



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of REHABILITATION
at Lithuanian Sports University

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Physiotherapy	Physiotherapy
State code	6121GX003	6211GX002
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies, 4 years	Full-time studies, 2 years Part-time studies, 2,5 years
Credit volume	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Health Sciences, Physiotherapist	Master of Health Sciences, Physiotherapist
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian, English
Minimum education required	Secondary education	University bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation, qualification of a Physiotherapist
Registration date of the study programme	19 May 1997	19 May 1997

Title of the study programme	Adapted Physical Activity
State code	6211GX001
Type of studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies, 2 years
Credit volume	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Master of Health Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English
Minimum education required	Bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation, Sports, Education or its equivalent
Registration date of the study programme	19 May 1997

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluations of study fields in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are based on the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport on 17 July 2019, Order No. V-835, and are carried out according to the procedure outlined in the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) on 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 (SER) prepared by HEI*; 2) *site visit of the expert panel to the HEI*; 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 the 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 is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on 8 November 2022.

Prof. dr. Sandra Buttigieg (panel chairperson), *Professor and Head of Department of Health Services Management, Faculty of Health Science, University of Malta (Malta);*

Prof. dr. Hector Tsang, *Head of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Hong Kong);*

Prof. dr. Luigi Tesio, *Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, School of Medicine Milano (Italy);*

Ms Jurgita Veliulytė, *Head of Dep. of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy at the Valakupių Rehabilitation center (Lithuania);*

Ms Emilija Karaseva, *a student in the field of Architecture, Kaunas Technological university (Lithuania).*

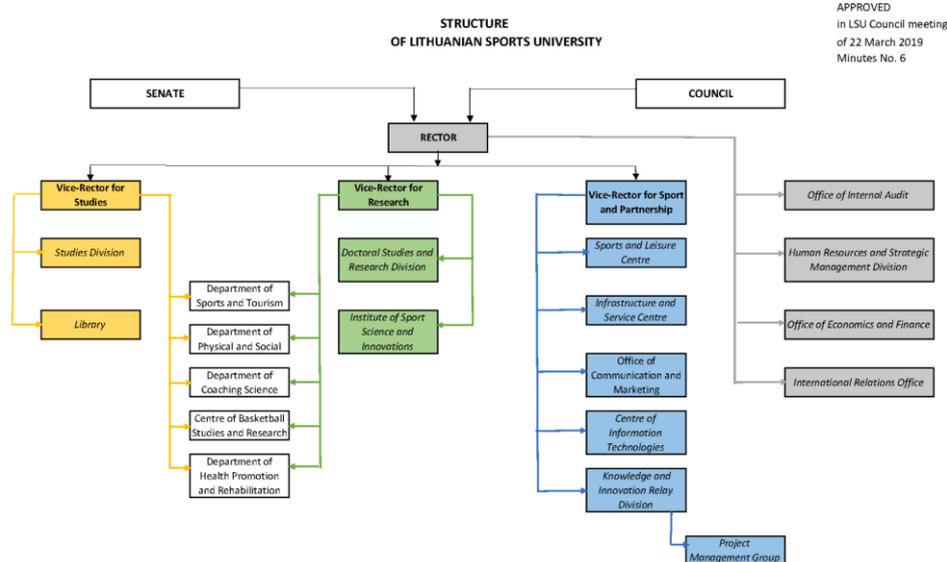
1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the SER 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.	Quality Assurance Manual
2.	
3.	

1.4. BACKGROUND OF REHABILITATION FIELD STUDIES AT LITHUANIAN SPORTS UNIVERSITY

Lithuanian Sports University (LSU) was founded in 1934, as a specialised public higher education institution, and with a focus on sport, leisure and health sciences. The structure of LSU is as illustrated in the figure below.



LSU has four departments: Department of Sports and Tourism, Department of Physical and Social Education, Department of Coaching Science, Department of Health Promotion and Rehabilitation, one Institute: Institute of Sport Science and Innovations, and one Centre: Centre of Basketball Studies and Research.

LSU offers eighteen degree study programmes at all three study cycles (6 undergraduate, 10 Master's and 2 PhD), mainly in sport science. Starting with the enrollment of 100 students, LSU has developed and expanded over the years and decades into an institution with nearly 2000 students.

Current student population is as follows:

Faculty	Undergraduate students	Master students	Doctoral students	Total:
Sports Biomedicine	940	136	25	1101
Sports Education	658	100	19	777
Total:				1878

Source: LSU Website

Some of the LSU graduates are distinguished scientists, world-renowned coaches, famous athletes, and prominent public figures.

With its mission to contribute to the sustainable development of society through international-level research and academic excellence, LSU is a leading academic and research centre in sports science in the Baltic Sea region. The main focus on sports science has enabled the university to interconnect studies, research and practice. According to SER (p. 5), LSU is the “only” university in Lithuania that conducts research and studies in all major fields of sports and health. It prides itself in preparing top-level professionals mainly in sports, physical education, and in social rehabilitation of people with disabilities, as well as in conducting research-based studies in the fields of biology, rehabilitation, management, pedagogy, and sports.

There are two previous external evaluations that took place in 2014: one for first cycle Bachelor programme in Adapted Physical Activity and one for second cycle Master programme in Physiotherapy.

The Bachelor programme in Adapted Physical Activity (APA) was accredited for 3 years in view of two evaluation areas, namely programme aims and learning outcomes, and curriculum design scoring satisfactory rather than good as the other evaluation areas. APA is now offered as a second cycle Master programme and not as a first cycle Bachelor programme.

The information pack has provided us with an external evaluation for the second cycle Master programme in Physiotherapy and not for first cycle Bachelor programme in Physiotherapy. This was evaluated positively with recommendations to clarify specialisation in specific fields in physiotherapy as regards orientation and research. It was also recommended to deepen knowledge in foreign languages.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Rehabilitation study field and *first cycle* Bachelor programme Physiotherapy at Lithuanian Sports University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

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

*1 (unsatisfactory) - 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.

Rehabilitation study field and second cycle Master programme in Physiotherapy and Adapted Physical Activity at Lithuanian Sports University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

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

*1 (unsatisfactory) - 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)

The expert panel was asked to evaluate the three study programmes in the study field Rehabilitation, namely first cycle studies Bachelor of Health Sciences Physiotherapy, the second cycle studies Master of Health Sciences in Physiotherapy and the second cycle studies Master of Health Sciences in Adapted Physical Activity.

There is conformity of the aims and outcomes of the Rehabilitation field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and labour market, but focusing mainly on physical activity, physiotherapy, and sports and leisure management. The interviews with the various stakeholders confirmed what is stated in SER (p. 7) and also through the distinctive features of the study programme in Annex 1, that the aim of the Physiotherapy study programme is to educate and train physiotherapists to provide highly professional physical treatment and rehabilitation of the persons/patients in need, emphasising that a physiotherapist's work is an integral part of society's physical health and overall well-being. Interviews with graduates clearly showed that LSU's education and training has prepared them to work independently mostly in the community. In addition, the role of the physiotherapist is also alongside the family doctor in primary care (SER, p. 8).

The first cycle studies Bachelor of Health Sciences Physiotherapy (Annex 1) provides a sound foundation, in particular graduates of the first cycle physiotherapy study programme become trained physiologists, while the second cycle studies Master of Health Sciences in Physiotherapy is clearly at a higher level in that stakeholders interviewed could easily refer to higher level of maturity and much better appreciation of research and evidence-based practice. The internships of the first cycle physiotherapy program take place in healthcare institutions. 40 ECTS credits are allocated for internships. LSU has signed more than 50 collaboration agreements with various healthcare institutions where LSU students can practise (SER, page 13).

LSU has strategically positioned itself as an academic institution that also promotes sports and well-being of persons with disabilities. Indeed, the need for the APA second-cycle study programme's aims and outcomes (Annex 1) correspond to Lithuania's international obligations (c. f. SER p. 9, "The Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – LR) Seimas's Law No. XI-854, May 27, 2010, ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Facultative Minutes). The Convention Article 4, Paragraph 1, Clauses (f) and (g) state that the States shall ensure and/or encourage research related to the empowerment of people with disabilities, the development of new technologies for the study process, information, communication, mobility, and assistance of the persons with disabilities and/or special needs and provide the modelling of standards and guidelines for the use of these technologies." The study programme also aims to create a sustainable environment and adequate conditions for developing the integration processes of persons with disabilities in Lithuania effectively, in line with The National Action Plan for Social Integration of the Disabled 2021-2023 (approved by order of the LR Minister of Social Security and Labor on September 8, 2020, No. A-817). (SER p. 8 and confirmed during the site visit). By preparing students as future specialists to work with the disabled, the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, including lifestyle-related issues, will help persons with disabilities to have better employment opportunities, enter the labour market more efficiently, and engage in sports and leisure. It is to be noted that the last evaluation of this programme was as a first cycle. This is now being offered as a second cycle.

The APA study is also compatible with the research in the field of disability empowerment, by investing in the Laboratory of Adapted Physical Activity Research and Studies. The main areas of research are analysis of physical, psychological, and social aspects of the disabled empowerment through physical activity. What is lacking is more exposure to interdisciplinary team working.

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

There is conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission statement of LSU, which is "Lithuanian sports university is committed to meet the international and national requirements, providing high-quality higher education in sports and related areas; carrying out research and experimental development through effective and efficient quality assurance system based on activity planning, implementation and quality assurance, assessment and continuous improvement." This was clearly evident from the numerous meetings and interviews conducted with the senior management, teachers, students, graduates,

social partners and sports champions. Indeed, LSU is proud to mention a great number of the LSU students and graduates, who have become champions and prize-winners of the Olympic Games, world and European championships. Among these are: the twice European boxing champion Algirdas Šocikas, the winner of the Olympic gold medal and world basketball champion Modestas Paulauskas, the winners of the Olympic gold medals discus thrower Virgilijus Alekna. and basketball players Voldemaras Chomičius and Rimantas Kurtinaitis. During the site visit, LSU's commitment to persons with disabilities through its unique APA second cycle study programme was also revealed. Interviews with various stakeholders confirmed that students receive practical training by ensuring acquisition of competencies and necessary skills and abilities to prevent/solve the health promotion and/or healthy lifestyle challenges for persons with disabilities.

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

SER p. 11 outlines a number of legal documents, which guide LSU in its operations and strategic position as a specialised public higher education institution, and with a focus on sport, leisure and health sciences. The study field rehabilitation and both first and second cycles comply with the legal requirements.

Table No. 1 Physiotherapy Study programme and its compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes* (SER, p. 13-20; Annex 1)

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	240 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	120 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	10 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	40 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	20 ECTS
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	>30%
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	20-40%

Table No. 2 Adapted Physical Activity Study programme and its compliance to general requirements for *second cycle study programmes* (SER, p. 13-20; Annex 1)

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS, out of which 40 ECTS credits are allocated for research, 10 ECTS credits - for studies of innovations and research projects, 60 ECTS credits - for study and research modules, and 10 ECTS credits - for optional study subjects (elective modules).
ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 60 ECTS	60 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	10 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	10-15%
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	85-90% of module hours allocated to students' individual work

Table No. 2 Physiotherapy Study programme and its compliance to general requirements for *second cycle study programmes* (SER, p. 13-20; Annex 1)

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS, out of which 40 ECTS credits are allocated for research, 10 ECTS credits - for studies of innovations and research projects, 60 ECTS credits - for study and research modules.

ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 60 ECTS	60 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	10 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	10-15%
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	85-90% of module hours allocated to students' individual work

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

The aims, learning outcomes, teaching and learning and assessment methods of the first (Physiotherapy) and second (Physiotherapy and Adapted Physical Activity) cycles are compatible with the Rehabilitation study field programmes and coherent in their structures. For the Physiotherapy study programme, these are achieved on a full-time basis within 4 years (8 semesters) with a credit value of 210 ECTS (Annex 1). The learning outcomes level corresponds to the European Level VI and the qualification requirements described in the National Qualifications Framework Level VI. The study programme is also in line with the requirements for undergraduate bachelor's degree programmes in terms of ECTS credits. For both the Physiotherapy and the Adapted Physical Activity Master programmes, the aims and learning outcomes are achieved on a full-time basis within 2 years (4 semesters) with a credit value of 120 ECTS (Annex 1). The learning outcomes correspond to the qualification requirements described in the National Qualifications Framework Level VII (Legal Acts).

As regards teaching and learning, both physiotherapy (first and second cycles) and Adapted Physical Activity programs (second cycle) are conducted in Lithuanian and English.

As shown in Annexes 1, 4 and 5, study methods and assessment methods are compatible with the learning outcomes for both the first and second cycles study programmes. The aim is to ensure the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to gain a bachelor's degree in Physiotherapy, by offering relevant subject matter that is logically grouped and in the correct sequence.

Assessment methods are comprehensive and are both formative and summative. They correspond to the various aspects of the subject matter in line with the learning outcomes.

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

The study modules, which are entered into the academic information system and registered with a unique number code, are developed on the basis of the learning outcomes and the required graduate competencies. Research is given great importance and indeed the relevance of research is evident in the modules' content. In addition, there is visible cooperation between lecturers, stakeholders, and students in developing the module. There is systematic evaluation of the study modules' compliance with the study programme's objectives. Each study module is presented in a manner that provides both English and Lithuanian versions of the study module's title, summary, objectives, study field and direction, study level, and subject group(s), intended learning outcomes, primary and additional literature sources, study and independent work volumes, forms, learning/teaching methods, procedure and methods and terms of student achievement assessment, the names of the study module coordinating and teaching lecturers. (Annex 1).

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

The site visit and interviews showed that LSU is student-friendly with provisions for personalised learning that is oriented to suit students' professional and personal needs. The Procedure for the Selection of Elective Study Modules (approved by the LSU Senate on December 22, 2020), the [Regulations for Preparation of Individual Study, approved by the LSU Senate on September 12, 2019](#) allow sufficient flexibility in both the first and second cycle study programmes to achieve wider array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and specialisation respectively. The students also confirmed the support that they receive from both senior management and teachers to achieve their full potential. Both first cycle and second study programs include optional credits that provide students with opportunities to study subjects of their interest to complement the mandatory subjects.

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

The final theses of both the first (Physiotherapy 20 ECTS) and second (Physiotherapy and Adapted Physical Activity 30 ECTS) cycles reflect the research requirements of the

Rehabilitation study field programmes. The final theses are directly related to the study programme' and study field's objectives and correspond to the intended learning outcomes and competencies to be acquired by a student in the study programme and the study field (Annex 2). Research is given enormous importance at LSU, using the experimental design as well as in clinical real fields. 37% of theses were done in clinical placements with real patients.

The structure in terms of student preparation and supervision is in place. The assessment is in line with the LSU's Study Regulations. The first and second cycle study programmes' final theses reflect the communication with and interests of social partners – with a focus on sports, rehabilitation, management, pedagogy, physical education, and social rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. LSU is a leading academic and research centre in sports science in the Baltic Sea region.
2. Experimental design research is given importance, and this has led to publications of manuscripts in high-impact factor journals.
3. The second cycle adapted physical activity study programme is unique with the aim to train graduates in the field of empowerment of persons with disabilities for pursuing independence, equal rights and opportunities as well as advocacy in order to maintain an active, healthy lifestyle.

(2) Areas for Improvement

1. There should be more emphasis on research in clinical areas and in the real world outside the experimental laboratory spaces, in particular as COVID restrictions have been removed.
2. Research from experimental design should be transferred to real life.

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

Research is well developed in the field. Many publications listed in the SER appear in non-indexed Journals, some in Lithuanian language (which is not to detract from their quality). A search on the SCIVAL database (drawing on Scopus/Elsevier) by the experts panel can facilitate an overall assessment of the LSU publications in the Rehabilitation field. It must be anticipated that the information given by SCIVAL is not coincident with the information provided by the SER and refers to the field of Rehabilitation as defined here (in practice, Courses within a Faculty/University). SCIVAL shows (among many other indexes) the number of publications of a whole institution (here, LSU) in a given general area (e.g., Medicine) or sub-areas (here, Physiology and Rehabilitation), not from a given field as defined in the SER and the present EER. It also includes “scholarly output” peer-reviewed Proceedings and Book chapters. That said, SCIVAL gave back the results shown in the following table:

Lith Sports Univ	2018	2019	2020	Total	2020- % in top CiteScore Journals, 10 th percentiles	2020- % in top cited publications worldwide, 10 th percentile
Rehabilitation	2	1	0	3	0	0
Physiology	10	16	12	38	0	16.7
Medicine	45	58	66	169	13.6	14.1

The two rightmost columns give the percentage of items published in Journals lying within the upper 10th percentiles of citations (CiteScore-Scopus) and the items lying within the most cited publications (upper 10th percentile) worldwide, respectively. There is excellent progress, from 2018 to 2020, in high-level, published Research. This production seems imbalanced, however, towards basic or, in general, non-Rehab sciences. This impression is also supported by Annex 3, giving the Lecturers and their main articles. Indeed, a list of excellent articles. A tentative classification of the articles’ topics gives back the following result:

FROM ANNEX 3-LSU

General topics of the articles, inferred from the titles of the articles (English language only. An attempt was made to avoid duplications)

FROM ANNEX 3-LSU

Physiology (incl. nutrition/metabolism)	33	32,4%
Psychology & Education	28	27,5%
Adapted Phys Ther/Health promoting exercises (activity in obesity, balance in the elderly, Yoga, Tai Chi..)	16	15,7%
Epidemiology-Social studies	11	10,8%
Physical/Exercise Therapies (Shoulder, Spine,Stroke..)	7	6,9%
Sports teaching and benefits	4	3,9%
Disabled people's Sports	3	2,9%
	10	100,0
	2	%

Despite the arbitrariness and the rough approximation of the above Table, it can be confirmed that the “field” of Rehabilitation, as far as the number of scientific articles is concerned, is mainly represented by basic/biological and psycho-social studies, with a smaller emphasis on applications of therapeutic exercises or, for the adapted physical activity area, on the development of practical health-promoting “physical” programs.

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

This picture is reversed when the content of studies and the Theses are examined (Annex 2). The topics are centred on Physiotherapy or Adapted Physical Therapy and do not miss relevant and up-to-date issues. However, cognitive rehabilitation is virtually missing, perhaps reflecting its scarce representation within the Rehabilitation field in Lithuania (there is only one Program in Speech Therapy in Lithuania, in Šiauliai).

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

The sports premises (pool, gym areas, physio-areas etc.), classrooms and Library, in themselves also necessary for research, are good. The equipment for Laboratory research is excellent (see Annex 5). However, the spaces allowed for physiological studies seem underdosed, considering that it is presumably dedicated to all students in the Courses held by LSU, all emphasising movement sciences (hence, motor physiology).

Students of the first cycle are encouraged to achieve good results in research activities, allowing them to gain additional points for admission to the second cycle. They are also encouraged to realise Theses suitable for publication in peer-reviewed Journals (Annex 1, page 26, Table 2.1). In any case, these must be presented at scientific conferences.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. High-level publications.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Imbalance of research towards basic or sports sciences.
2. Areas for Research laboratories should be widened.

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

Student admission requirements and process are comprehensive and definite. The General admission is organised and coordinated by the Association of Lithuanian higher education institutions for general admission (hereinafter – LAMA BPO), which is authorised by the Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. All the information about students' admission order and requirements is available on the [internet webpage of LSU](#). University also organises supplemental equalising studies for the students who have completed professional studies and wish to study in the University's second-cycle study programmes. Admissions in Physiotherapy second study cycle and Adapted Physical Activity have been stable, however decrease in numbers of admission can be seen in first cycle of Physiotherapy studies and in Physiotherapy (supplemental studies). This situation together with the student

attrition should be dealt with by reconsidering focus of studies and how they are promoted. After reviewing given booklets and University's website it is seen that it mainly focuses on sports, and not the field itself. Overall, the many ways of study promotion are admirable since they are focused not only on "come and see" method, but studies are being promoted by visiting schools. Expert panel concluded that the process of admission is great.

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

According to the Procedure for Academic Recognition and Acceptance of Partial Studies at LSU22 (approved by the LSU Senate on October 29, 2020, Minutes No. 2), the study results of the student who has studied at another HEI or a foreign HEI under the agreement of partial studies (student exchange programmes based on cooperation agreements) are credited without restrictions (course by course, semester by semester, academic year by academic year) if the student had an individual study programme before leaving, and if no term/condition violations of the partial studies agreement have been detected. During the interviews it was clear that the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning caused no problems and were clear and structured. Expert panel concludes that this section of evaluation has been great.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

The LSU students get information about the possibilities and conditions of the Erasmus+ and other academic mobility programmes during the information seminars-fairs, which are organised once an academic year before announcing the competition for the selection of students. The information about the candidate selection criteria for participation in the Erasmus+ and other academic mobility programmes is provided by e-mail and posted on the LSU website. However, the number of outgoing students for partial studies and internships has declined since 2017/2018. At the same time, numbers of full-time international students and incoming students for partial studies and internships have been stable. Overall, expert panels have concluded that conditions can be improved by more promotion elements.

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

The LSU students of the Rehabilitation field study programmes are provided with a consistent academic, financial social, psychological, and personal support under the Procedure for

Providing Financial Support to the Students and following the LSU Regulations on Granting Scholarships. 25 Continuous academic support is timely ensured when the students have learning problems and/or their academic advance is prolonged. The study group tutor and a specialist of the Studies Division administer the students of the first or second cycle study programmes. The students also can contact the study programme director and/or the Student Union for any support if needed. Students also can receive psycho-mental health and based on Table 3.8 in SER shows high demand for this type of support and is welcomed.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

LSU organises a lot of events and a wide variety of communication tools to make sure that students receive all information regarding studies and counselling that can be used. University has an active student body and active student representatives that is a great example for other academic communities. Expert panel concluded that the sufficiency of study information and student counselling is on a great level.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Great learning/teaching and e-learning/teaching environment that is structured and clear and at the same time allows more flexibility for students.
2. Evident colleagues like relationships between student body and staff.
3. Active student body and student representatives that encourage feedback and improvement in quality of studies.
4. Students receive constant and high-quality support from University in academic, financial, social, psychological and personal fields if required.

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

The teaching and learning methods to ensure the acquisition of both knowledge and skills among the students are reported in the SER (p. 37-39) in detail. According to the report, the

teachers select the best assessment methods and provide continuous feedback to the students. Table 4.1 (p. 38) lists the learning and assessment methods used by teachers which include lecture, problem-based learning, literature review and analysis, case study, group work, etc.

These methods are comprehensive and in line with international practices. In addition, LSU adopts the use of “Portfolio” among students for evaluation of independent development of competencies. This will facilitate and promote students’ self-assessment and learning efforts.

Graduates of the first cycle Physiotherapy programme can continue their studies in second cycle programmes of Physiotherapy, Tourism and Sports Management, Sports Coaching, Sports Psychology, Education, Physical Education, Sport Physiology, Adapted Physical Activity, and Health and Physical Activity. Second cycle Physiotherapy programme graduates can take further study in the doctoral programmes of Biomedical Sciences, while graduates of second cycle APA programme can have access to the third cycle study programs in the area of Biomedical or Social Sciences.

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

The principles, administrative support and infrastructure of LSU to ensure equal opportunities among students with various disabilities, special needs and from socially vulnerable groups are clearly documented in the SER (p. 39-40). There are detailed descriptions of facilities to ensure the campus is accessible for students with disabilities (e. g., wheelchair ramps, lifts, special elevators, etc.). Special adaptations in the library are also described. In addition, there is financial support for those with special needs or coming from disadvantaged groups. Individual study plans are allowed on their special request to the university administration. The assistance and support given to students with special needs was confirmed by comments from social partners. For example, there were a few award-winning students from different sports in our meeting with the students. They told us that the study programs gave them a lot of flexibility to receive intensive sports training and participation in different competition games while maintaining the study without any disturbances.

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

Monitoring of student study progress is reported in the SER (p. 41-44) in great depth. Based on the report, the assessment is effective and transparent. Assessment includes both knowledge

and practical skills. The weights of assessment components are documented in Annex I which look reasonable. LSU adopts a cumulative assessment system. Teaching staff have to analyse the tendencies of the achievements of students closely. The assessment methods will be adjusted based on the results of the analyses. Examination is conducted in accordance with ULS normative documents. The applied cumulative assessment system enables students to monitor their own progress. Similarly, feedback to the students is much emphasised by LSU. It includes student consultations, post-exam and presentation discussion, explanation of mistakes, etc. All of these measures are to ensure the quality of the studies.

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

According to the SER (p. 45-47), we can see that there is a clear employment monitoring system in LSU. Career monitoring allows us to know the employment figures of different study programs six months after graduation. According to the statistics provided, it is observed that the majority (over 75%) of the graduates at both first and second cycles are employed. The figures are even high for the first cycle Physiotherapy program and second cycle Rehabilitation programme.

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

The principles and practice in LSU to ensure academic integrity in accordance with LSU Code of Academic Ethics are unambiguously documented in the SER (p. 47-49). Dishonest behaviours are heavily penalised. There are various measures to make sure the examination is fair and objective. There are also clear guidelines on prevention of harassment, including sexual harassment. Students are introduced very early on the principles and procedures of these academic codes.

However, there is not any robust measure to prevent plagiarism in students' writing including their final theses, albeit the teachers' claim that plagiarism is checked when the final theses are uploaded to Moodle and ETD IS system.

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

There is an appeal procedure in place in LSU based on the SER (p. 49). Students can submit appeals on examination, and final thesis results. There is a Board of Examination Appeals and the Commission of the Final Thesis Appeals to handle the cases of appeal. According to the report, the number of appeals is low and most of the appeals were resolved in the end. This is consistent with the comments we received from the students during our meeting with them.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The employment figures for both first and second cycle Physiotherapy programmes are quite high.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The number of students discontinued or terminated their studies in both the first and second cycle of studies is high.
2. There is no objective measure to prevent plagiarism in students' writing including their final theses.

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

The quantity and quality of the teaching staff are reported in the SER (p. 51-53). A list of the professors and lecturers of the study programmes is attached as Annex 3. Altogether there are 64 teaching staff for the study programmes. The majority (over 70%) of them are at associate professor rank or above, reflecting the good overall quality in terms of teaching and research experiences. Other than LSU, there are also teaching staff involved from KTU for the second cycle Physiotherapy programme. The teaching staff are appointed in accordance with the university procedures. The research areas of the teaching staff will be matched with the subjects they are required to teach. The staffing composition as shown in Annex 3 is multi-disciplinary, including psychology, research, statistics, pathology, physiotherapy, physical activity, etc. The research expertise of the teaching staff covers a wide spectrum including muscles, motor control, health promotion, athlete training technologies, etc. There is a focus on

sports related sciences which reflect the overall uniqueness of LSU. There is a well-defined workload system, making sure that duties are equally and reasonably shared among the teaching staff. This is also consistent with the comments we heard from the teachers during our meeting with them. Other than teaching, all lecturers are required to take part in research activities. Changes in the teaching staff are minimal which suggest good job satisfaction. Based on the comments we heard, promotion is primarily based on research productivity and performances.

According to Annex 3, there are only 10 lecturers teaching physiotherapy core subjects. There does not have any teaching staff in related rehabilitation areas, such as occupational therapy and speech therapy. Despite teaching staff being required to take part in research activities, the research laboratories and projects we observed in our tour have a focus only on fundamental physiological aspects. In the opinion of the expert panel, more research activities should be geared towards clinical aspects of rehabilitation, examples, development of assessment and intervention techniques for different diseases and injuries.

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)

Academic mobility among teaching staff is reported in the SER (p. 53-55). There is a clear mechanism for selecting teaching staff for participating in academic visits, both nationally and internationally. The purposes of the academic visits are on both teaching and research development. In Table 5.2, there are quite a large number of teaching staff from the APA and Physiotherapy programmes engaged in national and international research projects. In 2020, 31 and 7 lecturers from the APA and Physiotherapy programmes engaged in national and international research projects respectively. Other than outbound visits, there are also a number of visiting professors from other universities participating in teaching of subjects in the study programmes. But the visits are mainly short-term and within Europe.

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

Based on the information provided by the SER (p. 55-56), there are clear policies and implementation plan to improve the competencies of teachers. The improvement is all-rounded, including teaching, research, clinical practice, and language. The staff development is mainly achieved through academic mobility and visits. There is a budget plan for this to make sure funding is adequate to support these visits. Based on the comments we heard from

teachers, staff development is mainly research focused. This requirement is for certain good to increase research productivity, mainly publication.

However, the expert panel suggests that there should be a balanced approach between emphasis on teaching and research. In addition, there does not seem to be a Sports Clinic in the campus for teaching staff to engage in clinical activities and conduct more clinically oriented research towards sports injury and health conditions which is the uniqueness of LSU.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The research areas of the teaching staff will be matched with the subjects they are required to teach.
2. The research expertise of the teaching staff covers a wide spectrum including muscles, motor control, health promotion, athlete training technologies, etc. There is a focus on sports related sciences which reflect the overall nature of LSU.
3. Changes in the teaching staff are minimal which suggest good job satisfaction.
4. There are quite a large number of teaching staff from the APA and Physiotherapy programmes engaged in national and international research projects.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Staff in Physiotherapy and other Rehabilitation disciplines such as Occupational Therapy are limited. This will limit the opportunities of LSU to develop other Rehabilitation programmes such as Occupational Therapy.
2. Despite teaching staff are required to take part in research activities, the research laboratories and projects we observed in our visit have a focus on fundamental physiological aspects. There are limited research activities on clinically or rehabilitation oriented studies.
3. Promotion is too slanted towards research productivity and performances, without much consideration on other competencies such as teaching and service.
4. The academic visits are mainly short-term and within Lithuania or Europe.

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

At the LSU, Rehabilitation studies are conducted in three nearby buildings, where the auditoriums, laboratories, administration and departments are located. Theoretical lectures are held in large auditoriums, which accommodate a larger number of students and students from different study programs can participate in the lecture at the same time. Hands-on lectures are planned and delivered in specially designed classrooms, where there are fewer workstations and more individualised hands-on training. The university has many spaces suitable for student sports: halls, swimming pool, stadium.

Some learning and common use spaces are in need of repair, but during the visit, students expressed the opinion that "the quality of the learning content is important, not the walls".

During the visit, the representatives of the administration regretted that the premises are partially adapted for students with special mobility needs (heavy external doors, lack of ramps, stairs), because the university has limitations to change the facade of the buildings due to the protected cultural heritage.

Auditoriums are equipped with video demonstration tools – multimedia, computers, smart boards. 10-15% of computer equipment is updated every year. The faculty has facilities adapted for distance learning. Free wireless Internet connection is available in all classrooms, laboratories and library reading rooms.

The experts visited the Sports Science Institute, whose laboratories are full of equipment for conducting scientific research. Rehabilitation studies field students have the opportunity to use laboratory facilities, services and material bases for conducting research related to theses, exams or scientific activities. It has been noticed that the rooms are small, they need to be shared with the researchers of the institute. According to SER: "Due to the intensive scientific activity in the laboratories belonging to the LSU SMI (Sports Science Institute), students do not always have the opportunity to visit the laboratories when exercises or laboratory work must be carried out. It is also sometimes difficult for students to carry out applied research work using laboratories and the equipment in them" (p. 57) and after seeing the real situation during the visit, the experts agree that Rehabilitation students should have an easily accessible laboratory.

The university library has been reconstructed, it has about 100 workplaces for students, the reading rooms are equipped with computer and software equipment, and there are 40 computerised workplaces. Methodological resources in the library (textbooks, books, periodicals, international databases, etc.) are suitable, sufficient and available. Scientific study information is accessible to persons with special needs. The library offers a wide selection of international scientific databases, which can be accessed from home.

The university cooperates with more than 54 social partners, where students carry out professional practice. During the visit, the students expressed positive assessments of the quality of the practice bases. The department has a flexible approach to the choice of practice base, so students have the opportunity to do practice throughout Lithuania.

Using the innovative equipment of the mobile laboratory, students can conduct scientific research throughout Lithuania. Such opportunities expand the possibilities of conducting scientific research and encourage the student to independently conduct research with the community outside of medical institutions.

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

The process of planning and upgrading the resources needed to carry out the field studies is described in the light of changing student and teaching staffs' needs. Acquisition of long-term assets in Rehabilitation studies is related to project activities and external funding sources.

The process of planning and updating the resources required for conducting studies in the field is carried out annually. The draft estimate is prepared taking into account the number of students financed by the State and students who enrolled with their own funds. The initial need for funds and the estimate are discussed at the Rectorate, the draft estimate is finally considered and approved by the LSU Council.

In order to attract external sources of funding, the university actively participates in project activities. One example, the won and funded project is the creation of LSU's innovative mobile sports science laboratory.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Cooperation with KTU and the researchers of the Mobile Laboratory.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Some learning and common use spaces are in need of repair. Insufficient amount of free time and recreation spaces for students.

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

Quality assurance is an important part of the overall governance of LSU to monitor students' learning experiences and maintain the quality of the study programs. There is a multi-level implementation system for the quality assurance process. At the institutional level, it is the responsibility of the University Senate, which approves the internal quality assurance system and controls the implementation. At the study program level, this is ensured by the Study Programme Committees in connection with the stakeholders. With the collaboration from the stakeholders, the study committees closely monitor the course of the study programs throughout the academic year. This is in line with the comments we heard from our meetings with the teachers, students and social partners. However, it seems that Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are not used in the QA process. The use of KPI for QA has been widely used in universities in other parts of the world.

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

There are five student body members in the University Senate. These representatives can directly participate in decision making of matters related to the study programmes. Stakeholders refer to administrative heads of partner institutions, departments and clinics. These stakeholders are invited to evaluate final theses of the students. These ways of involvement are also consistent with the opinions we heard from our meetings with them.

But about 20% of the student representatives are engaged in working groups on QA issues. More should be involved. Unlike student representatives, there are no social partners sitting in the University Senate and taking part in direct decision making.

3.7.3. Evaluation of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes

The quality evaluation process of the study programmes is regularly performed by the university. There are also regular surveys targeting the students, teachers, practitioners and graduates. As for the publication of information on study programmes, there are university websites. Information including research activities, self-evaluation results, opinions and feedback on the quality of the studies, and other relevant information is made known to the public. Overall, the collection, use and publication of information is deemed appropriate.

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

There are periodic surveys among students to collect their opinions on the quality of the study programmes through the internal information system. The collected opinions are analysed and summarised by the specialists of the Department of Studies. The analysed results are provided to the teaching staff and management side of the study programmes. It is considered that student opinions are collected and utilised sufficiently.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The QA system involves a sufficiently wide spectrum of stakeholders.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are not used in the QA process despite the fact that the use of KPI for QA has been widely used in universities in other parts of the world.
2. But the percentage of student representatives taking part in working groups related to QA is too low.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

<i>Evaluation Area</i>	<i>Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)</i>
<i>Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is too much emphasis on biological sciences in the curriculum design and the learning outcomes. There should be a more balanced approach in psychosocial and behavioural sciences in the learning outcomes and curriculum.
<i>Links between science (art) and studies</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The above recommendation applies also to this area. Research laboratories should not be slanted towards fundamental and basic sciences. There should be more on translational research laboratories to clinical and rehabilitation aspects.
<i>Student admission and support</i>	N.A.
<i>Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To investigate the reasons for the significant proportion of students who discontinued or terminated their studies from the programmes before completion and find ways to reduce the figure of premature discontinuation of the study programmes. 2. To formulate feasible and practical measures to prevent student plagiarism in writing including their final theses.

<p><i>Teaching staff</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recruit teaching staff specialising in related Rehabilitation areas especially occupational therapy and speech therapy. 2. To expand staff visits and development programmes to longer term and outside Europe. 3. To consider more competencies such as teaching and service in addition to research performance for staff promotion. 4. To conduct research activities with more orientation towards rehabilitation and clinical aspects, including the development of assessment and intervention techniques for various diseases and injuries. 5. To consider having a Sports Clinic in the campus for knowledge transfer and clinical activities and research.
<p><i>Learning facilities and resources</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some learning and common use spaces are in need of repair and expansion due to prolonged usage so as to provide more space for extra-curricular activities of students. 2. The premises of the Institute of Sports Science also need expansion to allow more space for researchers and field work studies.
<p><i>Study quality management and public information</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider adopting the widely recognized Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in the QA system. 2. To increase the proportion of student representatives taking part in working groups on QA issues and invite social partners to sit in the University Senate.

V. SUMMARY

An expert panel was formed to assess the three programmes in rehabilitation study field, namely Bachelor of Health Sciences Physiotherapy, Master of Health Sciences in Physiotherapy, and Master of Health Sciences in Adapted Physical Activity (APA), at the Lithuanian Sports University (LSU) in November 2022. The panel reviewed the self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by LSU and conducted a site visit to LSU in November 2022.

Assessment has been conducted based on the following seven areas of the three programmes:

1. Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum
2. Links between science (art) and studies
3. Student admission and support
4. Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment
5. Teaching staff
6. Learning facilities and resources
7. Study quality management and public information

The panel considers the programmes suit the needs of the society and labour market in Lithuania. The programmes fulfil the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of LSU. The APA programme is compatible with the research in the field of disability empowerment and is unique to train graduates in the field. Putting major focus on experimental design research leads to publications of manuscripts in high-impact factor journals. The aims, learning outcomes, teaching and learning and assessment methods of the programmes are considered compatible with programmes of the field and coherent in their structures. The study methods and assessment methods are also found to be compatible with the learning outcomes and in line with the LSU's study Regulations. Comprehensive involvement with lecturers, stakeholders and students can be seen in development of the study modules. Students are given sufficient opportunities and support for personalised learning to suit their professional and personal needs. Whilst research is given great emphasis at LSU, instead of focusing on the experimental design, more focus should be put on behavioural sciences and clinical areas, and the research should be transferred to real life outside the laboratory.

When assessing the linkage between science and study activities, it is noticed that students have been deeply involved in learning methodological topics and experimental research with strong research output of high-level publications, though the production seems imbalanced towards

basic and non-Rehab sciences. The topics of the content of studies and the Theses are centred on the relevant programmes and are related to the latest developments in the field, but it appears that there are no topics on cognitive rehabilitation. The facilities necessitating student activities, including sports premises and laboratory equipment, are good. However, there is a need to widen the areas for research laboratories as the spaces allowed for physiological studies seem insufficient.

The programmes have comprehensive and definite student admission requirements. The admission process is undertaken by an authorised body, and the admission criteria and process are sufficiently transparent. It has come to the panel's attention that there has been a decrease in admission number in the bachelor programme and master programme in Physiotherapy. To improve the admission number and student attrition matter, it is suggested to reconsider the focus of studies to the field itself as well as programme promotion elements. In addition, given the reduction in the number of outgoing students for partial studies and internships, it is advised to put more effort and attention on promotion of academic mobility to the students. It is noticed that LSU students are able to receive sufficient and high-quality support and information from the University on their academic, financial, social, psychological and personal needs. The University also has an active student body and representatives to encourage student feedback and improvement in study quality.

The panel also notices that the learning and assessment methods used are in line with international practices, with the uniqueness of adopting the use of "Portfolio" by students to evaluate their own development of competencies to facilitate students' self-assessment and learning efforts. Feasible conditions have been offered to ensure access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. Nevertheless, the expert panel expects elaboration from the programme teams on the reasons that a significant proportion of students discontinued or terminated their studies from the programmes, so as to provide corresponding recommendations on the improvement. Despite the effective and transparent principles and practice of the programmes to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination, no measure is found to prevent student plagiarism in writing and their final theses.

With the sufficient and high-quality teaching staff who are very experienced in teaching and research, the panel further suggests recruiting staff specialise in related rehabilitation areas especially occupational therapy and speech therapy which LSU is currently lacking. While academic mobility among teaching staff is adequate and the selection process for joining the activities is transparent, it is suggested to further broaden the staff's horizon by expanding the

visits to longer term and outside Europe. It is recommended to consider more competencies such as teaching and service in addition to research performance for staff promotion. With the broad spectrum of research expertise of the teaching staff, more research activities could be geared towards rehabilitation clinical aspects, including the development of assessment and intervention techniques for various diseases and injuries. The panel is also eager to learn more on the sources of funding support to staff on research activities. In addition, there appears a need to have a Sports Clinic in the campus for knowledge transfer of clinical activities and research.

Learning facilities are found mostly suitable for student learning and research. Rehabilitation students are provided with the opportunity to use the laboratory equipment of the Institute of Sports Science. Nevertheless, the premises are shared between the researchers and students, and are deemed insufficient for the students due to intensive use by the researchers. Because of the need to repair some of the learning and common spaces, the spaces are deemed insufficient for students during the repair period. Plan is needed here to expand the space for use by the programmes in the near future.

The programmes have a well-implemented quality assurance system which is able to involve a wide spectrum of stakeholders, though Key Performance Indicators (KPI), which are widely used and recognised in universities around the world, are not adopted in the QA system of LSU. Although student representatives are involved in decision making in the University Senate, it is suggested to increase the proportion of student representatives taking part in working groups on QA issues, and to also invite social partners to sit in the University Senate.

Overall, the panel considers all the three programmes have done a good job in all the assessed areas and has proposed the above recommendations for the betterment of the programmes.

Expert panel chairperson signature:
Prof. dr. Sandra Buttigieg