CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of INFORMATION SERVICES

at Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija

Expert panel:

1. **Associate professor Diane Marie Pennington (panel chairperson),** *academic;*
2. **Prof. dr. Martine Van Selm,** *academic;*
3. **Associate professor Crystal Fulton,** *academic;*
4. **Dr. Gintarė Tautkevičienė,** *representative of social partners / academic;*
5. **Ms. Viktorija Lankauskaitė,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator – *Ms. Evelina Keturakytė*

Report language – English

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Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	*Information Management*
State code	6531JX016
Type of studies	Higher Education College Studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies (3 years) Part-time studies (4 years)
Credit volume	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Social Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian (Double Diploma programme – English)
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	8 May 2012

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

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CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 Order No. V-149. The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel *13 December, 2021.* Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Review Visit was organised online using video-conferencing tool (Zoom).

Associate professor Diane Marie Pennington, Expert panel's Chair Person; Associate Professor in Information Science, Department of Computer and Information Sciences, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK.

Prof. dr. Martine van Selm, Dean at Erasmus School of History, Culture & Communication (ESHCC), Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands.

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Dr. Gintarė Tautkevičienė, Representative of Social Partners; Director of Library at Kaunas University of Technology, associate professor of the Social Sciences Department at Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania.

Ms. Viktorija Lankauskaitė, Student's Representative; PhD student, graduate of second cycle study programme *Digital Culture* at Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Changes in the library resources.
2.	Explanation about staff and student ratios.
3.	Professional skills of the graduates in Information Management from the point of view of the employers, students and teachers (January-February, 2021).
4.	Information Management programme budget.
5.	A list of the lecturers and the level of their skills of the English language.
6.	Examples of Descriptions of study subject tasks: Subjects "Information Behaviour", Bibliographic Description", "Digitization of Information", "Methodology of Applied Research", "Internet Technologies".

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

Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija (hereafter – the College) is the only college in Lithuania that aims to prepare the graduates for library related careers in the study programme of *Information Management* (state code – 6531JX016) (hereafter – study programme, the Programme) in the study field of Information Services. The College is a state higher education institution, acting as a public institution carrying out first cycle college studies.

The College has several faculties and departments: a) the Faculty of Health Care (3 departments); b) the Faculty of Business and Technologies (5 departments); c) Non-formal Education; and d) the Centre for Fostering Entrepreneurship and Leadership (13 operational structural units). The *Information Management* study programme sits in the Department of Management and Communication (hereafter – the Department) of the Faculty of Business and Technologies.

Students of the social sciences field's group make up almost 20% (284 persons) of all College students. Approximately 25% (70 persons) of these students are studying in the field of Information Services in the *Information Management* study programme.

The last external international expert evaluation of the Programme took place in 2015. On 10 March 2016, the Programme was accredited for 3 years (until 31 August 2019). The current evaluation covers most of the period from 2017 to 2020, with some data from 2016 and 2021 as needed for analyses.

The study programme was substantially updated in 2017 to reflect the conditions of the previous evaluation.

In 2020, the College has signed a double diploma agreement, which enables both Programme students to study at Porto Institute of Accounting and Administration (hereafter – ISCAP) and

ISCAP students to study at the College. This increased the visibility and competitiveness of the Programme at national and international level and expanded the employability and career prospects of graduates of both institutions.

I. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Information Services study field and first cycle at Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija *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

In the Self Evaluation Report (hereafter – SER) the College states its aim is to train information services professionals who can address a range of information activities. Their undergraduate programme aims to develop knowledge and skills with regards to the broad field of information management, including courses on information sources, media, archives and systems; courses on information behaviour and communication; courses on digitization and information security; and on research methods and language.

The College has established relationships with social partners (e.g. Radviliškis Vincas Kudirka progymnasium, Šiauliai County P. Višinskis Public Library, Šiauliai County Archive) and strategic partners which allows for the incorporation into the Programme of demands and suggestions that come directly from the labour market.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Programme's aims and outcomes meet the needs of society and the labour market in Lithuania. This full-time and part-time study programme is the only programme at any level in Lithuanian institutions providing library and information science education for the degree of Social Sciences for the labour market. Most graduates work as librarians in public libraries (for example in Public Library of Mažeikiai District Municipality, Library of Šiauliai Zokniai Progymnasium, Public Library of Vilnius County Adomas Mickevičius, Jurgis Bielinis Public Library of Biržai District Municipality etc.). Four graduates whom the expert panel met during the site visit are working as librarians in several libraries.

During the site visit, the social partner for 10 years with the school said that the demand is getting higher for graduates in this field. Production companies are looking for people who can work with databases, and who have good literacy skills. The representative was very happy to collaborate with the graduates and to offer work positions. Key skills mentioned by the social partner were digitalisation and technological assistance. Additionally, the programme was emphasised as not being only about libraries, as what the students learn is valued in many different jobs, such as database administrators, project manager, and other jobs beyond traditional settings.

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Management and Communication has continued to adhere to their stated programme aims and objectives; they have continued to provide education for library and information science professionals. The department flipped teaching to the online environment during the pandemic and the staff and students seemed generally comfortable with this transition.

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

(1) Factual situation

The College mission is "flexibly and quickly respond to changes in the labour market, to prepare qualified specialists, to educate creative, educated, dignified, ethically responsible, independent and entrepreneurial personality". As stated in the SER, the aim and intended learning outcomes of the updated Programme are directed not only to the traditional skills necessary for information management and specialist of information services, such as information selection, its systemization, archiving, storage, dissemination, etc., but also to the development of broader skills needed for the modern specialist, especially to the application of ICT in information management processes, knowledge of communication, business and public management, marketing, etc.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study programme's aims and outcomes align with the mission and objective of the field of library and information science.

In the SER, the Department states they have aligned their study programme aims and objectives with those of the College. While the programme aims and objectives cover a number of the desired graduate attributes for Information Services, these aims and objectives should be reviewed and organised as generic and specific to training for work in libraries. Then the description of each aim and objective should be reviewed and more clearly and succinctly presented.

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

(1) Factual situation

The study programme for Information Services is positioned within the social sciences and graduates qualify for a professional bachelor's degree of Social Sciences.

The programme offers a total of 180 credits, which meets the legal requirements for the number of credits for the first cycle study programmes. Credits allocated to accomplish learning outcomes of the Information Services study field (including internship and preparation of a final thesis) is 133 ECTS. The total scope of internship (practical placement) is 30 ECTS, the final degree project is allocated 12 ECTS. The number of contact hours (including distance contact hours) of the whole study programme is 2373 (49,4%). The lay-out is consistent with legal requirements.

The study programme is characterised by a 4-block structure in which courses at a basic level are followed by courses at an advanced level. Students need to select 133 ECTS, and then they can choose courses that deepen their knowledge in business-related and/or library and information science-related courses (15 ECTS). In addition, students choose a language block and free electives (which are also open to students from other disciplines) from a wide range of options (9 ECTS).

In the SER, the Department has stated that the Programme was updated in 2017, followed by a review of content and learning outcomes for a double degree with Portugal in June 2020.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The design of the study programme meets the requirements of the *Description of Study Cycles* (Order No. V-1012 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2015) and the *Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies* (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016).

The Programme provides the legislated credits. It would be helpful if the information about the credits and how credits are parsed could be stated more clearly. Additionally, the spread of credits needs clarity. This should be followed by a review of the credits and courses necessary for the study field of Information Services. For instance, students currently must complete a considerable number of courses/credits before selecting optional courses.

There are a number of areas that should be taught in a study programme for Information Services, and the Department covers a number of these, though there is room for updating. While the Department has stated that they have consulted American Library Association (ALA) and The Library and Information Association (CILIP) library and Information Science Guidelines for Study Programme Development, they should also consult the draft *Guidelines for Professional Library and Information Science (LIS) Education Programmes* provided by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), which can be accessed at https://lisedu.files.wordpress.com/2021/02/lisepguidelines-consult-draft.pdf. Although IFLA's document is currently in draft form, it is anticipated that it will move to a finalised version in the near future, and could still be a useful source in developing the programme.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER presents the logic for organising the study process as such: "the Programme' aim → intended learning outcome → study subject' outcome → evaluation and assessment of study subject' outcome → study method → study process". Here, the links are established between individual courses and their outcomes and the main outcomes of the study programme. The assessment practices help to evaluate the achievement of these outcomes.

Examples of assessment have been provided to the expert panel. The students are required to complete multiple choice and open question exams, prepare presentations based on the analysis of information behaviour, write bibliographic descriptions, and execute practical tasks.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Assessment outcomes need to be stated succinctly and clearly. Clear linkage between assessment outcomes and course outcomes and study programme outcomes should be provided. This provides a clear pathway for all stakeholders to understand what can be achieved through a particular course.

Assessment should fully address particular Information Services competencies. For example, cataloguing should include student development of full metadata records, including the application of UNIMARC, a universal MARC cataloguing format published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutes (IFLA), and Research Data Alliance (RDA) standards. There should be clear linkages between theoretical principles and the application of these principles.

Examinations for courses need to focus on individual course content, not combine topics from courses in the examination for a course. Examinations should test depth of learning, as opposed to addressing memory skills and surface learning. To achieve this and to avoid surface learning, examinations should be mainly discursive, with a smaller number of multiple choice questions.

A clear set of competencies to be gained through assessment is needed. The Expert panel would like to refer the College to Section 3.1.3 where the panel has listed professional bodies that have established documentation on expected competencies and skills for Information Services professionals.

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 Programme contains a number of subjects with varying credit loads. During the site visit, the Department of Management and Communication has explained that the credit loading follows the Bologna Model and that student time per course is calculated according to time needed to complete learning for each course.

The programme model pursues gradual deepening of knowledge and improvement of abilities. There are logical connections and continuity established between the taught subjects, where the skills learnt in one subject are transferable to other subjects. The example given in SER informs that the "knowledge and skills acquired in *Information and Knowledge Management* study subject by studying Information Flows Monitoring and Assessment, are necessary to achieve the learning outcomes of *Formation of Information Resources* subject". This way, the knowledge students gain is consistent.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Programme covers a range of topics. While the Department has considered the Bologna Model in allocating study hours to courses, the differing credit weighting for courses is confusing. A consistent, transparent approach is needed, in which courses have similar credit weightings and hours in keeping with the Bologna Model.

This revision is essential to support exchange programmes with other countries in Europe.

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

The Programme has a core of 133 compulsory credits, 15 credits for deepening knowledge and 9 credits as free choices. The students have a possibility to study foreign languages for their professional needs (Professional foreign language), but the language subjects (English, Russian, German) are compulsory.

Student learning is scaffolded, so that students build on the learning of a previous term. For instance, in a student's first year, in September, they study an introduction into the study field, including information services and general subjects. In the next term in February, they start building on the first semester.

After adding core courses, students select courses as connected to their professional interest. They have an opportunity to add additional courses to their studies. Most choices are closely connected to their study programme and competency development.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Programme offers students a wide selection of courses. However, the number of courses seems too large for the size of this programme to make most efficient use of staff and material resources.

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

(1) Factual situation

The Programme is research-focussed. Students complete a final thesis. Requirements for final thesis, their preparation and defence are regulated by the *Description of Graduation Project Development, Defence and Evaluation Procedure of Business and Public Management and Social Sciences Study Field Groups Programmes of the Faculty of Business and Technologies* (2019).

Students select topics of the Final Thesis that are relevant to information management problems, and analyse a chosen organisation. They propose solutions that are related to their practice placements (where they can collect the data) and are applicable. The topics can also be proposed by social partners (for example, the topic proposed by Biržai District Municipality Jurgis Bielinis Public Library was *Evaluation of Mediation of Library in the Process of Information Retrieval from the Employees' and Users' Perspective: Case of Biržai District Municipality Jurgis Bielinis Public Library*) and the students may share thesis results with them.

The theses are defended before the Qualification Committee, which consists of 5 people that assess the learning outcomes: 3 specialists-practitioners (social partners), a professional subjects' teacher, and an administrative employee.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

This sharing of research through a student viva examination presentation offers a nice example of sharing work with the Department and community. This is currently feasible, given the small number of students current on the Programme.

However, should the Programme grow, a thesis viva at undergraduate level may not be feasible. And currently, the process around a viva takes time that staff could use for their own research. The Department should review this process and consider alternatives for undergraduates, as applied in other institutions around the world.

Additionally, the thesis topics could be more flexible, given the College's positive views towards individualised learning, as there seems to be many case studies.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The Programme has multiple relevant learning outcomes.*
2. *There is variety in course offerings, and this allows students to tailor their learning according to their needs.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *Learning outcomes for the programme are sometimes unclear.*
2. *The overall number of courses is too large.*

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

Professors and lecturers engage in research activities themselves and participate/publish in (international) conferences, journals and books.

The Programme offers students opportunities to participate in a variety of research activities: presentation in research conferences, paper writing, informal students' research union. They conduct research by using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The focus of research generally lies on applied research aimed at solving a practical problem, sometimes offered by the social partners. Applied research is relevant to both the student and the institution that commissioned it.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The applied science and art activities are sufficient. The scope of the research methods courses could be enriched by including use of software for stats (such as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) or Computer Package for Mathematical Statistics (R)), as well as expanding the range of research methods offered.

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 Programme succeeds in establishing solid cross connections between social partners and the College during the academic year. Social partners are consulted for input in meetings with social partners and employers. In addition, they participate in student conferences, offer practical placements, take seats in committees for final thesis defence and round table discussions. In addition, relationships with strategic partners have been established, such as with the Chamber of Commerce, and the Association of Industrialists in order to provide the Programme with much relevant information about the labour market in a timely manner. Examples are key skills in digitalisation, tech assistance, data analyses, and project management. Feedback from social partners goes directly to the Programme Committee on the basis of which the Programme is being adjusted and improved.

In addition, in the SER is described that the subjects' teachers of the study field engage purposefully in research on Information and Organisation Communication Management and related fields in Social Sciences and Humanities – as is shown by the teachers' publication records and conference contributions in the Communication and Information Science Field and related interdisciplinary fields of Management, Economics and Education.

In addition applied outsourcing research is conducted with permanent external partners by which the relationship with these partners is consolidated even more. In the SER is described how the applied research output feeds back into the courses, by discussing these applied research topics with students in the courses and adding the recent research articles to course readings. For example, in the course *Information and Knowledge Management* principles of

intellectual freedom and free access to information is linked to recent insights regarding the web 4.0; in other courses students are introduced to the latest design trends, computing technologies, cloud computing technologies, e-heritage insights and more

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The link between the content of Information Services field studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology is well substantiated.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students are involved in research in many ways in their study programme: methods courses in which they apply skills, courses in which they engage in paper writing, and the final project. In addition, during the internships research is conducted.

The Programme offers students opportunities to participate in a variety of research activities: presentation in research conferences, paper writing, informal students' research union. They conduct research by using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Development of research skills and knowledge is offered by methodological courses (statistics and applied methods, 9 ECTS) but also through the substantive courses. In addition, students work on research in the final paper and during the internship. Student projects include for instance assisting the local public library by distributing surveys or include developing their own research projects. In the projects students demonstrate a practical application of research.

The Programme recommends students to participate in student conferences and encourages students to prepare CVs or competencies portfolios. Professors and lecturers also offer the opportunity to prepare for a presentation for a conference in lieu of an exam, or to conduct project activities and present these at college levels and at partner institutions. The students indicate being sufficiently informed about all options and that professors and lecturers encourage them to share in research work. Students see this as a good experience and the reasons for not participating is a lack of time amongst (working) students or a lack of confidence.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The conditions for students to get involved in applied science activities are sufficiently consistent with their study cycle. The Programme executors should think of ways to increase the number of students participating in these projects.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *Research is a recurring element in the Programme (both in methodological courses and substantive courses, as well as internships and thesis work).*
2. *Students may participate in research projects.*
3. *The Programme has strong relationships with social partners and the labour market in research.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *The scope of the research methods courses is now rather narrow and does not include the use of software for statistics (such as SPSS or R), or a wide range of research methods offered.*

2. *There is a small portion of students that actually participate in extracurricular research activities.*
3. *The theses topics are rather limited and focused more on certain methods and case studies.*

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

As the SER indicates, students are admitted according to the rules set for all Lithuanian Higher Education institutions: "either through joint admission to state funded (SF) places and state non-funded (SNF) places or through direct (institutional) admission (only to State non-funded places). Joint admission is organised and carried out by Lithuanian Higher Institutions Association for Organizing Joint Admission (LAMA BPO)." The criteria and process are disclosed both by LAMA BPO and by the College, informing entrants about the minimum requirements and the information is available on their respective websites.

The score for admission is calculated from the exam results and final subject evaluations (provided in the graduation certificate): Lithuanian language and literature (weighted coefficient 0.4), history, or mathematics, or information technologies, or geography (0.2), the third subject which does not coincide with other subjects (0.2) and foreign language (0.2). According to the SER, the College follows the criteria set by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport for giving additional points to the entrance score. Furthermore, the College recognises informal learning in their own admission rules: "additional points may be awarded to applicants entering SNF study places if they have completed *Lithuanian Junior Achievement* secondary education programme "Economics and Business" or if they have worked in voluntary programmes for at least 6 weeks, etc. – however, only if, even without these additional points, the competitive score of the applicant is at least 4.3 as set minimum score by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport."

Up to 9 preferences can be expressed by applicants in the LAMA BPO admission system. During the evaluated period, the priorities of the applicants and the number of signed agreements are reflected in the table No. 1 below, sourced from SER (page 21).

Table No. 1. Number of preferences (only those participating in competition) by priority and number of admissions

Admission year	Study programme mode**	Number of applications submitted			Number of signed agreements*		
		Priority 1	Other priorities	Total	SF	SNF	Total
2017	PT	**29**	58	87	26	2	28

2018	PT	**17**	35	52	13	5	18
2019	FT	**14**	42	56	10	8	18
2020	FT	**9**	41	50	9	4	13
	PT	**8**	23	31	5	4	9

*SF – state-funded studies, SNF – state non-funded studies **FT – full-time, PT – part-time

The analysis provided in the SER reveals that the competitive score of the entrants is higher than the set minimum of 4.3. The scores have been increasing during the analysed period, but due to changes in the calculation principles of the competitive score, the scores of 2019 and 2020 are not compared to the previous years' score. The average scores have been increasing as well during the analysed period.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Since the process of student selection and admission is monitored by an organisation that oversees the admission to all higher education institutions in Lithuania, this presents no difficulties for the College. The relevant information is clearly presented in the College and LAMA BPO websites. The criteria for awarding additional points are also clear.

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

For entrance to the Programme, the College credits partial studies according to the *Description of the Procedure for Crediting Learning Outcomes of Partial Studies* (2020), where the partial studies are credited based on agreed study content (other countries) and non-reconciled study content (Lithuania), and according to the *Description of the Order of Assessment, Recognition and Crediting of Academic Achievements Acquired by Non-formal Education and Informal Learning* (2018), outlining the assessment of participation in various events, internships, and other kinds of informal study. These procedures are relevant when crediting Erasmus+ programme learning outcomes as well.

The SER indicates that during the analysed period, credits of the Erasmus+ learning outcomes of the returnees were accepted in the Programme (2 students). During the evaluation period, 14 students had their learning outcomes credited under the non-reconciled study content.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The College follows clear criteria, set by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and in evaluating informal learning according to the rules established by the College. The College also follows a clear set of criteria for recognising foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning. This information is available on the College website.

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

(1) Factual situation

The students of Information Services field have a possibility to participate in Erasmus+ academic mobility programme. The conditions for academic mobility are also reinforced by the double diploma studies agreement with Portugal. The procedures for applying and participating in the Programme are clear and the students are well informed about the opportunities.

During the evaluation period, 7 students came to the Programme for partial studies, which represents 6.2 percent of the total Programme students. In March 2020, because of quarantine, 3 of them returned to their country of full-time studies. Two ISCAP students have declared their intention to complete field studies under a double diploma agreement.

During the evaluation period, only two students left for studies abroad, because of part-time studies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During the analysed period, only two outgoing students participated in Erasmus+ exchange programme. While students are well informed and have opportunities to go abroad for their studies, one of the obstacles appears to be the part-time nature of studies, since the current students are studying only part-time. Part-time students of the Information Services field are often working and have obligations that diminish their possibilities to participate in the exchange programme. The College should consider ways to facilitate and support more students to participate in the exchange programme.

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

(1) Factual situation

The College supports the students in a number of ways. The students are informed about the study programme and the courses at the beginning of each semester, and have a possibility to study according to the individual study schedule. The consultations are provided by teachers and various departments, depending on the issues.

Financially, several types of scholarships are available to students: incentive (based on the outcomes of the previous semester); one-off (based on scientific, cultural, social or sports activities, or according to the need, in case of a difficult financial situation or an unfortunate event (passing of an immediate family member, accidents)); social scholarship (available statewide, according to the criteria set by the State Studies Foundation); study scholarship (for students in state non-funded places with higher scores); and nominal (funded by different foundations, or companies, in the name of the president, or other patrons).

Accommodation services are also offered for students in the dormitories. The demand is fully met, and both full-time and part-time students can take advantage of the service.

Psychological support is provided by the Šiauliai City Municipality Public Health Bureau, the students are informed via College website and Facebook page.

Individually, the students can also join a number of artistic, cultural, sports, scientific or social groups that organise and participate in different events, implement various projects and activities. The Student Representative body is also active in contributing to personal development of students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Students of the Information Services field are aware of where to ask for support and help if needed. They count on curators, tutors, the head of the department, and vice-dean. Students also know about the available financial and psychological support. The information regarding this reaches students by email, in face-to-face meetings.

If students need psychological help, the College helps to find a specialist, the help is available through Šiauliai City Municipality Public Health Bureau, the information is easily available in the College website. The students can also be provided with accommodation in the dormitory. In conclusion, the students are well informed and taken care of.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

Section 3.2.3.1 of the SER explains how students admitted to the field of Information Studies are introduced to the study programme, the requirements, and other relevant information for students, as well as how consultations are provided to the students during the course of the studies.

Study information is available on various levels: department, teachers, administrative staff, dean's office. Student groups also have a dedicated curator, who provides them with various information first-hand.

Students are also informed by emails, the College website and other means of communication. The timetables for academic consultations are available on the College website as well.

Students have an introductory lecture that involves more practical activities: visiting facilities and educational site visits. Students become acquainted with the resources, become registered readers, etc.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The discussion with students of the Information Services field during the site visit revealed that the students are well informed and know where to find the necessary information about their studies. In accordance with the facts outlined in SER, the students get most of the information from their group curators. Students also seem to feel part of the community the College and the Programme offer.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The students have well developed academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support available.*
2. *The level of study information and counselling meets students' requirements.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *The small number of students in the Information Services field may affect uptake of exchanges.*
2. *Part-time studies is one of the factors that affects academic mobility.*
3. *The small size of the Programme may not support visibility of the Programme in the country.*

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Studying, student performance and graduate employment shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.4.1. Evaluation of the teaching and learning process that enables to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes

(1) Factual situation

The College provides full-time and part-time studies that are organised according to the procedures set by the College. Students may choose individual studies (Description of Individual Study Procedure, 2019). The rate between contact hours and independent work hours is regulated in the College Description of Study Programmes De*velopment General Requirements* (2019). Practices are organised, conducted and evaluated in accordance with the *College's Practices Organizing and Assessing Procedure* (2019).

During the COVID lockdown, studies were organised by virtual means of communication: using video conferences on *Google Meet, Zoom*, e-mail, and remote study environments such as *Google Classroom* and *Moodle*. Study materials were provided electronically.

The learning outcomes are achieved by a number of methods: lectures, workshops, seminars, demonstrations, discussions, group work, simulations, and others. The achievement of the outcomes is evaluated through a cumulative assessment system. Students' needs are addressed through consultations with instructors and independent assessment tasks.

The students can pursue careers in libraries, information collecting and management centres, perform administrative information management related tasks, and work in the private and state sector. The graduates can continue their studies in the master's degree studies after additional studies depending on their chosen field.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Study organisation procedures and the documents regulating the issues of study organisation are clear. The students' needs are taken into account by providing the possibility to choose individual studies, and continuously consult with the teachers. While the students can choose internship placements for their final thesis research, it appears that the work the students do is not too varied (topics and types of research are similar, only the companies change). A wider selection of projects is recommended.

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

(1) Factual situation

The College has a Student Support Department, which provides consultations to students with special needs. Efforts are made to create equal opportunities for all students to achieve the intended learning outcomes; alternative study and assessment methods are used. Considering individual abilities of students with special needs (visual, auditory, mobility impairments, and others), appropriate methods are used in the study process, such as increasing the font size, speaking at a slower pace, increasing the assessment time, providing individual consultations, adjusting the timetable or teaching (learning) environment, and providing special facilities and equipment at the library. Students also have psychological support available, if they

experience emotional difficulties, difficulties in learning, anxiety, loneliness, sadness, lack of motivation, disagreements with others, difficulties in making decisions, etc.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are efforts to create equal opportunities for students of Information Services field. A separate section on the College website, where the relevant information for students with disabilities is announced is especially commendable (https://svako.lt/lt/studentams/parama-studentams/parama-neigaliems-studentams).

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

The Department monitors students' interim assessments via the electronic exam sheets system. Interim assessments are discussed at the meetings of the Department in the middle of each semester. At the end of each semester, students are asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire on the implementation of the Programme. Students provide feedback on all subjects in their half year of studies and can also write additional comments.

Feedback to students is provided in various forms: comments are written in and individual student's work or comments are given generally to all students with the possibility to consult individually with the instructor at the end of a lecture or during consultations; during the semester, the students are given the information about the progress they are making.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The site visit and a discussion with students of the Information Services field revealed that the consultations are one of the main ways to monitor study progress and for students to evaluate themselves. In terms of planning the study progress, when it comes to choosing the electives, students are provided with an overview of the courses and can consult with instructors or other responsible staff as well.

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

(1) Factual situation

The College systematically collects and analyses data about employability of graduates. The average employability of graduates of the Information Services field is about 84 percent. The College maintains close relationships with graduates and follows their professional careers. Most of the programme's alumni have become social partners. They provide suggestions for the improvement of the programme and relevant competencies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

One of the positive aspects is that the graduates of the Information Services field are employed, not only by the libraries, but also by businesses and other public sector institutions.

The employers have a positive opinion about the graduates and their competences. The graduates seem to find work placement relatively easily. However, the majority of students at the beginning of their studies are already working, which might account for the high percentage of students employed.

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

(1) Factual situation

The College follows the *Code of Academic Ethics (2020).* Disciplinary measures against students for fraud, plagiarism, and dishonesty during the assessment are applied in accordance with the *Study Regulations* (2020) and the *Description of the Procedure for Promoting Students and Disciplinary Measures* (2020). Academic integrity is explained to students by instructors. Assessment is further reviewed for academic integrity using plagiarism detection tools.

The SER indicates that there were no violations of the *Code of Academic Ethics*. In total there were three cases in 2017 and one in 2018 of violations of academic ethics discussed at the College.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The College has a number of documents approved that help to focus attention on the issues and consequences of plagiarism, fraud, and academic dishonesty. Students are informed about disciplinary measures, tools for detection of plagiarism, and accepted practices. The implementation of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination policies is set in the College Statute that, together with other documents, is available on the College website.

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

(1) Factual situation

The order of appeals and complaints application and investigation is governed by the *Student Appeals Regulations* (2020). Students of the Information Services field are informed about procedures, the documents are available on the College's website.

During the self-assessment period, no appeals and complaints were received from the students of the Programme of the Information Services field.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The students of the Information Services field are informed about the procedures and have no complaints. The documents are available on the College website.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The Programme has good graduate employability.*
2. *The study process allows individualisation of studies and takes into account the needs of students.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *The unclear nature of student employment, as many of the students are working alongside their studies, which means that they can stay in their previous jobs and the usefulness of the studies cannot be fully evaluated.*

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 the additional information provided to the expert panel during the site visit, the programme is taught by 18 lecturers, out of which 5 are associate professors, with lecturers spending the most hours on teaching (almost 50% of their time).

An extensive list of the lecturers working in the Information Services study field and their qualifications is provided in Table 5.1. of the SER (pages 34-35).

The percentages of the lecturers holding a scientific degree and staff who have no less than 3 years practical experience matching to the subjects they teach and whether that corresponds with the requirements for the study programme are provided in the table No. 2 below.

Table No. 2. Information Services field lecturer compliance with the general requirements for the first cycle studies of college level for 2021/2022 school year

Requirement stated in Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies	In the Information Services field study programme of the first cycle of college level
No less than 10 % of the first cycle of college level of study field subjects' volume must be taught by scientists or recognized artists	39 % have PhD degree
More than a half of staff of college level study field should have no less than 3 years practical experience matching to the subjects they teach	93 % have practical experience

Professors and lecturers engage in research activities themselves and participate in (international) conferences, as well as publish journal articles and books, which informs about their good knowledge of current research and issues in the field that they can later transfer to students.

There are 8 teachers out of 18 in the programme, who have at least B2 [of CAF] level in their English (according to the additional information provided to the expert panel during the site visit).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

While it was good to see that staff do participate in research, professional development, and English learning, it would be beneficial if some staff were enabled to do more of these.

The staff : student ratio at 1:6 is quite high, which is helpful for students' access to staff. The Department may have opportunities to consider careful expansion of the Programme. This could increase the number of Information Services study field professionals becoming available on the labour market as well as increase economic viability.

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

Staff participates in exchange / other sponsored visit programmes to other regions: Spain, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia, Cyprus, Poland etc.

Teachers improve their professional and pedagogical competences (e.g. new studies, outcomes assessment methods) and seek points of contact at interdisciplinary and intercultural level when visiting foreign higher education institutions. Teachers of the Programme who worked in 2018–2020 had 21 teachers participating in academic mobility:
2018 - 6 teachers, 11 visits;
2019 - 5 teachers, 8 visits;
2020 - 2 teachers, 2 visits.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The level of staff participation in Erasmus+ and other sponsored staff visits to foreign organizations is good, and the number of outgoing teachers is sufficient.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER describes that the development of competences of the College's teachers is planned annually, depending on the Department's annual activity plans, the teacher's workload, and the teacher's expressed desire to develop their competences. The development of competences is planned for the forthcoming year of study.

The College covers the participation fee and internship expenses, and provides administrative assistance to teachers. Particular attention is paid to teachers studying for the doctorate degree.

The *Description of Order of Teachers' Practical Internship* (2019), recommends that the field of study teachers (lecturers and assistants) should improve their practical competences once during their term of office, at least every 7 years.

The last quality assessment recommended that staff develop their English language skills. The Department offers language training to staff.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Generic skills training for staff can be useful. Pursuit of Information Services study field subject specialist training is also recommended to help staff keep abreast of emerging topics and technologies.

There was strong participation in Lithuanian with the assistance of a translator during the site visit. Continued English language training would help staff develop confidence with the English language and enable further teaching in English. This will be particularly useful for the

exchange programme. As a minimum, teaching staff should have the same level of English language competency as students.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The staff: student ratio is a positive outcome for students, since they can avail of greater individual instruction.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *The staff : student ratio also suggests a more costly roll out of education for the institution, and more workload for the teachers.*
2. *English language training remains essential for staff.*

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 availability and state of facilities and resources to the staff and students of the Information Services field is good. There are enough rooms and spaces for teaching and individual or group work. The auditoriums and study rooms are equipped with computers, multimedia, and other presentation tools.

The College collaborates with social stakeholders (Šiauliai County Povilas Višinskis Public Library, Šiauliai County Archive), which provide premises and infrastructure for practical training. Šiauliai County Povilas Višinskis Public Library provides Scanner, Printer, Interactive Board, Software (Microsoft Office Professional 2010), LIBIS and Digitalization equipment (computer for working with large graphic files; monitor for working with graphic design applications; calibrator; software for writing data on a CD; scanner; Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III camera with lenses and accessories; camera stand with lighting; Adobe Photoshop, CS4. Šiauliai County Archive provides 4 computers, software (EAIS, document management programme Avilys). To illustrate, students who learn digitisation of information use the facilities provided by the social partners, so that they can learn in a natural environment.

The library provides appropriate spaces and facilities for studies and teamwork. The entire infrastructure of the library was upgraded and modernised in 2018. The Library subscribes to some scientific databases and academic e-books provided by Lithuanian higher education institutions. However, the funding for the renewal of the printed and e-resources is relatively limited. The annual spending on provision of resources for one student is low. More funds are allocated for e-resources purchases for 2022.

The College infrastructure is adapted for students with special needs. Special equipment and software are accessible in the Library and Self-study centre.

The double degree encourages students to learn and be inspired by what the partners have, in terms of IT and software that they apply.

The College successfully managed to deal with the COVID situation. Mainly virtual learning environments were used (Google Workspace for Education Suite, including Google Classroom as well as Moodle). EZproxy software provides access to subscribed e-resources. The need for e-books has increased in comparison to printed books.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The current infrastructure is suitable for students' of the Information Services field learning. Computers and other learning facilities are updated and modernised. Statistical analysis software SPSS is available on the library computers, but it is not taught within the courses. Qualitative software NVivo is not available, which was a point the students made. The students also suggested including an option to learn a programming language such as Python. Providing access to these should be considered at the College level. The library has new modern equipment installed (self-checkout system for physical materials).

The College's response to resources in support of learning during the pandemic is commendable. The College provided access to software and other resources to support learning from home, such as Zoom. Additionally, the College provided access to computers and other hardware if the students' own equipment was broken or unsuitable.

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

(1) Factual situation

The plan for infrastructure improvement is the development for the 5 years period. The annual plan is made for a financial year ahead, another one for three years. In 2021, a new computer classroom was bought and installed. The library infrastructure was updated in 2018.

Software licences are also renewed annually, according to necessity. Modern renovation of the facilities meets the needs of the future studies and research.

The funding allocated by the institution for the acquisition of print and electronic resources has remained the same. The cost of resources is growing. It was positive to see they will be increasing the funding in the future, especially with respect to the increased need for e-books and other electronic resources due to the current pandemic.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The updates of the infrastructure are planned both strategically for the time ahead, as well as according to necessity.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The College has sufficient resources and infrastructure for study in Information Services. The acquired information sources are specialised and meet the needs of the Information Services programmes well.*
2. *The College has long-term plans and vision prepared for updating the study infrastructure.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *The annual spending on provision of resources for one student is low.*

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

Following regulations provided by *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, as well as stipulated in the College, the Department has implemented a three year internal quality audit of their undergraduate programme of the Information Services field. The self-assessment working group included Faculty of Business and Technologies (hereafter – the Faculty) members, a student, and a social partner.

The Internal Quality Assurance Committee gathered information about multiple aspects of the Faculty and used this to prepare a significant report. They also used the previous quality assessment report to consider how the Programme has developed since its last review.

A self-assessment, containing this information, has been provided for evaluation by the Expert Panel.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The overall Internal Quality Assurance Committee is to be commended for gathering and organising significant data for this review. The expert panel recognises the time invested in producing reports and gathering the amount of information needed for this review.

There is also mention of an annual quality review process within the College; however, further details of this process are needed. For instance, how have these reviews resulted in quality improvement, and how are these monitored and reported?

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

(1) Factual situation

The Internal Quality Assurance Committee includes members of the Faculty, as well as student and social partner representation.

The College, according to the section 7.1.2.1 of the SKVC Methodology for External Evaluation of Study Fields Annex No. 1, provides data about the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation and development processes of the Information Services field of study, the contribution of stakeholders for study improvement, and their feedback.

During the site visit, the social partners stated that they are involved in day-to-day quality assurance for the Faculty's exchange programme, e.g., lecturers from Portugal visit the College to teach, work collaboratively with instructors in Lithuania, and maintain quality standards in Portugal to support the exchange programme. Social partners also commented on the benefits for students visiting Portugal and having exposure to new topics and ideas.

Alumni spoke highly of the College and the Department's study programme *Information Management.* For example, at the site visit, alumni stated that they valued the exchange programme because it afforded them an opportunity to compare libraries in different countries. Additionally, work placements allowed them to become acquainted with libraries outside their own offices. Alumni noted that this is the only college that provides an

Information Management programme and they spoke of their instructors as knowledgeable and experts.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The student representative on the Internal Quality Assurance Committee described their role as providing the student perspective for the review committee, e.g., students' views on the credit system and organised student events. While this is good, a further structured role which enables fuller student participation in this process would be beneficial to the Internal Quality Assurance Committee and to the Programme's ongoing development.

Social partners, particularly for the exchange with Portugal, are invested in quality. Exchanges should be reciprocal, and now students from Portugal should visit the College for further development and cooperation between the institutions.

Alumni comments are positive for the Department and hold reputational value.

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

(1) Factual situation

The College, according to the section 7.1.3.1 of the SKVC Methodology for External Evaluation of Study Fields Annex No. 1, provides data that are collected and made public concerning the delivery of the Information Services field studies (study programme, the place of its provision, admission requirements, learning outcomes, acquired qualifications, evaluation results, opinion of stakeholders on study quality, employment, etc.). In Section 7.1.3.1 of the SER, the College provides examples of how information collected about the delivery and evaluation of studies is used to improve the field studies.

The self-assessment report notes data that are included in the Department's internal assessment of quality, e.g., student enrolment and retention rates, thesis topics, student feedback, etc. The internal quality assessment report records that data are used for planning and development, e.g., student feedback is incorporated into planning and action points are communicated with students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Ongoing gathering of data around processes and outcomes of the study programme is good practice.

The creation of opportunities for dialogue between the Department and students is important and offers good practice. The openness of this process and outcomes is also good.

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

Section 7.4 of the SER states that the Department administers student surveys to help gauge quality of educational delivery. Survey results are made public via the College's website.

Additionally, the Department utilises the results of surveys administered by the Student Admission and Career Centre for trends in the labour market.

Students have additional means of communicating feedback, e.g., by speaking or writing to the Head of Department or Dean.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

While numerical data are gathered to evaluate student satisfaction, qualitative data are lacking. The Department could strengthen its understanding of students' experiences by collecting qualitative data as well.

The Department is responsive to students' needs. In Section 7.3 of the SER, examples are provided of responding to student feedback. For example, the Department makes plans for the Programme improvement based on the feedback provided through student surveys.

Multiple communication pathways, including formal surveys as well as individual oral or written feedback, offer students with flexible opportunities to tell the Department about their educational experiences.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The Department has good practice to gather quantitative data around educational processes.*
2. *The Department has good practice in utilising external data, such as careers data, for the development of this programme of the Information Services field.*
3. *Alumni are positive about the Department and its programme of the Information Services field. This has reputational value.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *Quantitative data do not provide enough detail and analysis.*
2. *Qualitative data are lacking.*

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

The College should be commended for continuing to provide its programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. Flipping teaching to the online environment is a significant task and staff should be applauded for their efforts. In the view of the Expert Panel, the College has been very successful in this respect.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS*

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	• Clear, specific learning outcomes across the study programme of the Information Services field (hereafter – study programme), courses, and assessment should be developed fully. Learning outcomes should be organised as generic and subject-specific graduate outcomes. • Courses should be reduced in number and restructured into larger credit-bearing units to optimise the didactical model and to provide clarity for staff and students about study programme learning. • A wider selection of project types and topics is desirable for final projects.
Links between science (art) and studies	• Research methods education should be reconfigured, so that it includes learning and use of foundational research software, e.g., Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Qualitative Data Analysis Software (NVIVO). • The types and topics for final projects should be expanded, e.g. projects that focus beyond surveys measuring satisfaction with library and other information services. • Greater research activity should be incorporated into courses included in the programme, so that there is greater student participation. • The Department of Management and Communication (hereafter – the Department) should continue to build and maintain its strong relationship with social partners around research.
Student admission and support	• Review students' mobility practices currently in place, in order to understand the barriers to participation. • A strategic plan for the Department is urgently needed for sustainability and growth. Expansion of the study programme will importantly support visibility of this programme and Department.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	• The Department should explore and compare student employment as they enter the study programme alongside placement to ensure the nature of placement is fully understood. • The Department should continue its well-established relationships with alumni and social partners.

Teaching staff	• Teaching staff of the Information Services field should develop their level of English to a fluent level. • The teaching staff of the Information Services field should continue to participate in international teaching activities and research projects.
Learning facilities and resources	• Funding should be increased for resources, including library materials and software, to sustain and support student learning, given the emphasis on future IT development for the study programme.
Study quality management and public information	• Continue to collect data about educational processes for quality assurance of the study programme. Collect qualitative data to deepen understanding of the Department's progress and outcomes. • Qualitative data should be gathered as well to offer a deeper understanding of the department's progress and outcomes. • Emphasise the unique contribution the Department makes to Lithuania, by hosting the only Information Services programme in the country. • Consider expanding the programme to make it more visible. • There is an opportunity for the Department to expand this programme, particularly internationally, that should be seized for the sustainability and development of the programme.

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

VI. SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the findings of the expert panel based on the Self-Evaluation Report (hereafter – SER) and the interviews with Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija (hereafter – the College) administration (senior management and faculty administration staff), staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff and stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, social partners). The expert panel gives a positive evaluation to the implementation of the study field of Information Services, first cycle at Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija with all areas assessed as good.

Importantly, the College is the only college in Lithuania that aims to prepare the graduates for library related careers in the study programme of *Information Management* (state code – 6531JX016) (hereafter – Programme).

The Programme has multiple, relevant graduate outcomes and offers a variety of courses. There are many opportunities for staff and students to engage in research, and the Programme has strong links with alumni, social partners and the labour market. Graduates of the Programme find employment in the labour market. The Department of Management and Communication (hereafter – the Department) collects quantitative data around these educational processes and uses data, such as careers data, for Programme development.

The Programme allows for the individualisation of studies and takes into account the needs of students. Teaching staff are well suited to deliver the Programme and they participate in both teaching and research activities, as well as visits to international institutions.

The College has sufficient resources and infrastructure for studies, and these are updated with an eye to future development. Additionally, students are supported holistically with respect to their academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal needs, and are well-informed about these supports.

While the Programme is good, there are always areas in which it might be improved, such as restructuring courses into larger credit-bearing units to optimise the didactical model; reconfiguring the research methods education, stimulating greater student participation in research projects, developing strategic plans for sustainability and growth of the Department, develop the level of English among staff to a fluent level and continuing to collect data about educational processes for quality assurance of the study programme.

The expert panel has provided a list of recommendations for the Department to address to continue developing its Programme.

Signature of expert panel chairperson:

Associate professor Diane Marie Pennington