



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of PHILOLOGY (LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE)

at Klaipėda University

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Lithuanian Philology</i>
State code	6121NX064
Type of studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (4 years)
Credit volume	240
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Humanities
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	2017-03-21

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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 19 April 2022.

1. **Prof. dr. Andra Kalnača**, Expert panel's Chairperson; Professor at University of Latvia, Latvia
2. **Prof. dr. Anastassia Zabrodskaia**, academic member; Professor at Tallinn University, Estonia
3. **Prof. dr. Hélène de Penanros**, academic member; Professor at INALCO, France
4. **Prof. dr. Aušra Martišiūtė-Linartienė**, Representative of Social Partners; Director of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania
5. **Mr. Osvaldas Bartaškevičius**, Student Representative; Technical Language Translation and Localisation, Kaunas University of Technology, 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.	<i>Lithuanian Philology</i> Self Evaluation Report
2.	Annex 1, <i>Lithuanian Philology</i> Study Plan
3.	Annex 2, <i>Lithuanian Philology</i> LIST OF FINAL THESIS 2019–2021
4.	Annex 3, Relationships between the results of the Lithuanian Philology program and the study results and assessment methods of the subjects implementing them

1.4. BACKGROUND OF PHILOLOGY (LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE) FIELD STUDIES AT Klaipėda University

Klaipėda University was founded in 1991 as a state university, responding to the needs of Klaipėda city and Western Lithuania cultural, educational, scientific, industrial, technical and economic issues. Klaipėda University is a multidisciplinary national and Baltic region centre of sciences and studies, integrated into international academic networks, successfully implementing the mission and goals defined in the Statute of the University, in line with the Bologna Declaration and the Lisbon Strategy, and meeting the needs of the Western Lithuania and Klaipėda city. Currently, Klaipėda University serves three faculties: The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, The Faculty of Marine Technology and Natural Sciences, The Faculty of Health Sciences, and two research institutes: The Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology, and Marine Research Institute.

Klaipėda University is implementing over 100 study programmes in three study cycles. Klaipėda University has academic partners in Europe and worldwide, carries out over 60 international and national research projects every year, participates in the activities of international foundations, programmes and networks, notably EU-CONEXUS and HORIZON.

Klaipėda University implements two first cycle study programmes in Philology by language: *Lithuanian Philology* and *English Philology*. The aim of *Lithuanian Philology* – first cycle study programme in the field of philology by language – is to train specialists in philology, having theoretical knowledge in humanities and Lithuanian philology, who are able to apply the following knowledge in practice by using the general competencies in the field of humanities and Lithuanian studies.

Lithuanian Philology previous external evaluation was carried out in 2014. The current Self Evaluation Report of this study programme includes references to the previous evaluation, indicating how various recommendations have been implemented

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the *Philology (Lithuanian language)* study field at Klaipėda University is given a **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	21

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

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

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

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

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

Study aims, outcomes and content shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)

(1) Factual situation

The Lithuanian Philology Study Programme offered by Klaipėda University is to train specialists in Lithuanian Philology who have theoretical knowledge in the humanities and philology and are able to apply this knowledge in practice, using the general competences in the humanities and Lithuanian studies. Lithuanian society needs specialists who have theoretical knowledge in Lithuanian philology and who are able to analyse facts and texts of Lithuanian language and literature, and have methodological (linguistic, literary and interdisciplinary) competences in the field of humanities. In addition, this programme suggests modules in pedagogy or theatre studies, and has the interdisciplinary nature of learning. Learning outcomes increase students' readiness for further study or a professional career. Thus, the Study Programme is designed to meet the special language needs of Lithuanian society and the Lithuanian labour market, with a strong emphasis on diverse knowledge of Lithuanian Philology.

As will be discussed later in this report, the faculty consists of well-qualified faculty who conduct research in their small fields and have repeatedly expressed their commitment to the field, their students, and their research directions.

Based on the structure of the curriculum, the balance between theoretical and practical knowledge, the availability of actual internships, the mandatory graduate thesis (designed to demonstrate the research and composition skills acquired), and the developed broad linguistic, literary, and pedagogical/theatre studies skills student have, the panel believes that the curriculum meets the needs of current society and the current job market for Lithuanian philologists with specialised teaching knowledge. The information on the admission requirements is published on the University's website, LAMA BPO, and other websites providing information on studies, and various other publications ("Where to study", etc.), study fairs, during visits to schools of general education, and other events (SER p. 19). It is easy to find all the information.

The admission of Lithuanian citizens for the first-cycle study programmes is centralised and takes place during the national admission period. The process is conducted by LAMA BPO (Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institution).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is noteworthy that the availability of Lithuanian philological studies is geographically located in a region that needs professionals who have undergone systematic study of Lithuanian philology and who have the necessary general competencies in humanities.

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

Klaipėda University's mission (<https://shmf.ku.lt/en/about-the-faculty/mission-vision-purpose#:~:text=Our%20principal%20is%20to%20train,foster%20and%20promote%20humanistic%20values.>) is "to train highly qualified and broad erudition specialists to the humanities, education and social sciences for Western Lithuania and other regions of the country, who would seek to constantly improve their professional and generic competences and would be able to foster and promote humanistic values." The Study Programme is consistent with this mission. Philology, by its very nature, is an activity requiring strong linguistic skills and historical knowledge. Notably, Klaipėda University can personalise this program by adding modules in pedagogy and theatre studies. Thus, this curriculum is structured to produce graduates who will make necessary contributions to Lithuanian philology in relation to pedagogy and theatre. The panel recognizes that various factors may limit students' participation in mobility (e.g., the cost of living abroad and the inability for graduate students to leave family or work responsibilities for long periods). However, future Lithuanian philologists should still benefit from the international mobility (especially since the Erasmus+ incoming teaching staff is very scarce).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As noted above, the need for Lithuanian-speaking philologists is important for the linguistic, cultural and socio-economic development of all of Lithuania and Western Lithuania in particular, as well as for the promotion of Lithuanian language, literature and culture in theatre studies. Theatre module should be available in the state language. The Study Programme responds directly to all of these needs, and providing pedagogical competencies for Lithuanian philologists is consistent with the goals and mission of Klaipėda University. The panel assesses that the field and study programmes as well as their outcomes are aligned with the mission, objectives of activities, and strategy of the HEI.

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

(1) Factual situation

The structure and anticipated student progression, balance of theoretical and practical classes, and elements of student personalization in the Study Programme meet and fulfil the national qualification levels, as the team understands them.

As noted earlier, the panel believes that the Study Programme is consistent in structure, delivery, and outcomes with similar programs at external (non-Lithuanian) institutions of higher education. The team noted no major methodological errors in the calculation of ECTS credits, allocation of home study requirements, etc.

Table No 1. Study programme *Lithuanian Philology*

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	192–198 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	Yes; 15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	Yes, 50%
The Studies of Pedagogy/Theatre Studies specialization module	not more than 120 ECTS	60 ECTS

** in case there is a national Descriptor of the Field Studies, please check if there are no stricter requirements*

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds the full compliance of the Study Programme with the necessary legal requirements, as we understand them.

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 teaching methods and learning opportunities within the Study Programme appear to be consistently aligned. In general terms, there is a logical sequence between the theoretical and practical subjects taught and the methods of instruction by which this material is presented, as well as the methods of assessment by which acquired skills are monitored. This demonstrates collegial collaboration as students apply skills learned in one course to other courses in the same programme and its modules.

The panel rates the Study Programme as strong, with a structure that definitely provides students with everything they need to become Lithuanian language teachers or work in theatre. Simply the importance of the Lithuanian language teaching profession should be communicated more broadly.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In general, there is a correspondence between learning outcomes, teaching/learning methods, and Study Programme goals. The overall consistency of teaching, assessment, and learning outcomes seems robust. The panel assesses that the compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programme is adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

The main subjects of the Study Programme are chosen rationally. They are good for building both theoretical skills and practical knowledge, and especially for positioning a successful graduate as an employable Lithuanian language philologist. The Study Programme is not limited to the training of a philologist, but also gives you the opportunity to choose pedagogical or theatrical modules.

The recommendation for developing student competencies is to involve more foreign experts (incoming Erasmus+ professors) who could give lectures that would allow students to position Lithuanian philology within contemporary philology. Institutional or departmental agreements with specific institutions or individuals can be a good strategy to ensure continuity of engagement and foreign participation. In this area of development, e-learning capabilities (ZOOM, Teams) can greatly expand teaching opportunities for students at relatively minimal cost to the institution.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Overall, the panel is satisfied that this is a consistent Study Programme. The overall situation appears to be that a well-designed, results-oriented study programme is being implemented effectively. The panel assesses that the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures the consistent development of competences of students is adequate.

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

Student personalization is about choosing which module – pedagogical or theatre studies – the student wants to take. These are completely different modules, with different goals and objectives. This allows the student to personalise, in a sense, their Study Programme from the moment they select a module.

Course choices (elective courses) are repeatedly provided throughout the Study Programme.

The choice of the final topic/area of the BA thesis and the location of the internship also seems to meet the requirement of student personalization.

During the visit, the panel had the opportunity to review the Final Theses in hard copy. No electronic copies were provided. It was clear that the topics reflected the research interests of the teaching staff.

The panel fully understands that the intended student population is overwhelmingly Lithuanian; the panel only notes that this factor may constrain both inbound and outbound mobility opportunities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As noted, there are opportunities for personalization in the Study Programme. The choice of Final Thesis topic and internship location are good elements of student personalization.

The panel assesses that opportunities for students to personalise the structure of field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes is adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

As noted earlier in this report, the assessment of undergraduate theses appears to be a weakness in this Study Programme. In addition, it is difficult to know whether or not the topics of the theses cover the broad areas of Lithuanian philology related to the pedagogical and theatrical module, since only some of the theses on paper were shown to the panel during the visit. The grades received by these theses were not presented. SER, p. 15: 'The principles of preparation of final theses, formation of the commission and thesis defence are established in the KU Description of General Requirements for Students' Academic Papers and Artistic Works, approved by the Senate Resolution No. 11-56 of 9 April 2010. The Description was updated by the Senate Resolution No. 11-35 and came into force on 1 September 2020, and is now called the KU Description of General Requirements for Students' Academic Papers. The principles of forming the final thesis defence commission are also regulated in the KU Study Regulations

(2018).’ On the one hand, the thesis requirement seems to give students an opportunity to explore their chosen topic in depth and to demonstrate and improve their research abilities. On the other hand, there are no formal tools that can be used to encourage academic integrity and prevent plagiarism because dissertations are submitted in paper form.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Undergraduate theses must be submitted electronically. This allows them to be checked with various programs for plagiarism. Thus, the panel assesses that compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements needs some revision.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The design of the Study Programme complies with the legal requirements established for higher education programs in Lithuania. The subjects are evenly distributed. Modules correspond to the level of study.
2. The goals and learning outcomes of the two modules are consistent with the activities of Lithuanian teachers and theatre professionals.
3. The Study Programme prepares students for further graduate study or work in the relevant areas.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Undergraduate theses are not checked for plagiarism because they are not submitted electronically. There is no online database of previously defended theses.
2. In our conversations with faculty and current students, we identified shortcomings regarding the participation of outgoing students and incoming Erasmus+ staff in mobility programs. There seems to be poor dissemination of information and a lack of extensive consultation with staff and students on how to improve the situation. Greater exposure of students to lectures by foreign professors is desirable. If internationalisation is part of the university's mission and/or vision, the administration should create the conditions, promote and encourage exchanges between incoming faculty and outgoing students to allow them to gain international exposure and experience.
3. The panel agreed that the university should adopt a strategy that emphasises the value and necessity of the Lithuanian language and Lithuanian teachers for the region.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The Self-Evaluation Report mentions almost 40 publications in the last five years (monographs, collective works, methods, articles, book chapters or conference proceedings, etc.) by the 15 teachers teaching the programme, who work at the University on a part-time basis, apart from two full-time readers. Most of these publications are in Lithuanian, with a few in English and German; they are mostly published at the University of Klaipėda, or in other Lithuanian editions, with only three publications in foreign countries. Some of the publications are on Lithuanian literature and culture, but most of them are in the field of linguistics; in each field, there is a majority of research rooted in the territory: studies of local dialects, Prussia, intellectual figures of Samogitia, etc.

The report does not give precise data concerning the projects financed during the last period, but only cites three undated 'examples' of funding obtained from the Lithuanian language commission.

This specialisation of research is in line with the general policy of the institution, which, as far as the social sciences and humanities are concerned, is dedicated to the study of the societies and cultures of the Baltic coast, and in particular the symbolic and linguistic systems of coastal communities. This regional specialisation in the marine field is in line with the University of Klaipėda's membership of the European network EU-conexus. The report also mentions a desire to strengthen international cooperation, but lacks quantitative data to consider progress in the field.

(2) Expert's analysis

The research carried out by the teachers of this component, especially that focused on regional themes, is certainly valuable and constitutes an important part of the rare field, on a European scale, of Lithuanian and Baltic studies.

In order to support this valuable part of the research internally, various measures should be studied:

- strengthening of the administrative support service for research: establishment of a system for monitoring European projects and assistance in compiling application files, which would benefit from being joint with the other Lithuanian universities involved in research in Lithuanian and Baltic philology (Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University);
- strengthening of financial support for research: aid for top-level publication, participation in international conferences, allocation of an annual quota of paid research training leave, etc.

The strategy of specialising in what is not being studied elsewhere is undoubtedly the right one, but the sustainability of the programme presupposes the establishment of an effective plan of structuring partnerships. If the prospects of collaboration with the Eu-conexus network can provide some funding, cooperation with research units working in the field in question should not be neglected: research centres in Lithuanian and Baltic studies existing abroad, but also and

especially in Lithuania. The field is too rare on a European and global scale to allow itself to be fragmented into independent or even competing units. A global reflection on the modalities of cooperation with other Lithuanian universities should be put in place.

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

(1) Factual situation

The teachers of the programme are active researchers, some of whom also participate in the doctoral committee or are involved in the training of doctoral students, so there is no shortage of strengths to ensure a link between science and teaching. Course syllabi and associated bibliographies are updated annually, ensuring that course content is linked to the latest research developments. The lecturers teach courses in their broad area of specialisation, which ensures the links between teaching and research, however, most of the courses are of a high degree of generality and the link with the latest developments in the lecturers' research is not clear: although this is one of the lecturers' areas of expertise, no courses on dialectology are offered, for example.

(2) Expert's analysis

The link between studies and research could be strengthened if the department offered more specialised courses focusing on the teachers' specific field of research. In order to ensure a minimum audience for these courses, a cooperative partnership with other universities offering philology courses could be considered: students from other universities could benefit from these courses, and in return, students from the Klaipėda University could benefit from the courses (more general, but also of specialities not taught locally) offered at these other universities. This kind of cooperation, which is now possible thanks to distance learning facilities, would be a useful way of supporting the education of the Klaipėda University, while not giving up its specificity.

Strengthening international collaborations, and inviting more international researchers to participate in the teaching programme for occasional courses or conferences would be a further way of strengthening the link with the latest developments in international research.

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

An important part of the curriculum is research training. In particular, students must write a scientific paper in S4 (for 6 ECTS), which is good preparation for the compulsory thesis in S8 (for 15 ECTS). Students are also encouraged to participate in their teachers' projects and possibly to do internships in research units abroad via Erasmus+, but the file lacks data on the extent of this participation and the nature of this encouragement.

(2) Expert's analysis

Given the lack of students (no 1st year student in 22-23), given the social difficulties faced by the rare students, a supportive policy is needed to attract more students and improve their participation in research:

- attribution of research grants, by the University, in order to support field research in particular;
- establishment of an internal incentive system within the programme (through the allocation of specific ECTS for participation in the work of a research team/publication of a paper/participation in a conference, or other well-defined activities)
- support for the organisation of student colloquia, organised by students; these colloquia would benefit from being organised jointly with students from the Vilnius and VMU philology faculties and on a rotating basis; participation would benefit from being open to Master's students from the Baltic and Lithuanian Studies Centres of Europe in order to bring together research strengths in this rare field at an early stage

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. A strong research potential on rare specialities in a disciplinary field that is already rare itself on a European scale.
2. A regional niche speciality, on which specific and attractive training can be based, if structuring partnerships can be set up.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. A lack of students that jeopardises the continuation of the programme.
2. A majority of part-time teachers.
3. Unclear strategic positioning: between a determination to strengthen regional studies, the exclusive field of expertise of the teachers, and the proposal of a very generalist training course supposed to meet the important need for teachers of Lithuanian.

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

According to SER, students' admission to the first cycle studies at KU are carried out according to the general admission procedure. The general admission is organised and coordinated by the Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for General Admission (hereinafter – LAMA BPO), authorised by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport. The criteria for

admission are also presented while the student is filling the forms at LAMA BPO. About the publicity – Lithuanian philology programme curators regularly promote the studies on social networks, educational institutions, KU study events, public lectures, etc. The number of students attending this study programme is very low.

(2) Expert's analysis

Regarding the admission criteria and process, the students confirmed that every information needed in the student selection and admission criteria are provided in KU website. Another answer was given that the University organises a study fair, in which they speak with representatives of the study programme and get answers to their questions.

Given the number of students that want to study this study programme, suggestion would be to expand publicity of this study programme in other cities, by showing the importance of Lithuanian philology, possibilities that this study programme and University can provide. Another way to attract students is to introduce the programme into local schools for young students, who are still in primary schools.

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

To ensure the mobility of students between countries and to recognize their results and periods of study abroad, Klaipėda University applies the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Before leaving for a period of study, the student signs an agreement on Erasmus+ Training, which confirms that the credits acquired during the study period will be recognized at the end of the mobility period. Before leaving for a period of study, the student agrees upon the study programme abroad with the Head of the Department. Upon successful completion of a period of study and submission of an academic certificate, the subjects studied during the period of study are recognized and transferred to the student's study plan to the KU Academic Information System, and upon completion of studies to the diploma supplement. The same credit transfer procedure applies to internships abroad.

All evidence of learning achievements obtained by the candidates in different environments (employer recommendation, commission certification, minutes of the performance appraisal meetings, feedback from users or clients, certificates obtained during seminars, etc.) is assessed. Two commissions are formed for the organization and implementation of the assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements: the Candidate Admission Commission; Commission for the Assessment and Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Achievements.

Students, teachers and non-academic staff are invited to get acquainted with the mobility opportunities during information seminars conducted in English and Lithuanian, where the

Erasmus+ mobility coordinator talks about Erasmus+ opportunities, rules and requirements. Moreover, students who have already participated in the Erasmus+ programme are invited to these seminars to share their impressions with other students. Foreign students, who came to study at KU through the Erasmus+ programme, are invited to present their countries and universities. All information is provided on the Klaipėda University website.

Due to the decline in the number of University students, too few students go to study at foreign universities under the Erasmus+ programme. A few years ago, it was noticed that there was some kind of a competition between students who pay for their studies and those with state-funded places, who are afraid of losing their “baskets”. Accordingly, students who pay for their studies go abroad more often. Graduate practical training is becoming more popular, when students leave under the Erasmus+ programme immediately after their studies, before gaining work experience. In 2019-2021, however, philology students did not go to foreign universities for periods of study. This was (and unfortunately still is) due to a number of reasons. It is difficult for students of the Lithuanian Philology programme to find Lithuanian studies in other universities. They could study in other programmes, but then it would not be possible to credit the courses that they have completed as relevant to those studied at KU. Another problem is social circumstances: many students work, some have started families, and therefore, avoid studying at foreign universities.

(2) Expert's analysis

The evaluation of the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies, and prior non-formal and informal learning is crucial for promoting student mobility and ensuring the transferability of learning outcomes.

Application of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS):

The application of the ECTS at Klaipėda University is a positive step towards ensuring the recognition and transferability of credits acquired during study periods abroad. The use of ECTS allows for a common credit system across participating institutions, facilitating the transparent assessment and recognition of learning outcomes. The agreement signed by students before their study period abroad, along with the involvement of the Head of the Department in approving the study programme, further ensures the recognition of credits upon successful completion. This procedure promotes consistency and fairness in credit transfer and supports student mobility.

Recognition of Study Periods and Internships Abroad:

The procedure for recognizing study periods and internships abroad, as described, appears to be well-defined and systematic. Upon successful completion of the study period or internship, students submit their academic certificates, and the subjects studied are recognized and transferred to the student's study plan and diploma supplement. This recognition process supports the seamless integration of international experiences into the students' academic journey, contributing to a well-rounded education.

Assessment and Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Achievements:

The establishment of two commissions for the assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements indicates a structured approach to recognizing learning acquired outside of formal educational settings. The use of various forms of evidence, such as employer recommendations, commission certifications, performance appraisal meetings, and feedback from users or clients, ensures a comprehensive evaluation process. This recognition procedure acknowledges the value of non-formal and informal learning experiences and enables students to receive credit for their relevant skills and knowledge.

Recommendations for Improvement:

While the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies, and prior non-formal and informal learning appears to be generally robust, there are a few areas that could be improved:

Promoting Student Participation in Mobility Programs: To address the decline in the number of students participating in mobility programs, it is essential to actively promote and incentivize student participation. This could involve raising awareness about the benefits of international experiences, addressing concerns about losing state-funded placements, and providing support in finding suitable study programs abroad that align with the students' field of study.

Addressing Barriers for Philology Students: To encourage philology students to pursue study periods abroad, it is important to address the specific challenges they face. Efforts should be made to identify potential partner universities that offer relevant Lithuanian studies or closely related programs. Additionally, providing support and resources for students who work or have family commitments can help alleviate some of the barriers they may face in pursuing study periods abroad.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

(1) Factual situation

Klaipėda University belongs to the Erasmus Student Network (ESN). It is one of the largest student organizations in Europe, which aims at helping incoming *Erasmus* students to integrate into a new environment more quickly, i.e. excursions, events, and social events are organized, support is provided in various situations, such as going to the Migration Department, to make a medical appointment, etc.

Students, teachers and non-academic staff are invited to get acquainted with the mobility opportunities during information seminars conducted in English and Lithuanian, where the Erasmus+ mobility coordinator talks about Erasmus+ opportunities, rules and requirements. Moreover, students who have already participated in the Erasmus+ programme are invited to these seminars to share their impressions with other students. Foreign students, who came to study at KU through the Erasmus+ programme, are invited to present their countries and universities. All information is provided on the Klaipėda University website.

(2) Expert's analysis

Academic mobility plays a crucial role in providing students with international exposure, cultural exchange, and educational enrichment. Klaipėda University's affiliation with the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) and its efforts to facilitate academic mobility demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the educational experience of its students.

Support from the Erasmus Student Network (ESN):

The inclusion of Klaipėda University in the ESN is a significant advantage for promoting academic mobility. The ESN is a well-established student organization with a wide network across Europe, which can provide valuable support to incoming Erasmus students. The organization's objective of helping students integrate into a new environment through excursions, events, and social activities is commendable. These initiatives not only foster cultural understanding but also promote social interactions, which are vital for the overall well-being and successful integration of international students.

Information Seminars:

The organization of information seminars in both English and Lithuanian is a positive step towards disseminating essential details about Erasmus+ opportunities, rules, and requirements. By conducting these seminars, Klaipėda University ensures that students, teachers, and non-academic staff are well-informed about the benefits and procedures of participating in the Erasmus+ program. Furthermore, inviting students who have already experienced the Erasmus+ program to share their impressions adds a personal touch and allows prospective participants to gain valuable insights from their peers. This peer-to-peer interaction can help alleviate concerns and provide a realistic perspective on the challenges and advantages of studying abroad.

Website Information:

The provision of comprehensive information on the Klaipėda University website is crucial for ensuring transparency and accessibility. By including details about academic mobility opportunities, program requirements, and the application process, the university facilitates easy access to pertinent information for interested students. It is essential that the website is regularly updated and user-friendly to enable smooth navigation and ensure that all necessary information is easily accessible.

Recommendations for Improvement:

While Klaipėda University demonstrates commendable efforts in ensuring academic mobility, there are a few areas where further enhancements could be made:

Expand Support Services: Apart from organizing excursions and social events, Klaipėda University could consider expanding its support services for incoming Erasmus students. This could include assistance with administrative tasks such as visiting the Migration Department, healthcare facilities, and general integration support. A dedicated support team or office could be established to provide comprehensive guidance throughout the mobility experience.

Language Support: Since the information seminars are conducted in English and Lithuanian, it would be beneficial to ensure that students who are not proficient in these languages are also provided with adequate support. Offering translation services or providing supplementary materials in multiple languages can help overcome language barriers and ensure that all students have equal access to information.

Enhanced Online Platform: While the presence of information on the university's website is commendable, continuous improvement of the online platform is necessary. The website should be regularly updated to provide the most recent information, and efforts should be made to make it more user-friendly and intuitive. Additionally, incorporating a dedicated section or forum where students can connect with each other and seek guidance would further enhance the digital support system.

In conclusion, Klaipėda University's collaboration with the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) and the measures taken to ensure academic mobility demonstrate a commitment to providing students with a rich and diverse educational experience. The support services provided by the ESN, the information seminars, and the availability of relevant information on the university's website are valuable resources for students considering participating in the Erasmus+ program. However, there is room for improvement, particularly in expanding support services, addressing language barriers, and enhancing the university's online platform. By implementing these recommendations, Klaipėda University can further enhance the conditions for ensuring academic mobility, ultimately enriching the educational journeys of its students.

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

Academic support is based on proper, benevolent, professional, and collegial relationships between students and teachers. The head of the department and other university teachers arrange meetings with students of all courses separately. During such meetings, efforts are made to listen to the students' opinions, answer their questions of concern, make suggestions, and discuss the cooperation between the students and the teachers; the aim is to find out whether students' expectations of studying in the chosen programme have been met; perspectives are also discussed, career and employment opportunities are introduced. Students may contact the Department of Philology or the Dean's Office with their questions of concern. Each university teacher also consults students outside lecture time according to the teacher consultation schedule approved by the Department.

Study infrastructure and material support for students in the field of philology is sufficient. Students have a possibility to use the funds of KU libraries and reading rooms, the Department and methodical office, other Faculty centres, the personal libraries of university teachers, the KU technical basis.

Students receive social scholarships through the *State Studies Foundation*. Students can receive one-time scholarship, which is provided for: participation in student research activities (publications, conference presentations, participation in research projects, participation in the activities of student research societies); participation in artistic activities (concerts, winners of competitions); participation in social activities of the University; and due to the deterioration of the student's material situation

Students are also provided with social support. It includes not only various kinds of financial support, but also other social solutions. After stating a good reason (illness, marital status, combination of studies and work, etc.), students may be granted the right to study according to an individual learning plan. Socially disadvantaged students, students living away from Klaipėda (at their request) may be placed in the KU dormitory. Full-time students can use the rights and discounts offered by the Lithuanian student identity card.

The university provides psychological counselling (contact and remote service). Consultations are provided in Lithuanian, Russian, English, and Polish. Spiritual pastoral consultations are organized.

Students are provided with individual career counselling.

(2) Expert's analysis

Providing academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support is crucial for the overall well-being and success of students.

Academic Support:

The presence of proper, benevolent, professional, and collegial relationships between students and teachers is a positive indication of academic support. The arrangement of separate meetings with students of all courses and the emphasis on listening to students' opinions, addressing their concerns, and providing suggestions contribute to a supportive learning environment. Discussing students' expectations, career opportunities, and employment prospects further enhances their academic experience. The availability of consultation schedules for teachers also ensures that students can seek guidance outside lecture hours. Overall, these measures indicate a commitment to academic support and fostering strong student-teacher relationships.

Study Infrastructure and Material Support:

The provision of sufficient study infrastructure and material support is crucial for students in the field of philology. The access to Klaipėda University libraries and reading rooms, department and methodical offices, faculty centers, personal libraries of university teachers, and the technical basis of the university demonstrates a comprehensive approach to supporting students' educational needs. These resources provide students with the necessary materials and facilities to engage in research, study, and academic development.

Social Scholarships and Support:

The availability of social scholarships through the State Studies Foundation is a valuable form of financial support for students. The criteria for receiving one-time scholarships based on participation in research activities, artistic activities, social activities of the university, and material circumstances provide students with opportunities to be recognized and financially supported for their achievements and needs. Furthermore, the provision of social support beyond financial assistance, such as the option for individual learning plans and access to KU dormitories for socially disadvantaged and non-local students, contributes to a supportive and inclusive environment. But regarding the information provided by the students, the criteria to acquire the financial support for students is too high and too demanding for a pretty sum.

Psychological Counselling and Career Counselling:

The provision of psychological counselling services in multiple languages and spiritual pastoral consultations reflects a comprehensive approach to supporting students' mental and emotional well-being. The availability of individual career counselling further enhances students' personal and professional development. These services indicate a recognition of the importance of holistic support and the university's commitment to addressing students' psychological and career-related needs.

Recommendations for Improvement:

While the support provided to students in the field of philology at Klaipėda University demonstrates several positive aspects, there are areas where further improvements can be made:

Enhanced Accessibility of Academic Support: To ensure the accessibility of academic support, it would be beneficial to establish clear channels of communication between students and faculty members. This could include regular office hours, online platforms for queries and feedback, or a dedicated system for tracking student progress and providing timely guidance.

Expanded Career Development Opportunities: While individual career counselling is provided, there is an opportunity to further enhance career development opportunities for students. This could include workshops, seminars, and internships that provide practical skills and connections to the job market. Collaborations with employers and alumni networks could also be established to provide students with mentorship and networking opportunities.

Strengthened Mental Health Support: While psychological counselling services are available, it is important to continually assess the demand for these services and ensure that there are adequate resources to meet students' needs. This may involve expanding the counselling team, increasing awareness of mental health resources, and providing additional training to faculty and staff to identify and support students who may require assistance.

To sum up, Klaipėda University demonstrates a commendable effort in providing academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support to students in the field of philology. The provision of academic support, study infrastructure, social scholarships, social support, psychological counselling, and career counselling contributes to a comprehensive support system. However, there is scope for improvement, particularly in enhancing the accessibility of

academic support, expanding career development opportunities, and strengthening mental health support. By implementing these recommendations, Klaipėda University can further enhance the suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness of the support provided to students, ultimately fostering their academic success and overall well-being.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

After the joint events of the beginning of the KU study year, introductory lectures are given to students at the faculties, where the faculty administration introduces the staff (the dean, vice-deans, study specialists, administrator, heads of departments, departmental study coordinators) and their areas of responsibility, and explains the issues on which students can address the relevant staff members of the faculty with. Afterwards, meetings in the departments are organized. Curators are assigned to groups of first cycle students.

(2) Expert's analysis

Study information and student counselling are critical components of a successful and supportive educational environment.

Joint Events and Introductory Lectures:

The organization of joint events at the beginning of the study year, followed by introductory lectures at the faculties, is a positive initiative. These events provide an opportunity for the faculty administration to introduce themselves and their roles to the students. By explaining the areas of responsibility, students can identify the relevant staff members to address with their concerns and questions. This step promotes transparency and accessibility, creating a conducive environment for students to seek assistance and guidance.

Departmental Meetings:

Organizing departmental meetings is another commendable practice. These meetings allow students to engage directly with the faculty members and gain a deeper understanding of the specific departments' activities and resources. It provides a platform for students to clarify any uncertainties they may have about their academic programs, course structures, and elective options. Departmental meetings contribute to the effective dissemination of study-related information and promote a sense of community within the department.

Assignment of Curators:

Assigning curators to groups of first cycle students is a valuable support system. Curators play a crucial role in providing guidance and assistance to students throughout their academic journey. They serve as mentors, helping students navigate academic requirements, choose appropriate courses, and address any personal or academic challenges they may encounter. The assignment of curators fosters personalized attention, enhances the student experience, and contributes to overall student well-being.

Recommendations for Improvement:

While the initiatives mentioned above indicate a positive approach to study information and student counselling, there are a few areas where further improvements can be made:

Regular Communication Channels: Establishing regular communication channels between faculty members and students can enhance the sufficiency of study information and student counselling services. This could include setting up office hours, creating online platforms for queries and feedback, or implementing an email system to address student concerns promptly. Open lines of communication can ensure that students have easy access to the necessary information and support when they need it.

Expanded Counselling Services: While the assignment of curators is a valuable step, it may be beneficial to consider expanding counselling services to cater to the diverse needs of students. This could include providing specialized counselling for academic, career, and personal development. Additionally, offering group workshops or seminars on study skills, time management, and stress management can further support students' overall well-being and academic success.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Clear recognition process.
2. Supportive academic environment.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low number of students.
2. Low mobility of students.
3. Bar to achieve one-time financial support is too high.

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

According to the SER, there are opportunities provided at KU to study and achieve the aspired aims at various circumstances: to obtain university education during a shorter period for those who have college education by crediting learning outcomes acquired in other institutions of higher education; to study according to an individual study plan in the presence of good reasons (illness, marital status, reconciliation between studies and work, etc).

KU provides opportunities to freely choose course units from various areas and fields of study. Student survey shows that most of the students are satisfied with the opportunity and the variety of the choice of course units.

Distance education methods are applied in both full-time and session-based studies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Students have the opportunity to personalise their study plans. Students collaborate with lecturers and can receive feedback. Experts' panel considers it to be satisfactory.

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

(1) Factual situation

Studies are accessible to both socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs, such as visual, mobility, or complex disabilities (special equipment has been purchased from the State Studies Fund under the project Ensuring Access to Studies for Students with Special Needs supported by the European Social Fund). Library departments provide an opportunity to use special programmes in reading rooms for people with individual needs. Impaired students can come to the faculty with personal assistants. The teachers of the department try to make the study content accessible to the student according to the specifics of one's impairment, or work remotely.

The impaired have a possibility to get financial support. The students in financial need have the possibility to get one-time scholarships from The Dean's Fund. Students receive social scholarships through the State Studies Foundation.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The conditions ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups, students with special needs in KU are adequate.

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

Students' achievements are periodically and systematically evaluated with fixed assignments in the AIS. Students are introduced to these assignments and their accounting forms during the first lectures.

Semester learning outcomes are evaluated all the time (activeness during seminars, during practical assignments, independent work, etc.) and noted according to the arranged plan (colloquia, tests, written works, etc.). The evaluation criteria are indicated in the KU Statute,

Study Regulations, 43rd article of the General Study Requirements of the III section of Procedures for Evaluating Results.

The academic communication is grounded on correctness, good will, professionalism, and collegial relationships between students and teachers. Information that is important for students (various useful indications, recommendations, links, teacher contacts, etc.) is placed on the webpage of the KU Department of Philology, on the noticeboard of the Faculty and VLE.

Students get feedback about their achievements all the time: the results of every lecture, the quality of carrying out the assignments, the range of students' progress during the semester are discussed, the colleagues' evaluation and self-evaluation are initiated; professional and communicative competences are discussed.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The monitoring of students' study progress and feedback to students is adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

As there were no graduates of the updated *Lithuanian Philology with Minor Studies in Pedagogy/Theatre Studies Specialization* during the analysed period, in the self-evaluation report is provided career overview of *Lithuanian Philology and Theatre Directing* programme that was evaluated in 2014. This programme is similar to the first cycle study programme *Lithuanian Philology with Theatre Studies Specialization*.

LPTD graduates work in education institutions as teachers of Lithuanian language and literature, in theatre studios and groups as managers-directors, as event organisers, journalists, television and radio show presenters, as cultural and education staff of municipal administration, public relations specialists, administrators of professional theatres and managers of international and republican festivals or projects, organisers-project managers in museums, libraries, etc.

The employers' feedback about employees who have completed studies at KU is very appealing. They value good professional preparation, knowledge of languages, and organisational abilities.

Students have the possibility to continue their studies at the second cycle in any Lithuanian or foreign higher education institution or choosing studies according to other programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The majority of students successfully find employment. Minor pedagogy studies and theatre studies specialisation ensures the satisfaction of the needs of language and art teachers in Klaipėda and Western Lithuania. The employability of the graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field are very good. The self-assessment details the successful careers of alumni. The graduates should be more actively involved in the process of developing and

improving the study programme, as well as in the study process. There should be closer cooperation with successful alumni from various institutions to support the university in developing a strategy to attract more students to this study programme.

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

(1) Factual situation

The principles and means of academic integrity, tolerance, and guaranteeing non-discrimination are defined in the Klaipėda University Academic Code of Ethics, Code of Ethics for Klaipėda University Teachers and Researchers. Regulations are formulated in the KU Code of Ethics regarding the prevention of discrimination, guaranteeing tolerance, personal freedom, honest evaluation, scientific and academic ethics and other basic human rights and values. The regulations of the Code of Ethics are obligatory for students, listeners, and partners. In order to ensure academic integrity, the electronic plagiarism verification system www.plag.lt is applied, and the plagiarism verification system Oxsico is installed on the VLA platform.

Teacher's relation with students is based on the principles of academic collaboration and transparency.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination is adequate.

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

Students' rights and duties are defined in the *KU Study Regulations*. A student can use one's right to address the dispute solving committee for the violation of one's interests. The procedures for the evaluation of the students' results and a possibility to appeal is announced before each examination session by the Rector's Order. Students find out about their achievements during a discussion with the teacher or via electronic 30 announcement in the KU AIS system, this information is personal. The results of the examination session are announced no later than 3 days after the examination. A student who does not agree with the evaluations of a specific course unit has a right to address the Appellation Committee.

There has not been a single appellation form the LP students for the last three years. One complaint of the LP student was submitted to the Academic Ethics Committee. The Academic Ethics Committee examined this complaint in accordance with the established procedure, and a warning was issued to the teacher.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The system for the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies in KU is clear and effective. Experts' panel considers this system to be adequate.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The study process, the system for assessing students' achievements, the monitoring of students' progress and the principles of academic integrity are clearly regulated.
2. Good conditions for socially vulnerable groups and the students with special needs.
3. Graduates have very good and prospective employment opportunities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The university has no clear strategy to attract more students to the programme.
2. Insufficient engagement with graduates who have made good careers.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

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

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

(1) Factual situation

According to SER (p. 32), the LP study programme is carried out by 15 teachers, the majority of whom hold the main positions at KU. Representatives of different industries also are invited to teach certain courses (especially in connection with theatre studies). Teaching staff have sufficient professional and scientific experience that corresponds to the course units taught. Teaching staff is also involved in research, especially professors who are leading scientists in the field of Baltic studies.

The implementation of the programme and the future of teaching staff is affected by the small number of students. It should also be noted that during the evaluation period there were no theatre studies (SER, p. 36), the programme has reoriented to the preparation of Lithuanian language and literature teachers.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Despite several internationally known Baltic studies researchers, in general the teaching staff of the programme is locally oriented, their qualification and competences are fully sufficient. Local orientation is confirmed by the fact that most of the indicated publications have been published either by Klaipėda University publishing house or by other Lithuanian publishers. Unfortunately, the expert panel did not have access to information about the scientific projects of the teaching staff, both supervised and shared. Therefore, it is not possible to ascertain what

the research strategy of the teaching staff and the LP study programme is. Is it and will it be focused on the theoretical and applied studies of the Klaipėda region and Western Lithuania, or will the main emphasis be on teacher education, or maybe combine both? The chosen strategy significantly can affect the number of teachers (especially recruiting young teachers and researchers), their qualification and scientific, didactic and professional competence.

It is important to note that at the current moment, the teaching staff of the LP study programme emphasizes the difficulty of balancing between teaching and doing research.

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

KU teachers have good opportunities to use Erasmus+ mobility (both teaching and training) and from 2019 the European University Network EU-CONEXUS exchange visits. According to SER (p. 37), Erasmus+ mobility was actively used before the pandemic (11 visits each year). The SER does not specifically indicate how much and what kind of incoming LP Programme teacher mobility there was during the evaluation period (the data are provided for KU or the Department as a whole, without distinguishing the information that relates directly to the FP Programme). SER has also not provided clear data on EU-CONEXUS exchange visits – whether and how many teachers of the programme participated in them.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In general, the outgoing mobility of the LP Programme's teachers is successful, mainly within the framework of Erasmus+. SER (p. 37) also noted that since the previous evaluation of the LP Programme, teachers' knowledge of foreign languages has improved, which has enabled them to go on more Erasmus+ mobility visits. However, the Programme should promote the widest possible involvement of guest lecturers via academic mobility.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to SER (p. 37), the KU envisages possibilities of improving qualification for the teaching staff and researchers and provides the conditions for increasing academic mobility, professional qualification development events, specialised courses, research without pedagogical activities, creative leave. Teachers must improve their qualification and can use one of the above-mentioned forms of qualification improvement at least once in 5 years. However, the SER does not say anything whether the teaching staff of the LP Programme participated in any courses during the evaluation period. It must be pointed out that the description of SER teaching staff Erasmus+ mobility mentions the fact that the teachers of the LP Programme improved their foreign language skills in order to be able to take advantage of mobility opportunities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The KU associates the improvement of teaching staff competencies mainly with pedagogical and research attestation every five years to determine whether the employee corresponds to the current position and can participate in the competition for tenure for the next term.

It is surprising that neither from SER nor during the meeting with the teaching staff of the LP Programme expert panel received any information about the opportunities to increase teachers' remote teaching and digitalization skills. It was the topicality of the pandemic that applied to every university teacher, and continues to be an integral part of the university's work.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Qualified teaching staff representing both outstanding Balticists and other specialists in the field, and experienced educators.
2. A variety of Erasmus+ and EU-CONEXUS mobility opportunities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Difficulty for teachers to balance research and workload.
2. Mainly local (regional) research orientation.
3. Opportunities for attracting new teachers have not been resolved.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The Faculty has 29 high-quality classrooms with about 780 places for work. Other classrooms are prepared to work with groups of 10-30 students, thus they meet the needs of the LP programme. Faculty has a library, 2 sports clubs, and premises for the Student Union office. Faculty students also use the Aula Magna in H. Mantas str. 90-2, which has two modern (250 seats) classrooms and a 100-seat conference room with teleconferencing broadcasting and reception equipment. All FSSH classrooms have internet, classrooms are equipped with a stationary multimedia. On weekdays, computer classes are scheduled for lectures, after classes – individual work of students.

Faculty library provides document printing services with a traditional and Braille printer VP Columbia. Individual lifts are available for students with mobility impairments, which help them to move upstairs and downstairs; electrically-height-adjustable tables ergoM1R-

1000/680E with corresponding chairs are used. According to the data available on 1 January 2022 the fund of this Library consisted of 19,236 copies of documents. Part of the publications is available for students at the reading room, and the most important books can be ordered for longer period

To ensure the availability of studies for students with individual needs, specialized software has been installed in library units (see Section 4): *Dolphin-Easy Converter*, *Easy Reader* (converts text into speech (in Lithuanian and English)); *Dolphin-Super Nova Magnifier* (provides a possibility to zoom all the information seen on the computer screen or its parts); *Win Talker Voice* (synthesizer in Lithuanian which transmits the information on the computer screen into speech); *JAWS 14.0 for Windows* (software that analyses information on the screen and transmits it to the speech synthesizer, which turns text into speech); *TOPAZ XL HD V 246 HL* (stationary electronic view zoomer); *Goodfeel 3.2 - Braille Music Translator* (programme, which translates text and sheet music into Braille script); *Traxsys Roller Joystick II* (alternative computer mouse for people with motoric impairments); *SARACE* reading equipment used to convert text into speech; special keyboards for the visually impaired.

E-resources of scientific information relevant to the LP programme are subscribed: Clarivate Analytics; databases of e-books (KU e-books, Academic Complete (Ebrary), eBooks on EBSCO); bibliographic and e-journal databases (Academic Search Complete, Academic Search Ultimate, Sage Journals Online, Science Direct, Springer Journals, Taylor & Francis, Wiley Online Library); system of similarity check Oxsico. All licensed databases are accessible 24/7 via both the computers of the University network and personal computers. Such an opportunity is provided by a remote access engine EZproxy.

(2) Expert's analysis

At the time of visitation, a lot of facilities of the faculty (different auditoriums, halls) were under reconstruction with the aim to modernise and renew it. The ones that are reconstructed seem up to standard, provided with computers, internet, projectors, etc. In regards to students with special needs, faculty does not provide a lot of accessibility for students with special needs (did not see much of lifts for students with impaired movement).

Talking about the library, the library is also under reconstruction, but has individual working areas that students can use for their studies. Library also provides desks and computers for individual work. Specialised software was not introduced during the visitation.

About the e-resources, students confirmed that they have free accessibility via the internet to databases containing research material needed. They also receive news about new material from the teachers.

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

(1) Factual situation

Current study conditions should be further improved by the repair of the FSSH started in early 2022. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania together with the EU Structural Funds have allocated a total of EUR 1,200,000 (of which 104,000 for equipment) for the infrastructure renewal project (No. 09.1.1-CPVA-V-720-13-0001, 19 February 2020). The aim of the project is the repair of the south wing, auditoriums, staircases, facilities of general usage (1794 sq. m.), creation of new study spaces, renewal of computer and other equipment, development of the Library by modernizing the existing premises and installing completely new ones at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

(2) Expert's analysis

As was mentioned, a lot of reconstruction work is happening inside the Faculty. It was told that students with special needs will also be taken into account when reconstructing (providing lifts, etc.). Provided that the funds are allocated carefully, it must be said that the reconstruction works are being done throughout the whole Faculty, which is too broad of a spectrum.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Library provides the newest material and is provided to the students.
2. Availability to use individual working areas for students to work after lecture hours.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Reconstruction work is being done too broadly, focus is needed to repair / reconstruct one piece at the time.
2. Low number of measures for mobility of students with special needs.

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 system of quality assurance is multi-level. According to SER (p. 45), the internal quality of studies is determined by the resolutions of the KU Council and Senate and the strategy of implementation of Rector's orders. The study programme quality assurance is guaranteed by the Committee of Humanities, the academic body supervising the study programmes of the study field and their implementation (with the participation of students and employers). Decisions regarding management and quality of the study programme assurance are made collegially.

Committee of Humanities is an academic body supervising the study programmes of the study field and their implementation. It is responsible to the Faculty Council that evaluates the quality of the study programmes of the Faculty, considers and submits the study programmes and their changes to the Senate for approval. The Committee of Humanities cooperates with the Study Quality Commission of KU, the Vice-Rector for Studies, the Study Service, the Student Union of KU and other administrative divisions (SER, p. 45).

The structure and content of study programmes implemented at KU are annually reviewed and updated. Every year in October-November, study programmes of the next year are reviewed and discussed, course units are re-accredited by evaluating information accumulated during the year.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Internal quality assurance system of the LP study study programme is sufficient and effective. The Committee of Humanities, with the participation of students and employers, controls the quality at the faculty level, after which the information is processed at the university level. The basis of quality assurance is annual self-assessment reports and various surveys.

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

(1) Factual situation

Not only students and teachers, but also various employers and social partners are involved in the quality assessment of the LP study programme. The Department of Philology emphasizes its close and diverse cooperation with employers from the public and private sector (local municipality, educational institutions, publishing houses, newspapers, local theatre etc.). As stated in the SER (p. 46), the receiving and evaluation of feedback from the students, employers and practitioners is an integral part of the study programme improvement and self-analysis. The aim is to use and integrate the quantitative and qualitative assessment methods of the study programme during the meetings organized by the Department where employers and practitioners are invited.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders is clearly visible in the creation and implementation of the LP study programme. For example, under the influence of the local labour market and employers, the Lithuanian language and literature teacher training module has been specially developed in the study programme in recent years. This is determined by the acute shortage of teachers in the region.

On the other hand, students emphasize the need to increase the amount of internships. However, students indicate that they are satisfied with the opportunity to choose different internships themselves, not only the school, in order to build more work experience related to the field of study.

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

(1) Factual situation

On the KU's website, an extensive information about various study programmes, incl. LP study programme, is published, e.g., requirements for admission to study programmes, outcomes of the study programme, descriptions of course units, acquired qualification, career opportunities. The results of the evaluation of study programmes, feedback of stakeholders (if any) are also announced publicly, but in the way of generalized summary.

Other channels of the information are also used. E. g., stakeholders are invited to Department meetings, round table discussions, participate in the activities of the *Committee for the Humanities*, in the process of evaluation and defence of final theses. In all the mentioned cases, there is a very good opportunity to exchange information about the implementation and improvement of the LP study programme.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Evaluation of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes, according to the SER and the meeting with representatives of the study program, is efficient. It should be noted that some employers and alumni emphasise the great role of Lithuanian philology in the study of the cultural history and linguistic peculiarities of Western Lithuania. Namely, the program should prepare Lithuanian philologists of a wider profile, not only teachers.

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

According to SER (p. 46), study feedback at the University is regulated by the *Description of the Procedure for Organizing Feedback on Studies at KU*. On the basis of the description, KU systematically conducts surveys on course units, on practical training, on the reasons for termination of studies, and a survey of alumni. Feedback is anonymous, provided electronically or in the form of a written questionnaire. In general, all students and alumni evaluate the study program as good and suitable for the requirements of the modern labour market.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Evaluation of the opinion of the field students according to the SER and the meeting with representatives of the study program, is efficient. Surveys also provide an opportunity to find out certain nuances that are positive or negative in the student's assessment of the study programme. E. g., students are satisfied that they have a flexible time-table to combine their studies and work. Students are also satisfied with the possibility to combine Lithuanian

philology studies with the theatre module. They can suggest to include the new study course in the curriculum, but the implementation depends on student amount.

Surprisingly, Erasmus+ mobility is not very popular among students of LP study programme. Perhaps this is because many students work in parallel with their studies.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The effective KU multi-level quality assessment system that also includes different types of feedback.
2. Systematic cooperation with stakeholders.
3. Ability to respond to labour market requirements based on student, alumni and stakeholder feedback.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There is some risk of overloading students, alumni, teachers etc. with surveys.
2. The activities carried out to manage study quality and public information are not able to ensure a sufficient number of students in the programme.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	Bachelor's theses must be submitted online and checked for plagiarism.
Links between science (art) and studies	Decide on a strategy to link more clearly research and teaching, which currently seem too disconnected
Student admission and support	To encourage philology students to pursue study periods abroad. Efforts should be made to identify potential partner universities that offer relevant Lithuanian studies or closely related programs.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	It is recommended to develop a strategy to attract more students to the programme.
Teaching staff	It is recommended to develop more national (not only regional) and especially international research.
Learning facilities and resources	It is recommended to narrow your reconstruction fields. Focus is needed to impact a lower area of the faculty at the time.
Study quality management and public information	It would be worth considering whether the study quality management and public information strategy should be changed in order to attract a larger number of students to the programme.

V. SUMMARY

Main findings of the expert panel:

The design of the Study Programme complies with legislative requirements, with subjects evenly distributed and modules appropriate to the level of study. The learning objectives and outcomes of the two modules of the Study Programme prepare students well for further graduate study or work in their respective fields (activities of Lithuanian educators and theatre professionals). The undergraduate theses submission procedure should be double-checked: they should be submitted online in .PDF format and thoroughly checked for plagiarism.

Lithuanian philology is a rare discipline at the European level and all the teaching and research strengths in this field must be preserved. In particular, the teachers of this component carry out research in niche areas (dialectology, marine terminology, etc.) which should motivate the creation of specialised research-oriented courses. In terms of professional training, the university would benefit from offering a speciality not represented in other universities and meeting Lithuania's need for Lithuanian language teachers. If necessary, the maintenance of this training in western Lithuania could be achieved through structuring partnerships with the universities of Vilnius and Vytautas Magnus, in order to provide a sufficiently attractive offer by sharing strengths (via online courses).

Klaipėda University exhibits strengths in providing study information, student counselling, support for students, and recognition of qualifications. However, there may be areas for improvement, such as increasing the number of recognized foreign qualifications and further enhancing the support system based on specific student needs (lowering the margin that needs to be achieved in order to get one-time financial support).

The need for the programme is underpinned by graduate and student employability rates. Graduates are particularly successful in Lithuanian schools, where they are able to integrate their knowledge of Lithuanian philology and theatre.

One of the strengths of the study programme *Lithuanian Philology* is qualified teaching staff representing both outstanding Balticists and other specialists in the field, and experienced educators. However, it should be recognized that the research activity of teaching staff is mainly locally oriented, so it should be given a wider national and international dimension. In order for the study programme to become more dynamic, the involvement of teachers in high-ranking national and international projects is definitely necessary. Attracting young teachers and researchers to the study programme and the university also is a very important and urgent issue.

The facilities of Klaipėda University play a crucial role in creating an optimal learning and research environment for its students and faculty members. While there are areas that could benefit from improvement, such as better planning of the works of reconstruction. By addressing this issue, Klaipėda University can further elevate the quality of its facilities and create a more enriching educational experience for all its stakeholders.

Despite the extensive work in study quality management and public information, the study program is threatened by the small number of students, especially the lack of students in the first year of study. This indicates that the strategy for informing potential students and society in general about the quality and development of the program should be reconsidered.

In conclusion, the expert panel would like to thank Klaipėda University and representatives of the study programme *Lithuanian Philology* for preparing the self-evaluation report. Also, the evaluation team would like to express its gratitude for the site-visit at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Andra Kalnača