described by the EU SQF-MILOF: Law of Military Conflict (International Humanitarian Law), Fundamentals of Communication, National Security, and Military Ethics and Psychology.

Annexes 3 and 4 of SER show the conformity of the learning outcomes of both *National Security and Defence Programme* and *Defence Study Programme* with the Study Cycle Corresponding to LTQF Qualification Level VI and VII, respectively. The conformity is exercised by validating the relevant learning outcomes of the programmes to the criteria of complexity, autonomy and variability of activities required by the LTQF. However, the qualifiers used to indicate the level of complexity of the learning outcomes for the *Defence Study Programme* do not always show the intended level. For example, in case of the criterion „Complexity of activities“, the learning outcome defined as „awareness of the political and legal contexts“ or the „ability to plan, implement, and control organisational processes in peace, crisis, and war“ do not express specialised skill at a high level of complexity required by level VII LTQF/EQF.

The award of credits for the study subjects falls in two categories. First category secures the award of 10 credits/ study subject and is measured by the achievement of four learning outcomes in the areas of 1) building knowledge, 2) developing research skills, 3) developing special skills and 4) developing personal skills. In principle, to get 10 credits, students spend 250 hours (70 contact hours and 180 self-study hours), which makes 1 ECTS worth of 25 hours.

A second category envisages the award of 5 credits, measured by the achievement of two to four learning outcomes (SER does not specify in what areas). The same allocation of time applies for this category, with students' workload of 125 study hours.

The conduct in parallel of the military training programme (e.g. leadership development) has an impact on the award of credits although it is assumed that the time spent for training does not count for the ECTS of the corresponding academic study subject (Basics of Leadership and possibly the Internship programme).

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 development of the learning outcomes for the programme subjects and modules in conformity with the overall field study programme aims and intended learning is regulated by an internal procedure mentioned by the SER (Procedure of the Internal Regulations No 33 „Planning and Coordination of the Study Programme Content“).

The outcomes of the study programmes presented in SER Annexes 3 and 4 are detailed in what could be considered subordinated learning outcomes relevant for several programme subjects. The SER does not offer any further details on learning outcomes for the programme subjects, but the self-evaluation team has provided its conclusions in this regard.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The departments responsible for study programme should consider using the most effective methods to ensure the achievement and assessment of the learning outcomes.

Currently, the teaching staff use 1-3 teaching methods for each study subject. The analysis also reveals that the learning outcomes of the programme subjects should specify the tasks (up to 3 tasks for subjects worth of 5 credits and no more than 5 tasks for subjects worth of 10 credits) so that assessment can be conducted properly.

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

In support of the aim of the programme, the *National Security and Defence Programme* delivers two main competences: management of security institutions and prevention of threats to national security. This focus derives from the professional needs of the military officers, who should possess, among others, competencies in strategic planning and management, on the one hand and competencies enabling them to analyse threats to national security and make appropriate decisions for managing these threats.

In case of *National Security and Defence Programme*, the programme subjects facilitate a more in-depth study of the national security and defence issues, focusing primarily on fundamental research. According to the SER, the programme subjects are grouped into three categories: management (public management models, modern management theory decision-making, emergency and risk management); political science (Lithuania's national security and foreign policy, global politics and security); and others (military jurisprudence, research methodology).

The *National Security and Defence Programme* builds naturally on competencies acquired in the first cycle thus ensuring a coherent and strategic development of competencies for military officers and civilians working in the defence field.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

We conclude that the subjects and modules of the field study programmes are consistent and coherent.

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

There are two categories of options for students to personalise their studies. First is that allowing cadets in the *National Security and Defence Programme* to opt for study subjects at a military academy or university of the EU country, under the ERASMUS+ programme. The second category of options include opportunity for electives. Students may choose one specialisation worth of 20 credits, either *management of security institutions* or *prevention of threats to national security*.

The English language is no longer studied in the Academy, since the Ministry of National Defence of Lithuania requires all officers to master it. As far as the foreign languages (other than English) are concerned, the Academy offers students the opportunities to study them in an informal manner.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

We conclude that there are sufficient opportunities for students to personalise their studies in the field of study programmes

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

1) Factual situation

Students attending the *National Security and Defence Programme* have to prepare a thesis (analytical work), in consultation with a supervisor, proving the mastery of the knowledge and skills acquired during the studies in a particular field.

In case of *National Security and Defence Programme* the Master Degree students should prepare a Master's Thesis with the character of a research thesis. They consult the work of other authors and based on their in-depth analysis of the topic, formulate research conclusions and solve both theoretical and practical scientific problems.

For the preparation and defence of their thesis, the Academy relevant staff provides students with methodological and other support necessary to reach the required outcomes and monitors the preparation of the paper. Qualifications committees and a Final Thesis Defence Committee are appointed by the Order of the Commandant of the Academy to monitor intermediate steps of the paper and the final thesis, respectively.

Moreover, the social partners committing the writing of various thesis are involved in the preparation and defence of the Final Thesis, by providing advice and offering internship seats for cadets preparing their Bachelor's Final thesis.

Therefore, the Academy has set clear and transparent procedures for the preparation, monitoring and defence of the final thesis for both bachelor and master degree in the study field. The individual work is carefully guided by supervisors and the interventions of various committees along the way of production ensures quality and that focus is maintained on the proposed topics of research.

The Academy was commissioned in 2021 by the Command Headquarters of the Mechanised Infantry Brigade "Žemaitija" to prepare a bachelor thesis on the topic "Cooperation of Klaipėda Garrison Military Units with the Ministry of Interior and Other Civil Institutions in the Context of General Defence".

At the same time, the Master thesis "Integration of the Principles of Military Operations Management in the Management of Emergencies" was selected to participate in the Best Master's Thesis Competition organised by the Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers.

The responsibility to select the topics for the final theses lies with the teaching staff of the defence study field and social partners, which are related to the organisation of the national defence system and the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The conformity is also monitored throughout the production cycle and at the end by the thesis reviewers.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

We can conclude that the measures taken by the Academy ensure the conformity of the content of the final theses to the defence study field.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The uniqueness of the programmes and the clear link of the defence study field with the needs of the society and social partners.
2. The flexibility of the *Defence Study Programme* allowing the military officers enrolled in the programme freedom of movement, avoiding disrupting the beneficiary's work programme and facilitating a two-way exchange of experience and knowledge between school and work context.
3. The link with the EU SQF-MILOF - a pan-European initiative aimed to facilitate the harmonization of military education and training for officers. Lithuania becomes one of the leading nations in promoting the competences of the European military officer.

(2) Weaknesses:

There were no weakness detected although we do note the following:

1. The formulation of learning outcomes in terms of complexity level, in accordance with the descriptors of the LTQF/ EQF.
2. How the learning outcomes are formulated/reached, at the level of study subjects.
3. The reflection of the interdependencies between topics of academic nature and similar one in the vocational military training (e.g. leadership development).

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

In accordance with the SER and the cited documents, the results of the last three years of the annual evaluation of HEIs' R&D and art activities and results of the last comparative expert evaluation of R&D activities of universities are presented and analysed for the period 2018-2020(2021), as follows:

- formal assessment of research papers for period 2018-2020. The presented data show a steady increase in formal assessment points and an increase in overall scores (Table).
- funds received from R&D projects for international projects totalling EUR 1,046,994 (Annex 5, SER),
- R&D (Arts) contracts commissioned by Ministry of National Defence, totalling approximately EUR 100.000, which is considered by the SER as an increase.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

However, it is assessed that more efforts should be put in increasing the number of international scientific activities, R&D projects and participation at these events, to widen the area for publicity of the results of R&D activities and a more active stance in attracting membership in international committees and expert groups.

Overall, it is assessed that the number of research projects, contracts and papers in the defence study field show an improvement compared with previous years and this show an increasing role for the MAL to contribute in joint research projects with their expertise and support the Ministry of National Defence with research products of interest.

MAL is mandated by law (i.e. Organisation of the National Defence System and Military Service of the Republic of Lithuania), to conduct *scientific research relevant to the National Defence System and of significance to national security and defence*. The topics to be addressed result from consultation with stakeholders in the National Defence System taking into account latest scientific trends.

In accordance with SER, Ministry of Defence commissioned MAL to conduct research under the heading of *continuous research and experimental development*. At the moment of evaluation, the MAL completed 4 projects and continue to be involved in other 8 projects to be finalised by 2023 (Annex 6, SER).

In 2021, the MAL established so called Research Group with the purpose to conduct R&D relevant to the National Defence System. More specifically, this group ever since has been implementing *a study-supporting research programme "Security and Defence of Small States"*, which combines 5 study-supporting projects (Annex 7, SER). Members of the research group are lecturers teaching at the corresponding study programmes and researchers. The topics originates out of their area of interest and expertise and the results are returned in the modules and subject they teach.

Considering all of these, it is appreciated that research, applied science and art activities carried out by the MAL are directly related to the defence study field.

The MAL is a member of several international association with which they cooperate regularly on a broad area of topics. These are the International Association of Military Academies (IAMA), the International Society of Military Sciences (ISMS) and other national and international partners in the implementation of research projects.

The MAL is also active in organising or contributing to scientific conferences with lecturers and researchers either as members of scientific committees or as moderators and speakers. The most cited conferences where defence study-related topics are the most common or are included in the events portfolio, are: the Baltic Military Conference, the International Research and Practice Conference on Changes in Public Governance, the International Research Forum "Networking on Sustainable Security in a Dynamic Environment and the International Research Conference "Challenges to National Defence in Contemporary Geopolitical Situation.

The MAL has a constant and active presence at scientific events in the field of defence study field where cooperation with external partners is a major objective.

The MAL plans the research activities at both individually and collective levels. Individual researchers and lecturers are subject of individual annual activity plans, in which research tasks should amount for 30-50 % of the total activity. In terms of collective research activity, this is planned as part of research groups 'planning as described above. Funding for research comes from multiple sources, such as internal funds of the MAL, funds from the Ministry of Defence's R&D for commissioned research and funds from competition-based projects.

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

1) Factual situation

Teaching staff build their knowledge base on the results of research they conduct in various field, which are linked to the defence study field and validated with the social partners such as the Ministry of National Defence. The MAL is well connected to the latest trends analysed by NATO and the EU in the area of security and defence like NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme; NATO Strategic Concepts, 2020 or the EU programme Horizon Europe 2021-2027.

The progress in conceptual development and technological advance promoted by these fora is then reflected by the teaching staff that update their lessons and study plans accordingly and regularly. Students are well aware of the importance of studying up-to-date information and are motivated to do so by the assessment criteria/ rubric that credits with the highest scores references to recent sources of information.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

We conclude that there are sufficient links between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology.

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 MAL uses and suggests several methods by which students are encouraged to get involved in scientific activities. These include the *study of the compulsory and supplementary literature of the subjects (modules)*, taking part in the *scientific conferences, presentations of the results of scientific projects and other scientific events organised by the MAL*, as well as by *independently engaging in scientific research*, or by *carrying out assignments in individual subjects of the programme*.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

We recognise the opportunities for students to become involved in scientific activities but also would be appreciated an with regard to numbers and percentage of students participating in scientific activities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The increasing participation and interests of the MAL teaching staff, researchers and students to participate in national and international research projects and conferences.
2. The clear link between the planned and conducted research activities and the latest scientific trends and needs of the social partners.
3. Access to a well-established funding system for research leading to the production of high-level publications and contribution to international conferences.

(2) Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses detected.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

1) Factual situation

Admission requirements are understandable and accessible. In the meetings it was confirmed that the admission process is clear and it was easy to find any information. According to the data provided in SER, and based on the interviews, it can be easily confirmed that the competition entering this programme is high. The number of entrants is increasing, but only 28 candidates were accepted in 2021 in the first cycle and 11 in the second cycle. At the same time, the admission number is increasing. Thus, the programme could be defined as well-founded and clear for every prospective student.

The admission requirements are easily found in the Rules of Admission, which are published on the main webpage.

Various factors were taken into account in the selection of the candidates for the first cycle (exams, medical tests and a motivational interview). During the interview, the following factors are examined:

- factors influencing the choice of the career section and the experience in the framework of the National Defence System;
- personal qualities that may influence the studies at the MAL and the service in the Lithuanian Armed Forces;
- ethical principles ;
- future plans.

During the first phase of their training, candidates can still change their choice and choose another programme if there are enough places available. This only enhances the motivation of the selected candidates.

For the second cycle of the Defence Studies programme, there are also conditions for starting the training. Here too, selection takes place on the basis of various criteria and rankings, and admitted candidates are selected on the basis of competition results and competition scores. Nevertheless, the competition for this training is open to a wide range of possible candidates among members of the professional military service, volunteer military personnel, civil servants and employees of the National Defence System working on the basis of employment contracts, as well as civil servants of other state institutions in accordance with existing agreements.

The number of candidates for the first cycle is increasing by about 10% every year, but still the number of selected candidates remains on a relative low side with 46 signed contracts in 2020 and 28 signed contracts in 2021. An explanation for this can be found in the selection and evaluation process before candidates are admitted. 30-35% are not selected for medical reasons or because they do not meet the physical requirements and are not fit for military service. Also in the results of the exams, it was found that some of the candidates did not achieve the required score and were therefore excluded from the competition.

For the 2nd cycle, motivation plays a major role and candidates are already familiar with the programme from the 1st cycle, which causes relatively fewer problems in selection.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania sets the bar relatively high for the selection of candidates in both cycles. Nevertheless, the selection process is not different when compared to similar institutions abroad. After all, the specific nature of the job requires healthy young people who are physically fit. The intellectual capacities of the candidates are also adequately measured. The whole process is clearly described and perfectly understandable for future candidates. The competitive process allows us to start with the best candidates in both cycles. A great added value for the first cycle is the interview in which the motivation of the candidates is assessed.

All this ensures that out of the increasing number of candidates, not necessarily more future students are selected due to medical, physical and intellectual deficiencies. On the other hand, one might also expect that this fairly accurate and thorough selection process would lead to less attrition among students, which is apparently not the case. Additional research on this attrition could lead to a greater return on investment (effort put into the selection of candidates compared to graduating students).

In the 2nd cycle, all this plays a much smaller role. The candidates are familiar with the 1st cycle and clearly show with their candidature that they are motivated to start this study.

All in all, one can conclude that the selection process is known, strict but also has an added value for the armed forces and is largely similar to the selection process in military institutions in other states. The selection process is in line with the selection process in other military institutions for both cycles.

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

Persons (citizens of the Republic of Lithuania) that have completed their education in foreign institutions or under the educational programmes of international organisations are admitted to study in the study programmes of the MAL in the field of Public Security if they fulfil the necessary criteria

During the analysed period there were no such persons that enrolled in any of the two study programmes who had completed their education in foreign institutions.

Recognition of partial study results is governed by a process based on an internal regulation. Recognition of partial studies is managed by the Study Department. The results of studies shall be credited that, upon receipt of an academic certificate from the higher education institution where the student completed his/her studies, will credit the results of the study.

During the analysed period there were no cases of crediting of partial study results obtained abroad on the basis of non-harmonised study content.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The recognition of full or partial results of studies is based on an internal procedure and is similar to the procedure in other academic institutions. So far, there have been no such cases and it is impossible to determine whether there are any shortcomings in

the procedure. This problem is similar to the problems in other military institutions that restrict the access to the program to national citizens.

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

1) Factual situation

The MAL has a clear policy on student mobility. If this was still a shortcoming in the previous accreditation, this problem has now largely been solved. A great effort has been made to give students the opportunity to participate in semesters abroad and this since the 2nd semester of the academic year 2019-2020. Covid has temporarily reduced the number of mobilities or even stopped the process. Soon the thread was picked up and the exchanges with partner institutions, including Theresan Military Academy (Austria), Royal Military Academy of Belgium, Saint-Cyr Military Academy (France), were restarted. All this has led to the fact that since the 1st semester of 2020 there are more candidates than the academy can admit.

The MAL has made a conscious decision to use the European Initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by Erasmus (EMILYO) network, which was approved by the Council of the European Union in 2008 and is curated by the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). This allows the institution to look for qualitative partners (instead of aiming for quantity). This allows students to find institutions where they can combine their university studies with the necessary military and sports training.

Within the MAL there is a selection process for those students who want to go on Erasmus (twice a year). The selection process is based on the assessment of: compatibility between the study/research plan of the foreign higher education institution and the study programme of the MAL; the cadet's academic performance; good knowledge of the foreign language in which the subjects will be taught; the cadet's motivation; the cadet's activity, and the evaluation of the commander.

In order to ensure the organisation of international experience during partial studies and full credit of the study results abroad, the MAL has reorganised its Bachelor's degree studies so that all cadets are provided with an optional one-semester duration mobility window during the third academic year.

Students can leave for a period of 3 months (for studies) whereby studies abroad is considered an integrated part of the study programme (ECTS). Credits and learning outcomes are recognised and credited according to a pre-agreed Learning Agreement. The Learning Agreement is negotiated with participation of the cadet, the Study Department and the Head of the study programme or for 2 months (in the framework of research for their thesis).

The figures clearly show that there is a clear increase in the mobility of the students.

The Number of Cadets who have left for partial studies at Higher Education Institutions Abroad.

NS&D ERASMUS+		Numbers of NS&D course III cadets	Total number of ERASMUS+ cadets	Number of course III cadets
2019	9		19	50

2020	6	19	26	49
2021	8	21	20	57

ESDC and Emilyo also encourage short exchanges, modules. The MAL has taken advantage of this to allow students to participate in these modules, to make its own programme modular (with subjects of 5 or 10 ECTS) and to develop and offer common modules itself (of Language Learning and Law of Military Conflict, and in 2022 modules of Military Ethics and Communication and Defence Economics).

A lot of attention is also paid to incoming students. Foreign students are fully integrated into the functioning of the MAL and follow the same regime as Lithuanian students. The modules selected by the foreign students are taught in English and external lecturers are sought for these modules.

The numbers of incoming students have also increased in recent years.

Period	First cycle studies	Second cycle studies
2018/2019	6	
2019/2020	12	3
2020/2021	17	

Up-to-date information on study exchanges is published on the website <https://www.lka.lt/kariunu-studiju-mobilumas/>

The implementation of the second cycle Defence studies programme has been launched on a part-time study basis. As stated in the SER the Academy faces challenges with the mobility of the students studying on a part-time basis. During the period under analysis, the MAL doesn't send any DS students for part-time studies to higher education institutions abroad, but has been inviting foreign lecturers to deliver lectures at the MAL.

There were no second cycle students leaving for partial studies abroad during the reported period.

2) *Expert judgement/indicator analysis*

The MAL has clearly made a great effort to work on academic mobilities. The number of students leaving each year is increasing (while a competition for leaving is being created), there is a solid selection process, the number of incoming students is also increasing while a number of common modules have been developed in the framework of Emilyo. Much attention is paid to the integration of incoming students. Foreign lecturers are also invited for guest lectures, where possible.

The MAL can therefore be seen as an example of an institution that in a relatively short period of time has built up a solid reputation as a reliable partner for the other institutions in the Emilyo network. The fact that a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach was used in the selection of the partners with whom exchanges were

initiated also shows that there was a thorough reflection on the purpose and added value of the exchanges.

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 MAL provides all the necessary support that students can expect. Students in the bachelor programme receive all the necessary academic, financial, psychological and administrative support they need during their studies. This also applies, in part, to students in the 2nd cycle who can make use of the library, classrooms and dormitory facilities, among other things, if necessary during their studies. Emergency medical care is also provided and students have access to a psychologist if they have personal problems.

The SER states that students have free access to online scientific databases and that the MAL constantly updates the library stocks, and takes care of the means and instruments required for teaching and learning, as well as IT infrastructure.

The MAL also provides opportunities for cadets to participate in scientific, cultural, sports, and social activities.

Information about the support is available to the cadets through various means of communication (e-mail, mano.lka.lt, Moodle platform, etc.), lecturers, the Cadet Battalion, the Study Department, and other administrative staff.

There is a good support system available for students based on SER and the interviews. All students, from both cycles, underlined the quality of the support they received from the administration, the library and the academics.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

All the necessary support is in place and the various meetings and interviews have shown that, on the one hand, the MAL as an organisation clearly wants to work on this and that, on the other hand, the students of the various cycles greatly appreciate all this effort.

Students can count on a lot of understanding from administration and academics when they have problems with the planning of their tests for example. The relationship between teaching staff, administration and students is excellent, which is probably due to the relatively small number of students in the Academy.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

1) Factual situation

The students gradually go through a learning process as mentioned in the SER. The MAL is aware of possible adjustment problems of young candidate soldiers who end up in a boarding school system with all its support. In this respect, there is a big role for the academic and the administration. Interviews and meetings show that this process is running smoothly. There is enough room for guidance, both as a group by passing on all the necessary information with regard to, for example, study choices and Erasmus exchanges and on an individual level by the teachers in a certain domain. As much information as possible is passed on to the students through all possible channels.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The small scale of the Academy and the small student groups ensure that the guidance of students can be guaranteed up to the highest level. Individual teachers and the administration are able to guide the students very well during the whole learning process. This is clearly one of the strengths of the MAL and also one of the aspects that is consciously put in the picture.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The rigorous selection process allows starting with the most suitable candidates and this in both cycles.
2. The material and moral support is one of the strengths of the MAL. Students are individually coached in a very good way. Students are also informed through all kinds of channels and their courses can be adjusted if necessary.
3. The results are visible in the increasing number of incoming students and in the competition between the MAL students to be able to leave for carefully selected partner institutions.

(2) Weaknesses:

There were no weakness detected.

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

The choice of modularity, as described in the SER, has some advantages but also some disadvantages. As mentioned, the content of the courses does not differ from the conventional way of teaching but is taught in an intensive way. The MAL introduced the process carefully and paid sufficient attention to the guidance of the teachers (including the workload for the students) and to the feedback from the students (which was predominantly positive). The intensive knowledge accumulation and skill building leads to better quantitative results and allows for a deeper focus according to the survey. On the other hand, it was mentioned in fairness that the sustainability of the module study outcomes has not yet been validated by the Academy's Study Monitoring System. The challenge of module-based studies is the participation of cadets and lecturers which should also be monitored if possible.

Different learning and evaluation methods were identified and applied. The learning methods include analysis of scientific sources, exercises, seminars, conference type seminars or reporting, team assignments (projects), imitation of activities (simulations) and visits to organisations or visits by representatives of organisations.

The workload for the students is calculated and there is evaluation both according to established criteria, i.e. pre-defined assessment criteria which are linked to assessment levels (scores) and on the basis of a formative assessment, which is based on the feedback from the lecturer and provides the cadet with an opportunity for continuous improvement.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The introduction of a modular system is thoroughly prepared and well monitored. The advantage of such a system is that overlaps can be avoided and themes and/or course content can be better matched. In the future, it may also be possible to introduce more flexible learning pathways if desired. Modular education also strengthens the autonomy and self-regulation of students. Student feedback on the outcome of this choice is essential and was also included in the assessment. On the other hand, there seems to be little innovation in the learning and assessment methods that could improve or strengthen the autonomy and self-regulation of students. Systems of Deep Learning or the use of EdTech can offer a solution here but were not mentioned. The evaluation process within the MAL is also completely internal by using the feedback of the students, the guidance of the teachers and the discussion of the results in the Academy's Study Monitoring System. Working with external reviewers at the level of the system or even at the level of the different courses can only improve the follow-up of the whole process. At that point, the feedback from the students, a teacher self-evaluation, an external evaluation and an assessment by the Academy's Study Monitoring System are used to come up with a guideline for improvement.

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 SER, *"MAL study facilities are partially adapted for students with special needs, but all cadets and public security students are members of the armed forces, who are subject to special and high demands in terms of their physical and emotional condition."* Everything is also in place to provide students with adequate support should they encounter problems of any kind.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Like many other military academies, the MAL is exceptionally confronted with students with special needs. The thorough guidance and small scale of the MAL also allows for a very fast reaction and, if necessary, taking the right actions to make the students concerned succeed in their studies. This is one of the strengths of the MAL and of military institutions in general.

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

At the level of the MAL there is a system of feedback and evaluation of the courses involving students and teachers. The whole process takes place internally on the basis of existing procedures. As stated in the SER, the quality of studies is monitored by the Study Programme Committee. It is then the Committee that will take the necessary decisions on the improvement of the organisation of the study process in response to

the results of the feedback. The individual assessment of the students is done in the different courses they participate in as mentioned above.

The monitoring of students' study progress is performed by the Study Department, which collects and structures the results of surveys.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

A revision of the self-evaluation as such is not strictly speaking necessary but can be done to improve the quality of the treatment. The follow-up of the individual students is largely linked to the intensive counselling that already exists in the MAL.

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

1) Factual situation

Students of the MAL are 100% employed in the armed forces. Figures on employment over the whole career are available but were not mentioned in the SER. Feedback from the organisation 1 year after the graduates are employed is used in the review process of the training.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Like other military academies abroad, the MAL is uniquely positioned to train staff for one organisation and receive feedback from that organisation. This way of working ensures a high professional level of these personnel who are thoroughly prepared for their future positions.

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

1) Factual situation

At the level of the forces and at the level of the MAL, there are many procedures and guidelines relating to the Principles and Measures for Ensuring Academic Integrity, Tolerance, and Non-Discrimination. An important document for the MAL in this regard is the Code of Ethics which not only focuses on the principles of academic ethics and the development of a uniform concept of academic ethics at the MAL but also on the promotion of ethical behaviour and the prevention of violations of academic ethics as well as responding to them in an appropriate manner. The Code of Ethics lists the fundamental principles of ethical behaviour, such as honesty, fairness, trust, respect, responsibility and equality. The Code of Academic Ethics contains a detailed description of behaviours that violate academic ethics and measures to ensure ethical behaviour as stated in the SER. Other documents related to the subject are MAL's Procedure for the Assessment of Study Results and the Methodological Guidelines for the Preparation of Final Theses and Other Written Assignments.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

All violations are handled by the Ethics Committee.

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 MAL has a procedure relating to appeals and complaints (Submission and Handling of Appeals), approved by Decision No V-427 of the Head of the MAL on 18 June 2021. This procedure describes the essential steps for handling a complaint or appeal.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Just as for ethical issues, there is regulation for non-ethical issues. Since rules and their application are often based on, or comparable to, case law, it is only natural that an appeal procedure exists that allows students to formulate statements related to their study process. However, no appeals or complaints have been reported.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The modular system offers many advantages, as evidenced by the positive feedback from the students during the meetings and interviews. The different learning and evaluation methods together with good supervision also allow for timely intervention.
2. The training allows everyone who succeeds to start his career without the need to postulate for even a single day of unemployment. Often, this can even lead to life-long employment.
3. The existence of a Code of Ethics is an absolute added value to guide the behaviour of young students in the right direction with a clear link to their future professional career.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses reported.

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 HEI has 18 teaching staff for the first cycle and 10 for the second cycle. More than 50% of the study field subjects are taught by scientific scholars. Both degree programmes are scientific degrees. The Academy also relies on military instructors given the nature of defence academy and its students. Given their military service, these staff have the requisite professional experience. The number of professors teaching on the first and second cycle meets the 20% threshold for professors teaching.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The institution provided data on the permanent teaching staff including those that were part-time who have been employed for at least 3 years. This data was provided in the SER and follow-up questions were asked about the teaching areas of staff and how this related to the curriculum but also how this was related to their area of research. The HEI was found to meet their obligations under legislation. The HEI is limited by the number of students (cadets) that it is allowed to take with no more than 110 cadets at

any one time. Given this, the student-staff ration is very appropriate at the ratio is 18:82 or 4.56 cadets per 1 lecturer in the first cycle and the ratio is 10:21 or 2.1 students per 1 lecturer in the second cycle. The academic staff are represented by 5 broad study areas and the Academy has two research centres. The panel found that the study areas and the research centres offered an important vehicle for research culture for staff and students. The research staff have been dynamic in their collaborations and visiting positions throughout Europe. Prior to Covid, the Academy hosted visiting researchers. Furthermore, the Academy's appointment process meets the Law on Science and Higher Education mandating appointments through competition for all new lecturer appointments. The SER indicates that all teaching staff have at least B2 level in English.

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

Academic mobility has been impacted by the Covid virus from 2020. However, prior to this, there was considerable mobility through Erasmus+ and through roles in the government institutes in Lithuania.

Below is the reported number of mobility visits from SER p.55:

Year	Teaching	Learning
2017	2	4
2018	2	6
2019	11	12

We can see that year 2019 was a good year for staff mobility though it was cut short by the Covid virus and mobility to date of the virtual site visit remains limited.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Academic mobility has been a corner stone of the programme and this was verified in the questions put to academic staff in the virtual site visit. It is especially relevant within the context of NATO defence education but also a general best practice approach to teaching and learning as well as research. While Covid has disrupted mobility, we would be very keen to see academic mobility begin to be reintroduced at the earliest time.

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

1) Factual situation

Teaching skills are improved through a centralised Academy approach to teaching qualification and performance. Research skills are developed largely within the research community of the departments but also through international collaborations and engagements such as through workshops, conferences, and plenaries.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The approach use here is similar to other universities in Europe where teaching skills are centrally developed and evaluated where research skills are considered to be disciplinary and internationally determined. Since 2019, teaching skill development has been maintained though we should appreciate that academic mobility is an important part of teaching development. Nevertheless, teaching skills development remains high on the agenda. Research skills training has been limited as has been for everyone throughout the pandemic.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Centralised teaching skills development service for academic staff.
2. The promotion of academic mobility prior to the pandemic.
3. The continued consideration for academic mobility for teaching and learning as well as for research is still an important, yet currently disrupted, area.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were detected.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Study field learning facilities and resources should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

3.6.1. Evaluation of the suitability and adequacy of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process

1) Factual situation

Physical: Teaching and student study space is adequate for the education of students as per the SER. However, given the site visit was virtual, it is difficult to validate this, though one member of the expert panel has been a part of another visit in 2016 where teaching space was shown.

Informational: Considerable progress has been made in developing the informational resources for students. The library services have contributed greatly to the development of online resources for academic and public security resources.

Financial: the support for students, like academic staff, has been lessened due to the inability to be mobile during the pandemic. Support for students remains for mobility and learning needs.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Overall, the Military academy continues to support student learning across physical, informational, and financial areas. The one area that has been highlighted has been the need for remote and mobile access to resources.

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

1) Factual situation

According to the SER, The planning and upgrading of resources has been carried out from 2015 to 2019 with EUR 3.85 million for a renovated auditorium. A further EUR 0.226 million has been used to renovate barracks. There is a further plan to invest in distance learning/blended learning facilities. The SER does not detail the budget for this or the planning stage.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The military academy continues to invest in its student spaces from learning and living. The virtual site visit did not allow for a detailed discussion of planned renovations or building. Student and staff focus was particularly on online learning which is serviced well by the library.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Study space continues to improve.
2. Library support for online resources continues to improve.
3. Students feel catered for in relation to the resources provided to them to study.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were detected.

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 Academy has an internal evaluation system that is based on three levels of feedback: subject level, program level and institutional level. Students take part in providing feedback by filling in a subject survey at the end of every course, that is anonymous and in addition to this survey, students have annual meetings to discuss the program with the staff. Teaching staff is being assessed annually by having a meeting with the Head of the Programme Leader, who if needed assists the teacher to improve or update the program of their subject.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on SER and the interviews, the procedures of the internal evaluation were confirmed. In addition to assistance from the Head of the Programme Leader if there was a problem indicated with the content of the subject, Master program teachers can improve their skills by participating in either scientific group courses or centralised group courses. SER has emphasized that the priority is given to the strategy of quality improvement of the studies at MAL (p. 62). The strategy is based on the feedback received from students, recommendations prepared by Secretariat of the Commandment of MAL, and the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system. However, the internal quality assurance system is not fully implemented and functioning, as students have expressed concern about the usage of their feedback. The interview has revealed that students are not informed about where does the feedback collected from them go or if it is taken into consideration.

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

1) Factual situation

MAL maintains a good relationship with its alumni and stakeholders, which is based on continuous communication. Having both parties in close contact with MAL helps to ensure necessary improvements and development of the study programs to prepare professionals that would meet criteria to be included in the bodies of Lithuanian Armed Forces and The Ministry of National Defence. Furthermore, the students of the Academy are already working, and they incorporate their studies into their career advancement, which means that the students are able to apply the knowledge gained in the academy at their job placement simultaneously and see potential gaps in knowledge and skills provided in their chosen study program. Stakeholders are also included in activities of Study Program Committee to help ensure the quality of the studies at MAL.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The information on the Stakeholders and students' effective involvement in the internal quality assurance provided in SER and the information collected during the interviews was coherent. The representative from the Ministry of National Defence emphasized professionalism of the students and the importance of the professionals receiving higher education, which allows them better to adapt to working in the institution. Moreover, students who have been studying at MAL having a few years gap between their bachelor's and master's have mentioned that the improvement and the progress of the studies is visible and that it meets their standards of good quality education. Stakeholders confirmed that the Academy contacts them on regular bases in order to find out what are the possible areas of improvement of their study programs.

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 information about the studies is available on the MAL's webpage and several other webpages that provide information regarding the study programs and admissions (www.aikos.lt; www.lka.lt). The assessment of the Academy itself can be found on their webpage (<https://www.lka.lt/akademijos-akreditacija/>). While evaluation and improvement processes are carried out withing the Academy and it is taken care of by Study Program Committee, that collects the feedback from the students and teachers and is analyzed, summarized and presented to the Administration. Later the results of the feedback are shared with the teachers and if needed the improvements of the study subjects are implemented.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Interviews with administration, teaching staff and students show that the feedback is indeed being collected, and the teachers do have options on how to improve their subjects' contents or their personal skills if needed. However, it is still not fully clear how to what extent the feedback is actually used to improve the programs and if it passes further besides being collected and evaluated by the Study Program Committee.

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 information provided in SER of student's opinion about the quality of the studies at MAL is evidently very positive. Tables 21, 22, and 23 in SER (p. 65) has shown the survey results that were collected from the students, claiming that students are very happy with the quality of their studies, they would recommend the studies to a friend or a colleague, evaluations of the study subjects were scored high as well as the evaluations of sources of information of the studies always having more than 50% of students giving the evaluation of 'excellent'.

2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During the interviews students have confirmed SER statements, as they were happy with the quality of the studies, how practical the teaching was. The students also repeatedly mentioned that due to flexibility of the master's program they are able to study and work at the same time, they receive a lot of support from the teachers and administration, and ability to synchronize studying and working allows them to see the importance of knowledge and skills learned at MAL before fully graduating the program.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Students' satisfaction with study quality.
2. Effective involvement of stakeholders and graduates in study program improvement.
3. Students acknowledge the practicality of the studies they receive at MAL.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses detected.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

- The MAL excels in the support it provides to its students. Students are excellently selected, guided and supported by both academic staff and administration. The relatively high attrition rate remains a final point of work, but this does not take away from the fact that the MAL is already an excellent example of how HEI can support their students. What also stands out is how the MAL pays attention to internationalisation. Mobilities are encouraged for both incoming and outgoing staff and students. This makes the MAL one of the reliable partners within the EMILYO framework.

- The adoption of the principles and values of the EU officer competence profile by linking the programmes to Military Erasmus initiative and referencing their learning outcomes to Sectoral Qualifications Framework-Military Officer Profession, making Lithuania a promoter of these initiatives at EU level.

-Library resources and scholarly sources have greatly improved, providing for a comparable experience and opportunity for students.

-Encouraged by the new teaching suites and plans for further teaching space.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS*

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To formulate learning outcomes in terms of complexity level, in accordance with the descriptors of the LTQF/EQF. 2. Consider determining learning outcomes to be formulated/reached, at the level of study subjects. 3. Reflect of the interdependencies between topics of academic nature and similar one in the vocational military training (e.g. leadership development).
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage teaching staff to conduct research in their areas of expertise at the expense of projects directed by the MAL on personnel. 2. Provide motivation for students and cadets to publish and participate in joint research projects with teaching staff.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a road map to return to mobility when possible to do so. 2. Review attrition rates and consider greater student support for those likely to abandon.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage feedback from graduates beyond 12 months. Consider a committee for alumni and employers to feedback into the programmes. 2. Promote autonomy and self-regulation through adapted work forms and evaluations for greater student performance and outcomes.
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Register doctoral studies in the field of Defence or joint doctoral studies in the field of Public Security with other universities.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the supply of mobile resource for cadets for access to learning environments and resources.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform students about how their feedback is used in internal quality assurance. 2. Review the internal quality assurance system for greater efficacy.

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

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the Defence field studies at General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania:

The panel has concluded that aim of the programme corresponds to the major objectives of the Academy, and the content of the programme is in accordance with the professional requirements of the military system and the public needs. In general, the study programme follows the principles of the Bologna Process and other provisions of the European Higher Education Area.

The programme is divided into levels and modules, with subject volume calculated in study hours, aim of the subjects is described and general study results are defined. The quality and style of different modules in the study programme is relatively consistent. Modules are clearly formulated though the panel believed that module level learning outcomes should be generated alongside programme level learning outcomes. As a result, the study programme illustrates imprecision in how learning outcomes are defined and assessed.

The panel would like to congratulate the Academy on how it has responded to the pandemic with impact on staff and student mobility as well as online learning to the level never planned. While the Academy has a distinct type of student that is operational as members of the Armed Forces of Lithuania, the Academy has still developed considerable online and library resources to maintain student learning and progress. We recommend that a plan for post-pandemic learning and mobility should progress with a degree of urgency.

Lecturing staff have shown a great satisfaction with the Academy, colleagues and the students. The study programme is provided by the staff who meet legal requirements (number of PhD holders, those outside academy, percentage of Professors, etc.), as well as those before 2020 who were foreign lecturers participating in the teaching process. Furthermore, based on the documentation provided, permanent academic staff are qualified in the study field, having adequate scientific, pedagogical, and practical experience. All staff have extensive professional experience.

Attention is paid to lecturers' professional development, including participation in scientific conferences. There is some evidence that the institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff, but there was no evidence for training courses in methodology for outcome – based curricula. None of the participants confirmed participation in any training related to development or assessment of learning outcomes.

Academic staff are generally involved in research directly related to the study programme and they participate in research activities to adequate extent. Teaching and research are clearly linked – academic staff especially in military areas produce new textbooks, results of research are integrated into the studies, and students are involved in research activities. It was noted in the SER that due to funding opportunities; researchers are at times required to find areas of research that go beyond the scholarly remit of the Academy. Greater international collaboration,

especially between defence academies, would be able to support researchers staying within the remit of the Academy.

The Academy has proper teaching facilities and library for the implementation of the study programme. The premises for studies are adequate both in their size and in quality, especially given the renovation of auditoria. The library offers both the required scholastic materials and the electronic materials that students would need for their regular study. The only concern raised by the SER and the meeting with cadets was the lack of mobile devices that would allow them to engage learning resources online and while mobile. Finally, the teaching and learning equipment is appropriate for student results as well as for teaching staff use.

The library of the Academy is well equipped and teaching materials, including textbooks, books, databases, and periodicals, are adequate and accessible to students both electronically and in the library.

Students are motivated and satisfied with the programme and its benefits of being unique, related to the public and labour market demands. Admission requirements are understandable and accessible. Concern was raised by the 10% attrition rate. This leads to a question as to whether there is a problem in admissions or in student support.

Many students mentioned during the interview that they are overloaded with different responsibilities and lack time. As the programme is part-time, all students have their work, duties, and studies as a part of their career. For that reason, it is hard for students to find time to be actively involved in other additional activities. Understandably, students have not been actively encouraged to participate in any supplementary research activities besides the Master thesis. During the study period, students are allowed to go abroad on the missions, but they must undertake their examinations, or suspend. While the time and workload issues were raised by the students, none raised a concern about the ability to make the most of the learning environment and process.

All graduates are almost fully employed in the military area or similar, and the programme is part of their further officer career. Professional activities of most graduates meet the programme providers' expectations. However, it is notable that training for cadets who all will have to negotiate civilian life at one point does not appear to be a part of the curriculum or career support.

A complex assessment of the study programme quality is performed based on the study programme assessment methodology. The programme's objectives and learning outcomes are discussed with lecturers and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly analysed based on SER.

Feedback is collected from students after every course by filling in the questionnaires, but it is not clearly defined if or how the feedback is used to improve the programme. Also, data about feedback analyses are not provided in the SER. Based on interviews, a bigger improvement will be made in the coming academic year in the implementation of student feedback, but the interviewees could not define any concrete action for that.

The quality assurance of the study programme is ensured by the programme partners as they participate in its development, evaluation and improvement of the programme.

It has not been possible to determine exactly to what extent the stakeholders were involved in the improvement of the programme.

In conclusion, the Academy is well-functioning higher education institution, which is able to continue the implementation of the Bachelor's and Master's Degree Study Programmes in Public Security and Defence. Still, there are several areas of improvement, which are described in the report and listed above as recommendations to the management and staff responsible for the programme development.

Expert panel leader

Prof. Dr. David J. Galbreath