CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of INFORMATION SERVICES

at Vilnius University

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	Business Information Management	Information System Management	Knowledge Management and Leadership
State code	6121JX022	6211JX029	6211JX030
Type of studies	University cycle studies	University cycle studies	University cycle studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	Second cycle	Second cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies (4 years)	Full-time studies (2 years)	Full-time studies (1.5 years)
Credit volume	240	120	90
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Social Sciences	Master of Social Sciences	Master of Social Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Higher education university type	Higher education university type
Registration date of the study programme	19 May 1997	19 May 1997	19 February 2007

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 Order No. V-149. The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel in 17 December *2021.* Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Review Visit was organised online using a 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.
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>
> **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.	The list of graduates of Information Services field studies and their positions at work.
2.	Updated table No. 6 from the SER "The Results of Scientific Researches of the Lecturers of Information Services Study Field for the Years 2017-2019".
3.	Specific examples of what the lecturers write for their instructions provided to students: exam questions, directions for writing essays, and guidelines for hands-on practical assignments as appropriate.

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

Vilnius University (hereafter – VU, the University), established in 1579, is the oldest and largest higher education institution in Lithuania that offers all-cycle studies in the fields of humanities, social sciences, medical and healthcare sciences and technological sciences as well as the second cycle studies in one art area: more than 80 bachelor's and integrated study programmes as well as 110 master's and professional pedagogical study programmes are offered. Doctoral students can choose from nearly 30 research fields, while resident students can choose from more than 60 residency study programmes. The University offers studies in 13 study field groups and 60 study fields.

Study programmes in the evaluated study field of Information Services are operated in VU Faculty of Communication (hereafter – the Faculty, FC) established in 1991. One first cycle bachelor's study programme of *Business Information Management* (state code – 6121JX022) (hereafter – the first cycle study programme, the bachelor's study programme, BIMB) and two second cycle master's study programmes of *Information System Management* (state code – 6211JX029) (hereafter – the second cycle study programme, the master's study programme, ISMM) and *Knowledge Management and Leadership* (state code – 6211JX030) (hereafter – the second cycle study programme, the master's study programme, KMLM) are operated within the study field. Studies in the fields of Information Services have been operated in VU since 1997.

The last external evaluation of the programmes of the study field of Information Services was conducted in 2010. The master's study programme of *Knowledge Management and Leadership* was accredited as Information management, but in 2012 the programme was updated and renamed. With reference to the decision of VU FC Board (13.02.2012, extract No. 160000-10-5), in 19 April 2012, the Senate of VU approved changing the title of the master's study programme Information Management (state code – 621P10002) to *Knowledge Management and Leadership*. The study programmes evaluated for accreditation were evaluated positively and accredited for 6 years, and later the periods of the study programme accreditation were extended under the order of 17.05.2017 the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

The description of Information Services field studies in the group of study fields of Social Sciences is not currently approved; therefore, the special requirements for the programmes of this study field are not regulated yet. The first and second cycle study programmes are performed in compliance with the *Description of Study Cycles* (Order No. V-1012 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2015) and the *Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies* (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016).

There are associations which can provide advice around Information Services programmes in Lithuania, including the Lithuanian Librarians' Association and the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium. Additionally, international associations which provide guidelines for developing an appropriate programme in Information Services: e.g., the American Library Association (ALA), the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Information Services study field and **first cycle** at Vilnius 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	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	2
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	**20**

*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.

Information Services study field and **second cycle** at Vilnius 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	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	2
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	2
5.	Teaching staff	2
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	**18**

*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

Vilnius University offers a subject area, referred to as "Information Services," within which the study programmes of *Business Information Management* (BIMB) at the Bachelor's level and *Information System Management* (ISMM) and *Knowledge Management and Leadership* (KMLM) at the Master's level, leading to degrees labelled Bachelor and Master of Social Science respectively.

The staff implementing the study programmes reports a strong association of learning around business topics, particularly topics in this area supported by information technologies.

The aims and outcomes of the BIMB programme at the bachelor's level and the ISMM and KMLM programmes at the master level, are designed to align with the needs of society and the labour market. All three programmes aim to address the need for information and communication, IT and marketing specialists by many organisations (international as well) in Lithuania. The programmes' aim at educating students in professional competencies in business, information and knowledge management, and prepare them for jobs that require effective communication management and/or are positioned in big data working environments. Graduates of the BIMB programme often continue studying in various master programmes, whereas, graduates from the ISMM and KMLM find their way as generalists in business jobs that require expertise in internal and external communication processes, knowledge management and leadership.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The aims and outcomes of the BIMB programme at the bachelor's level and the ISMM and KMLM programmes at the master level meet the needs of society and the labour market in Lithuania.

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Faculty of Communication has continued to adhere to their stated programme aims and objectives; they have continued to provide education to the students enrolled. The teaching was flipped to the online environment during the pandemic and the staff and students seemed generally comfortable with this transition.

The aims and outcomes of the programmes do not support training for professional employment in core library and information science-related areas. As a result, there is no library and information science Master's degree programme in Lithuania.

Students are prepared for careers in business environments, learning about competencies in business, information and knowledge management, with the aim to prepare them for jobs that require effective communication management and/or are positioned in big data

working environments. The programmes are not focused technological training available to students who complete Master's level training in Information Services.

The representatives of the Faculty of Communication refer to Knowledge Management, but emphasised a focus on technology in the site visit. A clearly designed Knowledge or Information Management programme is needed, perhaps best aligned with or repositioned within the Business department's existing programmes around digital, general and project management, and marketing topics. The Faculty needs a unique selling point to differentiate it from a Business school or programme.

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 programmes are presented in the SER as preparing graduates through training for work in business:

Cycle I (undergraduate) - *"develop business information management specialists, who are able to think critically and work independently, analyse information and communication processes in society and business environment, to initiate, plan, perform and control the projects related to information and communication services and products, who can apply modern management means and methods in activities of modern organisation."*

Cycle II (postgraduate) - *"Cycle II ISMM study programme is related to the need for the master's-level information and communication specialists in Lithuania. Informational, organisational or company communication management, research, analytical and counselling activity, information and communication arrangement services are especially relevant to the business sector."*

The SER states that both the BIMB programme at the bachelor's level and the ISMM and KMLM programmes at the master level conform to the strategy of the institution. The programmes address the need for business communication and knowledge management specialists, a need that is acknowledged by the Vilnius University Faculty of Communication. In this way the Information Services field study programmes aim to contribute to the university's strategic aims of developing interdisciplinary studies and enhancing domestic economic capital.

The SER states that both the BIMB and the ISMM and the KMLM programmes are oriented towards a strong theoretical and academic training of students by courses on theory and research methods that are necessary for mastering the scope of the Information Services study field, by developing higher level competencies including conducting fundamental and applied scientific research projects.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert panel observed that the university strategy provides general goals for the university as a whole. The Faculty of Communication ([VU Faculty of Communication - Vilnius University](#)) is divided into several departments related to Information Services: 1) Department of Book, Media, and Publishing Studies, 2) Department of Digital Cultures and Communication, 3) Centre for Journalism and Media Research, 4) Department of Organizational Information and Communication Research. However, these departments would be associated with doctoral research, rather than first and second cycle teaching.

The SER (page 15) describes how the Information Services field study programmes align with the Vilnius University strategic plan 2018–2020, in which the following strategic activity priorities were formulated:

- European university: development of interdisciplinarity in science and studies.
- University strengthening Lithuania: enhancement of the domestic economic, social and cultural capital.
- University motivating its community: improvement of work and study conditions.

The Information Services field study programmes aim to contribute to the implementation of the priorities above, especially in case of development of interdisciplinarity in science and studies. The Expert panel wondered, however, about the extent the Information Services field study programmes contribute to these priorities, as the priorities could align with a broad range of programmes. The Faculty of Communication's focus on preparation for work in the business environment would seem to overlap with the outcomes of study with the university's Business school's programmes. The objectives of the Cycle I and Cycle II programmes are more consistent with those of a business programme, rather than an information Services programme.

Several of the generic skills noted in Appendix 1 of the SER are useful to include in Cycles I and Cycle II programmes, as noted in the tables below. However, in several cases, these generic competencies require development and further consideration (see tables No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 below).

Overall, greater clarity around programme aims and objectives is needed for all programmes, particularly to position the programmes appropriately in the field of Information Services. The aims and objectives should be stated as distinct programme outcomes which provide a comprehensive view of each programme and distinguish one programme from another.

Table No. 1. Aims & objectives for the first cycle study programme *Business Information Management (BIMB)*

Cycle I - Programme Aims & Objectives as stated in SER, Appendix 1.		
General Competencies	**Learning Outcomes**	**Expert Panel Evaluation**
Communication and public speaking	**1.1.** Students will be able to analyse the processes of multi-level communication in a modern society, understand the cultural contexts of a society determining the communication codes and measures used, communicate clearly, coherently and effectively, will be able to identify different forms of communication, their features, understand and assess different contexts and methods of communication.	1.1. Useful generic learning outcomes. Should be presented as direct outcomes and as a list of multiple outcomes.
	1.2. Students will acquire foreign language skills (reading, writing,	1.2. Generic language development outcomes are

	speaking, listening) oriented to C1 proficiency level according to the requirements of the European Framework for Language Competence (EFLC) and applying acquired professional foreign language skills in academic and practical activities of the course.	appropriate.
Critical thinking and openness to innovation	**2.1.** Students will be able to actively search, understand and analyse the information obtained from different sources, critically assess the societal processes, the role of information and communication in them, know the specificity of the development of means of information and communication and possibilities for their application, will be able to correctly execute research activities. **2.2.** Students will be able to understand the significance of civil society, the importance of citizenship in the process of democracy, understand the importance of knowledge in professional activities in the context of interaction between politicians, state authorities, media and society; will be able to analyse social and political processes in society.	2.1. The statement provided is relevant to the subject area of Information Services, as well as a generic outcome. 2.2. The linkage with the generic outcome should be stated more clearly.
Cooperation and teamwork	**3.1.** Students will be able to work independently, combine independent and teamwork, communicate clearly, collect and share information, analyse difficult situations and implement team projects. **3.2.** Students will be able to communicate and cooperate in the intercultural environment, commit to the values of tolerance, responsibility, respect, self-respect, etc., will be able to work in a team, assume responsibility for their activities and assigned tasks, adequately assess personal achievements and the achievements of other team members, will be able to reflect and give feedback, name aspects of the activity	3.1. Team collaboration provides a good generic outcome. 3.2. This outcome should be clearly differentiated from 3.1.

	to be improved, will be able to properly communicate to achieve effective communication and results of a team activity.	
Problem solving and decision making	**4.1.** Students will be able to critically assess the most important process of organisational activity, determine the interrelations and interactions between phenomena, apply systematic and creative methods of assignments and problem solutions.	4.1. This outcome needs to be rephrased to focus on problem solving and decision making.
	4.2. Students will be able to understand business organisation problems, plan and implement practical activities, learn how to make decisions independently in difficult situations, and creatively apply the means for creation of the value provided to the consumer.	4.2. This outcome relates to the field of business only. The outcome should be restated as a generic outcome with wider application.
Subject Specific Competencies	**Learning Outcomes**	**Expert Panel Evaluation**
The ability to analyse the political, economic, social, legal and technological environment of a business organisation, determine the relations of the interaction of environmental elements, operational patterns, reason the need of business projects related with information and communication services and products.	**5.1.** Students will be able to find and systematise political, economic, social, legal and technological information, describe the issues faced, explain their origin and impact to functioning and development of a society, formalise the environment of an economic activity, justify strategic management, implement the complexity of management functions of organisations and modern methods of management, apply effective solutions of information and communication management in the activity of contemporary organisation. **5.2.** Students will be able to systematically analyse the environment of a business organisation, its external and internal information, apply reliable methods of analysis, access, assess and analyse the types, forms, features, structure of communication and information services of different organisations,	The subject specific competency identified relates only to the field of business.

	perform assessment of services, create management strategies of organisational innovation, know their implementing measures, analyse the possibilities of the innovative potential of organisations, understand the features of organisation of the creative process of innovation by applying the best suited information and communication services and products.	
Understanding how to integrate the processes of organisation into an integral and effective system of project creation and implementation, including project management, planning and control of project quality, knowledge management, legal protection of innovative products and services, management of human resources by applying the best ICT for the activity of business organisation.	**6.1.** Students will understand the project management particularities, project management processes, project management subsystems, will be able to apply the methods and techniques used for project management, initiate, plan and coordinate projects, manage the content, time, resources and risks of the project, and apply the project management methods. **6.2.** Students will understand the paradigms and models of the management of human resources, understand the strategies of the management of human resources and the concepts of the strategic management of human resources, will be able to motivate other people to achieve common goals, understand the contemporary methods for controlling human groups, and implement the solutions of communication management in multicultural project teams.	The subject specific competency identified relates to the field of business. There are competencies here, such as project management, which are relevant to Information Services, and these should be elucidated appropriately for the study field of Information Services.
The ability to initiate and coordinate projects related with information and communication	**7.1.** Students will understand the specificity of business processes and operations, the main marketing theories and possibilities for their application in the business practice, acquire managerial understanding about internal and external marketing	The subject specific competency identified begins as an Information Services-related outcome, then is situated in the field of business.

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services and products of a business organisation in the traditional and digital environment, implement the strategies of integrated marketing communication of an organisation for their promotion by using contemporary ICT.	factors, will be able to create marketing strategies for development of the activity of traditional and virtual organisations in the physical and digital environment. **7.2.** Students will be able to analyse the development tendencies of a society, the situation on the market, explain the information and communication processes in a society and organisation, identify the target audiences of integrated communication, plan and implement the projects of integrated communication helping to implement the mission, vision and strategic goals of a business organisation.	
The ability to understand and create the informational structure of a business organisation, ensure the reliability, legal protection and security of the information used, optimise the dissemination of the internal and external information of the organisation.	**8.1.** Students will understand the issues of an organisation of human activity information and formation and structuring of information systems, will be able to design and analyse information systems, understand design stages of information systems, methods of analysis, differences in hardware and software, will be able to choose the equipment according to the needs of the developed information system, application of such system in practice. **8.2.** Students will be able to assess different aspects of information security and threat groups of an organisation, identify the main threat factors and methods for causing a threat, explain different reasons for threats and expected consequences, determine the probability of different consequences, and apply the strategies.	The subject specific competency identified relates to the field of business. 8.1. This outcome should be reworded. It can be related to Information Services, particularly around information systems. There is a hint of information behaviour, though no learning outcome is clearly stated around this. 8.2. The learning outcome as stated is related to security. This should be linked clearly to Information Services.

Table No. 2. Aims & objectives for the second cycle study programme *Information System Management (ISMM)*

Cycle II - Information System Management (ISMM) Programme Aims & Objectives as stated in SER, Appendix 1.		
General competencies	**Learning outcomes**	**Expert Panel Evaluation**
Analytical thinking and critical assessment	**1.1.** Students will be able to analyse and critically assess the information, use the latest programming technologies and databases, manage the process of data mining, discerning the synergies between information technologies and the business environment to objectively assess internal and external factors of information system management and analyse the initiatives and solutions of organisations. **1.2.** Students will be able to think in an organised, analytical and critical manner by assessing the scientific and professional information, its availability and reliability, select the priorities of the activity and to effectively use the resources, make reasoned summarising conclusions, assess the impact of the decisions made to the activity of an organisation and the trends in the development of advanced technologies.	This generic outcome is relevant to Information Services, but focused toward the field of business. 1.1 This outcome needs to be reconsidered to place topics, such as data mining, in an appropriate subject-specific outcome for information systems. Focus on critical thinking as a generic learning outcome here. 1.2 This generic outcome begins well, but then moves to the specificity of business. Again, focus on the generic learning outcome to be gained by students.
Independence	**2.1.** Students will be able to independently use the latest information technologies for collection, analysis and assessment of information, perform individual practical assignments and organise teamwork by accepting responsibility for the outcome, assess the activity of	Independence is not a generic learning outcome. This learning outcome area requires revision to provide multiple

	information systems at the organisational and global level, solve issues in the intercultural space, manage and motivate human resources for successful activity of an organisation. **2.2.** Students will be able to apply the knowledge of information and communication, information technology and other sciences for organisation, administration and improvement of management of information systems of other organisations.	generic learning outcomes.
Effective communication	**3.1.** Students will be able through effective communication to establish and assess the links between information systems and entrepreneurship, management specificity of major databases, perform required qualitative and/or quantitative surveys, and provide solution methods and/or recommendations of issues. **3.2.** Students will be able to apply communication solutions by introducing suggested ideas and reasoning the methods of solution of identified issues.	Communication skills form an appropriate generic learning outcome. The outcomes stated need to be rephrased to focus on communication. For knowledge and skills in research methods separate learning outcomes should be formulated.
Initiative	**4.1.** Students will be able to analyse initiatives and solutions of organisations for implementation, organisation and management of information systems, and submit the results of the analysis for effective organisation of the activity of organisation. **4.2.** Students will be able to apply information systems as a set of structured processes and procedures and assess information systems according to universally accepted standards and rules by providing initiative methods of issue solving.	Initiative is not a generic learning outcome. These outcomes need to be rewritten.

Subject-specific competences	Learning outcomes	Expert Panel Evaluation
The ability to design, model and manage information systems.	**5.1.** Students will be able to initiate, design and perform information system screening, assess the opportunities for enhancing the entrepreneurship in the electronic space and relationship connected with intellectual property, apply the adoption of strategic decisions, analyse data flows by using the tools of business data analytics in order to ensure a successful activity of a business organisation. **5.2.** Students will be able to model and manage information systems to increase the effectiveness of business activity by using the methods of data mining and the latest programming technologies, by fully using the strategies of the electronic signature and communication surveys, by taking into account the possibilities for initiation and creation of new businesses, by taking into account the principles of online marketing and situations of intercultural communication.	Information systems are relevant to Information Services. And the subject-specific competency relates to information systems generally. However, while the learning outcomes expressed in 5.1 and 5.2 pertain to information systems, they are expressed as specific to business.
The ability to create new businesses, assess the results of intellectual property, effectively use databases, management models of human resources for implementation of innovative solutions of organisation's activity and application of information systems at different levels.	**6.1.** Students will be able to apply theoretical features of new IT businesses and planning and control principles of IT projects in practice, apply management models for management of knowledge and human resources for optimization of the activity of the organisation, assess the outcomes of creative activity, and use the latest databases for achieving the targets set. **6.2.** Students will be able to integrally use databases for achieving individual and/or group targets and assessment of outcomes, analyse business data in an organised manner for the system audit by applying contemporary information technologies and	The subject-specific competency as stated does not fully align with the learning outcomes provided.

	ensuring that information is reliable.	
The ability to analyse and critically assess the issues of information system management and apply theoretical knowledge in adopting effective and constructive decisions.	**7.1.** Students will be able to identify complex issues in online marketing, strategic management, and motivation of human resources, intercultural communication, information and knowledge management and to solve them by applying innovative methods based on scientific knowledge and achievements for adopting effective and constructive decisions. **7.2.** Students will be able to properly prepare and implement projects of strategic management and enhancing efficiency, IT strategic projects by using the tools of data analytics and general principles of information and knowledge management, use the elements of the static and dynamic programming, assess the processes of program creation and determine the possibilities for improving the process of software product creation.	Information systems topics relate to Information Services. In 7.1, there is a business focus, as opposed to an Information Services focus. In 7.2, the learning outcome could be reworded, but is closer to the study field.
The ability to organise and analyse the empirical data of the internal and external information environment, information needs and communication studies and to creatively and flexibly apply them in practice for solving the problems in information systems by taking into account the circumstances of implementation of information systems.	**8.1.** Students will be able to apply the knowledge of information, communication, information technology, and cultural communication, intellectual property law for improving the organisation, administration and management of information systems of organisations. **8.2.** Students will be able to analyse the internal and external information environment of organisations and information needs from a local and global perspective by properly assessing the possibilities for communication and using the latest tools for creating information systems for improving the activity of organisations and solving identified issues.	The subject-specific competency should be more specific to the field of study. It would seem more generic than subject-specific. The learning outcomes 8.1 and 8.2 help to explain the intention of the subject-specific competency. However, these require greater subject focus, as opposed to generic focus.

Table No 3. Aims & objectives for the second cycle study programme *Knowledge Management and Leadership (KMLM)*

Cycle II - *Knowledge Management and Leadership (KMLM)* Programme Aims & Objectives as stated in SER, Appendix 1.		
General competences	**Learning outcomes**	**Expert Panel Evaluation**
Analytical and critical thinking	**1.1.** Students will be able to independently collect, organise and analyse information from different sources by applying the latest advanced information technologies and databased knowledge management, and understand the importance of changes and anticipate them. **1.2.** Students will be able to manage the processes of information and knowledge, apply the acquired knowledge, create the knowledge base of an organisation, independently plan stages of the activity and responsibly set out the priorities.	This generic competency is appropriate for the field of Information Services. However, it is defined here differently as a generic outcome; generic outcomes should be applicable across programmes. Analytical and critical thinking should be explained appropriately as a generic learning outcome.
Development and improvement	**2.1.** Students will be able to promote and implement the learning processes, create and develop professional partnership networks. **2.2.** Students will be able to set performance targets and achieve them by constantly improving learning skills, share the responsibility for implementation of assignments in organising and implementing team/individual assignments/activities.	This generic competency and the learning outcomes require further consideration and development.
Communication	**3.1.** Students will be able to combine own knowledge and ideas with knowledge and ideas of others, negotiate and effectively communicate with representatives of different cultures and partners. **3.2.** Students will be able to effectively communicate, be active and creative in generating new	Communication skills form an appropriate generic competency.

	ideas and arguing by justifying strategic solutions of issues, demonstrate the skills of written and oral communication, good linguistic skills, and expression of ideas.	
Leadership	**4.1.** Students will be able to communicate the vision of an organisation and inspire people, create and develop teams as well as the culture of an organisation based on a mutual trust of employees, encouraging exchanging the knowledge. **4.2.** Students will be able to manage the team by accepting the responsibility for own and team actions and performance outcomes by using the specific technologies of knowledge management.	Leadership is an appropriate generic competency.
Subject-specific competences	**Learning outcomes**	**Expert Panel Evaluation**
The ability to understand, explain and apply the principles and tendencies of the knowledge management theory in order to ensure effective knowledge management in an organisation.	**5.1.** Students will be able to apply the methods of strategic analysis and information and knowledge management principles in analysing the activity of the organisation overcoming complex communication barriers in the practical activity, within a responsible legal and ethical approach and by implementing strategies of creativity in an organisation. **5.2.** Students will be able to integrate the principles and methods of knowledge management for project implementation, online marketing, implementation of management strategies of human resources, determining the impact of a complex individual behaviour for successful business and implementation of the scientific research strategy.	The subject-specific competency relates to knowledge management. However, while the learning outcomes expressed in 5.1 and 5.2 pertain to management topics which could be part of Information Services, they are expressed as specific to the field of business.

The ability to analyse and critically assess the management issues of information and knowledge and apply acquired theoretical knowledge in making effective and constructive decisions.	**6.1.** Students will be able to communicate and successfully cooperate in a global environment by understanding the multicultural and intercultural environment, to practically assess the challenges of conflict and crisis communication; will be able to plan and assess the impact of communication to the process of creation of the image and reputation, creative management of difficult situations and promotion of entrepreneurship in the electronic space on the basis of information and knowledge management theories. **6.2.** Students will be able to apply the project management methods and measures in practice by creating and implementing projects, properly prepare and perform group works for implementation of management strategies of human resources, selection of technical measures of online marketing, creation of technologies for electronic signature and solving activity issues in the environment of an organisation for ensuring the management process of the knowledge of an organisation and successful expression of the leadership.	The subject-specific competency relates to knowledge management. However, while the learning outcomes expressed pertain to management topics which could be part of Information Services, they are expressed as specific to the field of business.
The ability to implement the theoretical provisions of organisational leadership, management of risks and changes, project management, human resources management, image and	**7.1.** Students will be able to identify and assess leadership in an organisation in terms of an image and reputation and gender, analyse and assess the legal norms regulating the leadership relationship, prepare the strategy of crisis communication, visualise and interpret data by using the methods of strategic planning and communication research of an organisation. **7.2.** Students will be able to create and implement the motivational	The subject-specific competency relates to knowledge management. However, while the learning outcomes expressed pertain to management topics which could be part of Information Services, they are expressed as specific to the field of business.

reputation, crisis management and communication, intellectual property rights and e- commerce in an actual business organisation.	system for human resources in an organisation, use the e-signature tool in developing entrepreneurship in the electronic space by demonstrating the ability to create actual campaigns, perform individual project work and reason the outcomes of the studies.	
The ability to conduct research of information and knowledge management, information products and service market, internal and external information environment of organisations, research of information needs on the basis of the methodology of communication and information research, to apply them in a business organisation in a creative and flexible manner when solving specific issues of information and knowledge management.	**8.1.** Students will be able to identify, formulate and reason the issues of knowledge management and leadership, select appropriate empiric and theoretical material, apply suitable qualitative and/or qualitative research methods for solving the issue. **8.2.** Students will be able to accept and implement reasonable solutions of information products and service market of information and knowledge management by applying the principles of project management, modern IT and ensuring that the information is reliable.	Research skills form a significant competency area for this programme and research skills in general fit well with Information Services. The learning outcomes specify research in the field of business.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER describes how the programmes comply with the legal requirements.

The SER states:

The objectives of the programmes of the study field of Information services and planned results of the studies are formulated to correspond to: Lithuanian Qualifications Framework[17], the Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies[18] and the Description of Study Cycles[19] as well as the general and special study results defined in the regulation (project version) of the study field of Information Services. During the formation and updating of the objectives and study results of the study field of Information Services, the objectives and study results of the study field programmes, operated in other state or foreign higher schools (benchmark) are analysed.

Lithuania's higher education system provides legislative requirements for education. Specifically, the regulations under Chapter III, Programme Structure note that the programme as created should *enable the comparison of qualification degrees awarded in Lithuania and abroad.*

Table No. 4. Programme's *Business Information Management* compliance to general requirements for first cycle study programmes

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme *Business Information Management*
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	240 ECTS
ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 120 ECTS to accomplish study results of a Field	210 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	35 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	20 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 15 ECTS	20 ESTC
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	1,996 hours which is 31%
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	4,379 hours which is 69%

Table No. 5. Programmes' *Information System Management* and *Knowledge Management and Leadership* compliance to general requirements for second cycle study programmes

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme *Information System Management*	In the Programme *Knowledge Management and Leadership*
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 60 ECTS	65 ECTS	65 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	20 ECTS	25 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	944 hours which is 29.5%	704 hours which is 29.3%
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	2,256 hours which is 70.5%	1,696 hours which is 70.7%

In the SER, the programmes are cited as accomplishing the following to comply with the above noted legislation:

First Cycle: (Table 1, page 17 SER)
The overall programme is comprised of 240 credits, of which the SER states that 210 credits are allocated in compliance with the regulations for the study field subjects; that is, the credits satisfy the minimum of 120 credits which must be *composed of study field subjects.*

Second Cycle (Table 2, page 18 SER):
The Knowledge Management programme is comprised of 90 credits. The Information Systems programme is comprised of 120 credits. The SER report states that students are required to complete compulsory courses and credits which are compliant with cycle requirements, as well as academic and professional needs.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert panel understands that the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport is in the process of setting up a *Descriptor of the Information Services Study Field,* and indeed, the SER refers to this standard, but does not address it. Understandably, this standard is in draft form; however, the department has the option to refer to practice in other countries while waiting for the final publication of the standard.

The SER does not demonstrate matching of study field content and study programme. For example, Table 3 in the SER refers to numbers of student workload hours, but does not connect this with Information Services content. Also, the programme offers a study abroad opportunity in the area of Information Services through the Erasmus scheme, but students are not trained in Information Services, and, therefore, cannot avail of this activity; the programme and activity are disconnected.

The aims and objectives for student learning for both cycles refer to generic skills, as well as to subject skills for subjects other than Information Services. The generic skills proposed for second cycle study programmes do not always reflect the types of skills that students need for academic study and professional application, e.g., general competences listed for the master level in ISMM include "Independence" and "Initiative."

There are a number of areas that should be taught in an Information Services programme, including core training (e.g., organisation of information, cataloguing, reference services, etc.) which is present in international information services programmes.

There are associations relevant to Information Services in Lithuania, which can provide advice and support to the Faculty of Communication. These include:
- Lithuanian Librarians' Association, https://www.lbd.lt/
- Lithuanian Research Library Consortium, https://lmba.lt/en

International guidelines are also available for developing an appropriate programme in Information Services; see, for example, the following standards for programmes:
- American Library Association (ALA). (2009). *Core Competences of Librarianship*, https://www.ala.org/educationcareers/sites/ala.org.educationcareers/files/content/careers/corecomp/corecompetences/finalcorecompstat09.pdf.
  This document is comprehensive of competences for the field and will help the Faculty consider avenues for information science in their programmes. The ALA is now in the process of updating this document and the department is encouraged to watch for this as well.
- Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). (2021). *Professional Knowledge and Skills Base,* https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/PKSB. This tool is extremely useful for setting programme learning outcomes. The PKSB is a respected tool among professionals and professional associations in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The work of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) will also be useful to the Faculty. Most recently, they have been working on a set of guidelines which incorporate programme advice from experts in this subject field from around the world:
- IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) - draft *Guidelines for Professional Library and Information Science (LIS) Education Programmes*, https://lisedu.files.wordpress.com/2021/02/lisepguidelines-consult-draft.pdf

Alternatively, the Faculty may wish to consider alignment with another area in the University to progress its current programmes, in particular its Cycle II study programmes.

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 courses in both first and second cycles combine various assessment methods, such as exams with closed-answer multiple-choice questions, open questions, assignments, and more. The additional information on assessment methods shows that at the Master level closed-answer questions are part of the examination.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Assessment outcomes should be linked to Information Services and stated clearly. There should be clear linkages between assessment outcomes and course outcomes and programme outcomes. This provides a clear pathway for all stakeholders to understand what can be achieved through a particular course and how this relates to Information Services study field.

The assessment presented should explore student learning in Information Services study field. Examinations should test depth of learning, as opposed to addressing memory skills and surface learning. The additional information provided on assessment methods shows that closed-answer questions are asked for second cycle exams. The expert panel note that this form of assessment is not well placed in second cycle assessment, but may be useful in part for first cycle exams. Assessment at the Master level should be aimed at assessing insight and abilities contributing to the development of knowledge. To achieve this and to avoid surface learning, second cycle examinations should be mainly discursive. Examination questions for the second cycle should probe the subject matter deeply to support student development of professional competences.

Overall, assessment should challenge students to go beyond basic learning to higher levels of achievement as enumerated in Bloom's Taxonomy.

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

(1) Factual situation

In the SER (p. 20-21), a structure for implementing each programme for first and second cycles is provided. For the first cycle, every semester for the first three years contains a selection of compulsory courses, and in the final year students prepare a thesis.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Again, referring to pedagogical expertise, e.g., the levels of learning found in Bloom's Taxonomy, courses should cover the subject of Information Services study field appropriately, such that students are exploring the whole of the field, as well as to progress from basic to more advanced learning. This is particularly important to do at Master's level / Second Cycle.

Course outlines should focus on Information Services study field and not aspects of business topics, e.g., "public administration." Course planning should address Information Services topics in depth, covering all aspects of a given Information Services topic, that is, the whole of a topic and of the professional subject.

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

As per 1.2.4.1 of the SER, there are opportunities for students to personalise their studies, to choose a specialisation, to study foreign languages, or choose elective subjects. Examples for the BIMB programme are elective courses such as 'Business Communication in Social Media', 'Programming Fundamentals', 'Financial Accounting', 'Information Security' or 'Agile Project Management'. Examples for the ISMM program are electives such as 'Intellectual Property Law', 'Web Programming' 'Artificial Intelligence'. Examples from the KMLM programme are elective courses such as 'Intercultural Communication' and 'International Crisis Communication'.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

While students have opportunities to select courses to meet their personal learning objectives, they do not have sufficient course offerings to support learning about Information Services.

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

(1) Factual situation

Thesis topics for projects for first and second cycles are provided by the lecturers in the Faculty of Communication. Thesis topics are evaluated and approved by the Study Programme Committee responsible for programme operation.

The students, supervised by selected academic supervisors, prepare their final theses in their final year of study (first cycle students in their final years, as they can include some information from their previous work in other courses, second-cycle students have their thesis preparation organised in different semesters as they go along).

The theses are defended publicly, with the defence committee, consisting of the lecturers and social partners (in 2020/2019 school year – 1, in 2019/2018 school year – 2, in 2017/2018 school year – 2) present. As stated in the SER, "The final thesis must be defended before an Evaluation Committee. At least one member of the Commission has to be from an institution other than the University."

No final theses were written on the topics proposed by social partners during the evaluated period. Final theses for both cycles are assigned the appropriate credit weighting.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The grades given to theses reviewed were appropriate. The public defence of the theses offers a nice example of sharing work with the department and community. Final theses should target traditional and emerging Information Services topics to facilitate knowledge acquisition to participate in Information Services-related positions in the workplace.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The Faculty of Communication makes a strong effort to address workplace needs of companies and corporations by supporting the development of knowledge managers.*

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The courses and credits on offer do not support learning in the subject area of Information Services, as the programmes focus on preparing graduates for a business setting.
2. Assessment does not probe subjects areas nor encourage students to achieve beyond surface learning.

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

Research is central to the first cycle study programme BIMB. The programme offers academic literacy and theory training in year 1, hands-on methodological training in year 2 (10 ECTS in quantitative and qualitative methods), and courses generally contain a research element (such as doing literature review, surveys). Outside of the curriculum, student conferences are organised and in non-covid times the student academic society organises research related activities on a regular basis (during the pandemic less activity here).

Research activities are usually initiated by professors: students may become a research assistant for a couple of months.

Research ethics are taught in the course on qualitative methods in year 2 of the BIMB programme and in a preparation course for the bachelor's thesis. Training includes topics such as plagiarism, how to cite, how to use information sources properly, informed consent. Supervisors are responsible for the ethical compliance in student thesis research projects. Students are supported if they wish to write their thesis in English. PhD dissertations are in English.

Professors and lecturers are qualified researchers themselves as they participate/publish in (international) conferences, journals and books.

The programmes succeed in establishing solid cross-connections between social partners and the University during the academic year. Students seem to value academic cooperation with social partners and other employers on real business problems.

According to SER, social partners participate in activities such as career days, give lectures, and can initiate thesis topics from their side. Feedback from social partners goes to the programme management on the basis of which the programme is being adjusted and improved.

Research is also central to the second cycle study programmes ISMM and KMLM: a course on Communication Research Methods (5EC) is offered in the first year. Students in the second cycle programmes are admitted from other programmes than the first cycle BIMB programme. Therefore, it is recommended to offer (optional) additional methods modules to remedy possible deficits in knowledge about (communication) research methods, research ethics, and more. In the ISMM and KMLM programmes students conduct research themselves and/or in collaboration with their supervisor when writing their thesis. Social partners are invited to be part of the thesis defence committee and/or event.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The science activities offered to students in both the first cycle BIMB programme and in the second cycle ISMM and KMLM programmes are sufficient. The potential of the relationships with the social partners could even be strengthened, so that the programmes can keep up with recent trends, such as cyber security.

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

(1) Factual situation

In the SER it is explained that the Information service study field is related to the communication and information research area which encompasses a wide variety of social science disciplines such as economy, business management, law, computer science and information technologies and more. The SER shows that the scope of the research activities of the academic staff of both bachelor and master programmes is up to standard as, over the years 2017–2020, academic staff collectively realised a growing number of (high quality and international) publications. Expert panel recommends monitoring these figures on a yearly basis in order to see whether this growth consolidates.

The SER also refers to a Comparative expert MTEP activity evaluation which showed that the high quality and growth of the research activities of the study field's academic staff was acknowledged in 2018. The SER's Annex 3 shows that themes and topics taught in the respective courses of both bachelor and master programmes correspond with the scholarly interest and expertise of those lecturers teaching these courses. This makes it possible for lecturers to refer to their own research activities when giving classes and involve students herein, a good practice which was also referred to by several lecturers during the site visit.

The overview of research projects in which the academic staff of both bachelor and master programmes participate are externally funded by (European) grants and are interdisciplinary in scope. The international and interdisciplinary orientations of the projects align well with the broad scope of both the bachelor and master programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, and technology is good. Expert panel recommends monitoring publication outputs and research project funding figures on a yearly basis in order to see whether this growth consolidates.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER shows that student involvement in research activities mostly refers to shorter student activities such as short-term visits, summer camps, research internships. Only a very few students participated in realising scholarly journal publications. Although bachelor's and master's students are encouraged to get involved in the activity of scientific research together with the lecturers, there are also reasons on behalf of the students not to participate, such as having a job next to being a student, family obligations or social life activities. To stimulate student participation in research and other extracurricular

activities, a new portfolio option is in place by which students can obtain credits for these research and extracurricular activities.

Master students are expected to be involved in high quality research when writing their thesis: to contribute novel ideas, in a creative manner, find out solutions to a problem, apply analytical ways to achieve solutions. Both master and bachelor's students are expected to defend their thesis in public in front of a committee.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The conditions for students to get involved in research activities are sufficiently consistent with their study cycle. The first and second cycle study programmes should continue to think of ways to increase student motivation and the number of students participating in these projects.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *Research activities are a recurring element in the first cycle study programme (both in methodological courses and substantive courses, as well as internships and thesis work).*
2. *Lecturers refer to their own research activities when giving classes and involve students herein, which we consider a good practice*
3. *The BIMB programme and the ISMM and KMLM programmes have established a variety of relationships with social partners and the labour market in research.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *The potential of the relationship with social partners and alumni is not fully used now as the social partners can be more involved to keep the programmes involved in new developments in the labour market.*
2. *There is a small portion of students that actually participate in extracurricular research activities. The first and second cycle study programmes should continue to think of ways to increase the number of students participating in these projects.*

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

Regarding the first cycle study programme, persons with secondary education are admitted to the programme, and admission takes place during the General Admission period and in accordance with the procedures of the Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for Centralised Admissions (LAMA BPO) that are required for all higher education institutions in Lithuania.

The second-cycle study programme admission is independent from LAMA BPO and is conducted in accordance with the *Vilnius University Admissions Procedure for Second-Cycle Study Programmes* approved by VU Senate. Prospective students with a first cycle study

graduate diploma from university can be admitted, as well as persons with a first cycle study college diploma with additional bridging courses.

Additional admission grades for the second cycle study programme can be added for certain activities, which include participating in national and international scientific conferences, science popularisation articles, and research articles published in scientific journals. The weight of the point is determined by the level of the journal or the conference in question (national, international, peer-reviewed, etc.). The following additional points are also given: "0.5 points for college graduates and 1-year-long bridging courses of "Communication and information"; 1 point for those who have the fields present in social science field group – communication; information services; publishing, journalism – university bachelor's degree;" (SER, 2021).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The first cycle study programme admissions are overseen by a single body – LAMA BPO; therefore, the procedure presents no difficulties to the university or a first cycle programme. The procedure is clear and available at Vilnius University and LAMA BPO websites, among others.

The admission procedure for the second cycle study programme is managed by the university itself. The procedure is outlined in a related document (*Vilnius University Admissions Procedure for Second-Cycle Study Programmes)* and is relatively clear. However, awarding additional points for the graduates in the field of social sciences specifically, such as "communication; information services; publishing, journalism", could be reconsidered, because it may disadvantage prospective students from other fields who could be equally interested and able to study in the Information Services field study programmes or discourage them from applying at all. Staying more open to other fields might influence the student numbers, and support the expansion of the pool of knowledge among students, especially when it comes to subjects, such as informatics, big data, data analysis and management, cybersecurity, etc.

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

The University recognises foreign qualifications gained in previous or partial studies, as well as informally gained education.

The recognition of foreign qualifications adheres to "the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the Description of the Procedure for Recognition of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired Under Educational Programmes of Foreign States And International Organisations, the Methodology of Evaluating Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired Under Educational Programmes of Foreign States And International Organisations and other documents" (SER, 2021, p. 42). Each gained qualification is evaluated individually, and is concerned with factors, such as study content, formal requirements, and subject-specific competences. No more than 75% of the scope of first cycle, second cycle, integrated and joint study programmes may be recognised.

The existing regulations at Vilnius University also recognise informally gained education, e.g., internships, volunteering, employment, projects, and similar activities. No more than

50% of the scope of a programme can be recognised, and the decision is taken by the Study Programme Committee, with possible participation of external evaluators.

During the evaluated period, there were not many requests to include the results of previous studies. The information provided in SER indicates that there were 3 cases of study module inclusion in 2019-2020 in the second cycle programme of *Knowledge management and leadership*, and 3 cases in 2018-2019 in the first cycle programme of *Business Information Management*. There are no non-accredited cases.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The procedures for recognising foreign qualifications and informally gained education are clear and well-established. The documents are easily accessible on the University's website.

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

(1) Factual situation

The University organises and coordinates academic exchange programmes for their students. Students of all cycles can spend up to half of their studies abroad, by participating in various mobility programmes, of which Erasmus and Erasmus+ can make up 12 months. The exchange possibility is also available for compulsory internships, additional summer internships, or graduate practice under Erasmus+ and other agreements. The processes of mobility are overseen by the university's Internal Relations Department and by the staff responsible for international cooperation and studies abroad. All information about mobility opportunities is available on the University website.

During the evaluated period (2017-2020) there were 225 incoming students in the first cycle and 48 in the second cycle of the Information Services study field programmes. There are fewer outgoing students, with 8 students in the first cycle study programme and none in the second cycle study programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

On the whole, the students (both first and second cycles) are well-informed about the possibilities of academic mobility. The information about exchange programmes is provided to them in newsletters, emails and during informational meetings, and is also available on the website of the university.

The site visit revealed that the students are not particularly active in participating in mobility programmes. Students' unavailability due to work, or a lack of motivation were given as possible reasons for the low numbers of outgoing students. The first cycle students, however, also expressed their disappointment in a lack of available study programmes and courses corresponding to their study programme at the destination universities. As a result, while students might be motivated to go abroad for partial studies, they cannot find proper placement. This should be investigated closely by the BIMB programme management.

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 University provides students with various types of support that are available to both first cycle and second cycle students. While centralised academic support is provided by

the Student Services and Career Department, for the convenience of students, they can be counselled at every academic unit of Vilnius University. Information Services field students are additionally counselled in the Faculty of Communication by five academic consultants and one consultant who consults the students with special needs.

Financial support is provided with several types of scholarships: incentive scholarships for very good learning results, one-off social grants and one-off earmarked scholarships, and nominal scholarships based on specific study and research fields. State-wide loans that are administered by the State Studies Foundation are also available. The scholarship procedures are published on the University's website. The Faculty has also established guidelines for reducing study payments (for subject, module, or semester) in special cases.

Accommodation as a form of social support is also available at the University, and the need is almost fully satisfied, with 95% of accommodated students.

The psychological support for students is available through the Counselling and Training Centre, where students can receive consultations on relevant personal, family, study, social integration, and other issues.

The University also provides students with additional support that includes career counselling, professional and personal development, healthy lifestyle practice, and various types of cultural, sports, and social activities.

Finally, an additional support system is established as a mentorship programme, where students can get mentorship from fellow students, teachers, alumni, social partners, or companies as a whole.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The University provides students with sufficient support for different types of needs, the students are well informed and well taken care of. Students of both cycles receive informational emails or mention being able to talk to the staff they trust most. First cycle students count on curators for all kinds of information which they provide in the introductory meeting, as well as throughout the year.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

The students are informed about their study programme and the relevant processes in a number of ways. The integration week provides students with initial information about their study programme (aims, intended outcomes, methods, and study individualisation opportunities) and its content through meetings with members of the Study Programme Committee. Later on, general study information is available to students through the Student Services and Career Centre, and specific information is provided in individual meetings with the relevant staff.

Means for counselling students include email, phone, direct inquiry system available on the website of the University, social media, physical meetings, and discussion forums.

Study Programme Committee members and lecturers consult students about the intended outcomes of the programme, courses, their content, and career possibilities for the existing programme. Lecturers have appointed office hours for consultations which can also be done after lectures and via e-mail or the virtual learning environment.

These practises include both first cycle and second cycle students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The level of study information and student counselling is sufficient, although, since it is not specified in the SER, the Integration week appears to be focused on the first cycle students more. While a whole week of introductions might not be necessary to master's level students, the recommendation here is to ensure that the introduction the new second cycle students get, since many of them come from different universities, is enough.

A number of first cycle students appear to be working in various jobs alongside their studies which might reflect on their results and overall performance. Second cycle students also manage work and studies in many cases, but they are often already working before they start studying, and the studies might be more related to their work, which affects their motivation and allows to manage time better (e.g., if the employers know that the knowledge their employee gains is useful for the company, they might be more tolerant when it comes to leaving work for lectures or exams, and so on). Additionally, during the site visit, the second cycle students said that they enjoy being busy.

With these remarks, the recommendation is to include, among the list of already existing ways of counselling and support, counselling for students who are managing work and studies at the same time. Counselling should also aim at not discouraging students from working during their studies, because some of the students might just not be able to avoid it because of their financial situation, but at helping them to manage their time and workload better, as well as deal with the difficult situations that might arise as a consequence.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The students get sufficient study counselling and individual consultations are of particular value to the students.*
2. *The students are well supported in different spheres of their university experience.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *The mobility practices are affected by the study programme implementation as a business-oriented study field programme, especially as it is labelled as an information management programme while being more of a business-oriented degree, as noted in Chapter 3.1 "Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum". For this reason, it is difficult for students to find appropriate matches to their home programme at other universities throughout the EU and further abroad.*
2. *The biggest weakness in this section for second cycle students is the limitation placed on entrance to the programmes, that is, that only students from particular fields (as noted above in 3.3.1 "Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process") receive additional points towards admission.*

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

Students are encouraged to develop generic competences which the Faculty considers important generally for professional practice, including "the culture of argumentation and creativity as well as critical thinking, social responsibility, problem solving ability, regular updating, understanding, accepting and tolerating the variety of the works and society." During the site visit, VU staff explained that competences are determined by the needs of the labour market. Social partners, employers, and graduates of the Information Services field study are actively and consistently involved in their formulation.

When the field study programme committees discuss and approve the subject syllabi, special attention is given to their quality: updating of relevant subject topics, clarification of specific compulsory literature pages, indication of clear evaluation criteria, and list of compulsory literature. There are two study programme committees for the field of Information services: BIMB study programme committee, and ISMM and KMLM – United Information management master's study programme committee.

Various study forms, methods of study and achievement evaluation, most suitable for the intended results, are used. Different types of study forms are used: lectures, seminars, practice, individual work, consultations given by the lecturers. Practical tasks are for smaller student groups (tasks in sub-groups). When performing the tasks, students have the possibility to consult with the lecturer after the lectures directly, via the email, Moodle, or MS Teams platform.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The process of learning and teaching of the programme presented is clear. The need for review of generic competences, particularly for second cycle study programmes has been outlined in section 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*" above.

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

(1) Factual situation

Vilnius University approved its five-year strategy for variety and equal possibilities, defining the most important activity fields until 2025. The University has the procedure for study individualisation according to individual needs emerging because of a disability, which allows adapting the study process to students and listeners with special needs.

There are responsible persons for the work with disabled students who refer to the provided recommendations and prepare the study individualisation plan, and guarantees that it is implemented.

When evaluating the study performance of students with special needs (visual, auditory, mobility, and other impairments), flexible forms of performance assessment are utilised, and the needs of these persons are taken into account. Socially vulnerable groups can use all support provided at Vilnius University which helps in adapting the study process according to the individual situation.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The conditions ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs are sufficient. Having dedicated personnel to deal with the individualisation of study plans and making sure the students are well taken care of is especially commendable.

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 progress of the first and second cycle students in the Information Services study field is monitored on several levels: subject, study year, and the whole study programme. On the level of the subject, the progress is monitored by the lecturers through feedback to students about their completed tasks and areas for improvement. In terms of monitoring the progress during the study year, the Study Programme Committee evaluates the learning outcomes outlined in the study plan by reviewing how well the students performed in their exams, as well as whether any of the students terminated their studies and why. The progress of the whole study programme is monitored through final theses preparation and defences, as well as through consultations with the companies that hosted the students for their internships.

The students also get feedback not only about their studying, but also about their progress, and questions related to study management, such as study plan changes, and Study Programme Committee activities, are also addressed.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The first and second cycle students in the Information Services study field get a lot of feedback and are often consulted individually which provides opportunities for self-assessment and improvement. However, while the monitoring of the study progress in subjects is sufficient as it depends on the teachers of the module, programme level progress monitoring as it is might not be enough, especially when it comes to yearly practice. The numbers of students who passed or failed the exams as well as the numbers of students terminating their studies do not necessarily inform about the achieved learning outcomes.

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

(1) Factual situation

Graduate career tracking is implemented through the Career Tracking Information System (CTIS) karjera.lt tools. These provide objective indicators from state information systems and government and departmental registers and subjective indicators from the graduates' survey.

Based on VU data, one year after graduation over 80 % of the graduates of first cycle studies are employed on a contractual basis. For the second cycle - 100 % of the graduates.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The first and second cycle study programmes are oriented largely to the business field. As the site visit revealed, internship placements are chosen according to set criteria, and the programmes are oriented more to business organisations. The social partners participating in the site visit were also large businesses. This corresponds to the implementation of the study programmes as related to the business field.

The employers are happy with the alumni, as they have good business related skills, and the students are happy with the knowledge they get and with their career possibilities.

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

(1) Factual situation

Section 4.2 of the SER summarised information on examined cases of violations of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination and decisions made over the last 3 years of studies.

Teachers and students must adhere to the Academic Ethics Code of Vilnius University that defines general academic, teaching, study and scientific research ethical norms. The Code defines cases of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, bribery, and assisting another in dishonest academic activity. The university uses a plagiarism detection system (ESAS) that enables the verification of the overlapping of a paper with other papers stored in the University database and eLABa repository. During the exam period, invigilators delegated by the Students Representation monitor exams for cheating or misconduct, helping staff and the university ensure that conduct during exams is fair and honest.

Cases of the breach of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are handled at the University in accordance with the Regulations of the Central Academic Ethics Commission of Vilnius University and the Regulations of the Academic Ethics Commission of Core Academic Units of Vilnius University, as well as the Regulations of the Central Dispute Resolution Committee of Vilnius University and the Regulations of the Dispute Resolution Committee of Core Academic Units of Vilnius University. All documents are available at the website.

The appeals procedure is determined by the Regulations of the Dispute Resolution Commission of Core Academic Units. The FC analyses the appellations, related to educational and study activity, in the Dispute Resolution Commission which follows "the Regulations of the Dispute Resolution Committee of Core Academic Units of Vilnius University" in its activity.

According to the SER, during the evaluated period, 3 cases of academic non-integrity were recorded in the BIMB study programme. In the 2018/2019 school year, the case of academic non-integrity was recorded during the evaluation of the study results, the student was expelled from the University. In the 2019/2020 school year, 2 students were also expelled because of non-integrity during the evaluation of the study results. The students of the master's study programme did not apply to the Academic ethics commission.

In the case of the appeals, 2 cases were analysed, regarding the final evaluation of the

course paper (spring semester of 2017/2018 school year). The decision reached was that the paper was evaluated correctly. In 2018/2019 2 cases of evaluation criteria were analysed, and in 2019/2020 there were no appealed cases. The second cycle students did not apply to the Dispute Resolution Commission during the analysed period.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

While there are documents, guidelines, and practises set to prevent plagiarism and ensure academic integrity, there seems to be a lack of information about research ethics. The examples of final theses provided contain transcripts of interviews which raise concerns about privacy issues – the aspect that students and teachers should be aware of. During the site visit, the Expert panel noticed that second cycle students were not familiar with the notion of informed consent. The recommendation here would be to pay more attention not only to academic integrity, but also to the questions of research ethics as well, when discussing academic work, specific assignments, and methodologies.

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 appeal lodging procedure is determined by the Regulations of the Dispute Resolution Commission of Core Academic Units (hereafter – CAU). Persons who disagree with the examination procedure or evaluation can file a complaint with the Appeals Commission of a CAU within 5 days after the publication of examination results. The FC analyses the appellations, related to educational and study activity, in the Dispute Resolution Commission which follows "the Regulations of the Dispute Resolution Committee of Core Academic Units of Vilnius University" in its activity.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

While the procedures are well defined and have proper documentation, the documents are not easily accessible. The documents could be grouped according to topics, to make sure the students know that conflict resolution documents refer to "Appeals".

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The conditions enabling access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs are well ensured. Having dedicated personnel to deal with the individualisation of study plans and making sure the students are well taken care of is especially commendable*
2. *The students get proper individual counselling and their progress is well monitored.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *More attention to various aspects of research ethics is recommended.*
2. *The career of students is oriented to the business field more than to the field of Information Services, which also affects the possibilities of their academic mobility.*

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The Self Evaluation Report indicates that since September 2020, Information Services field studies have been implemented by 56 lecturers. 27 (almost half) of them have been working for at least three years and at least part-time. These lecturers work in the study programmes of both cycles. The rest are lecturers teaching a specific subject under the contract at an hourly rate. An extensive list of the lecturers working in the Information Services study field and their qualifications is provided as an annex to the SER.

The percentages of the lecturers holding a scientific degree and whether that corresponds with the requirements for the study programme are provided in the tables below, which have been sourced from the SER.

Table No. 6. Information Services field lecturer compliance with the general requirements for the <u>first cycle</u> studies for 2017-2020 school years (According to the SER, Table 27)

Requirement stated in Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies	In the Information Services field study programme of the first cycle
No less than 50% of Information Services study field subjects must be taught by scientists or recognized artists	Of 40 lecturers, teaching in the first cycle study programme, scientists formed: in 2020/2019 school year – 27 scientists (67.5%) in 2019/2018 school year - 27 scientists (67.5%) in 2017/2018 school year – 28 scientists (68%)

Table No. 7. Information service field lecturer compliance with the general requirements for the <u>second cycle</u> studies for 2017-2020 school year (According to the SER, Table 28)

Requirement stated in Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies	In Information Services field study programmes of the second cycle
No less than 80% of all study subjects teachers must have a scientific degree (or be renowned artists)	Information System Management – 80%; Knowledge Management and Leadership – 81%.

The remaining share (20%) of teachers may be practitioners who, in the period of recent 7 years, have gained at least 3 years of experience in professional activities which correspond to the taught applied subjects.	Information System Management – 10%; Knowledge Management and Leadership – 10%.
No less than 20% of major study field subjects' volume has to be taught by teachers occupying the position of a Professors	Since 2020: Information System Management – 20%; Knowledge Management and Leadership – 24%.

As stated in the SER, the ratio of the number of the lecturers and students in the first and second cycle study programme is 1 : 4, when one lecturer gets 4 students. In the first cycle, the number of students is increasing; in second cycle programmes, the numbers of students remains the same.

The lecturers with professional practice in the field contain 10% of the teaching staff in both second cycle study programmes. However, a number of lecturers tend to choose professional practice over teaching and might leave the University for financial reasons, according to SER. This turnover is partly addressed with attempts to attract master's graduates to the doctoral studies and encourage research and teaching activities among young scientists.

The number of professors in both second cycle study programmes has been less than 20% throughout the whole evaluation period (2017-2020). In the SER is written that "The lack of professors in both programmes (the percentage part of lecturers taking the position of the professor in ISMM was 10.5 percent, and in KMLM – 12.5 percent) also emerged, but, gradually the situation changed and since 2020 all the aforementioned shortcomings were eliminated. The study programme committee attracted new lecturers having the scientific degree as well as lecturers taking the position of the professor in Information Services study field. Therefore, currently, cycle II study programmes comply with the requirements for staff composition."

The SER notes the language levels of teachers. All three programmes are taught in Lithuanian.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Faculty of Communication is making efforts to meet the minimum qualification requirements for lecturers. However, there is a potential problem for second cycle programmes, if the Faculty do not employ more teachers with a higher qualification. For future, the Faculty would benefit from offering teaching in the English language, particularly to attract students on mobility programmes.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile)

(1) Factual situation

The Faculty of Communication takes part in four international programmes (Erasmus, Erasmus internship, Baltic SeaVirtual Campus, European Masters of Professional Communication). As stated in the SER, the contracts with foreign universities are reviewed

and updated every year. The Faculty currently holds contracts with 93 foreign higher schools. During the exchange visit the lecturers teach according to the agreed programme.

In 2017-2018, 8 lecturers went on exchange visits, in 2018-2019 – 12, in 2019-2020 – 2, the last number mostly affected by the pandemic. Every year, approximately 6 professors from abroad are guest lecturing at the Faculty of Communication. In 2019, 18 lecturers visited the Faculty of Communication. While these lecturers are not necessarily only from the field of Information Services, the field students can benefit from these mobility practices.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert panel noted the importance of mobility for staff and also noticed there is incoming as well as outgoing mobility. The Expert panel hopes mobility will remain high on the agenda post-Covid-19 restrictions.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER indicates that during the analysed period, all lecturers of Information Services field study programmes of both cycles developed their skills in different professional activities: international science and study projects, international conferences, scientific internships, professional development courses and seminars.

Vilnius University centrally organises training for teachers, and the regular lecturers of the Information Services study field actively take part in the trainings. 40% of them took part in several training sessions.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Expert panel acknowledges strong staff participation in activities, such as staff mobility and training. These activities support essential competencies, such as language skills, for delivering programmes. The COVID-19 pandemic increased staff skills around providing education digitally.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *Staff participation in mobility is good.*
2. *Staff participation in training is good.*
3. *Instructors combine academic and practical experience in the classroom.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *There is a potential problem for the second cycle study programmes, if the Faculty do not employ more teachers with a higher qualification.*
2. *There is a potential issue around teaching all courses in Lithuanian, which does not accommodate mobility students.*

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 of Communication's (FC) auditoriums and study rooms are equipped with tools (interactive boards, multimedia projectors, VHS/DVD/CD/MD players, TV sets with video projectors, professional studio cameras) and software (Microsoft Office, Adobe Master Suite publishing programme package, etc.) needed for teaching and study. The equipment and software are regularly updated.

The first and second cycle students of the Faculty can use the Library premises and facilities. The library premises and resources are available physically 24/7, as well as remotely by VPN. The teachers and students are provided with the largest collection of subscribed scientific databases and e-books in Lithuania. The Faculty of Communication staff and students can access subscribed e-resources from home computers via VPN.

The FC and the library provide some access conditions for disabled people. The specialised equipment and compensational measures are available to the students in the FC, as well on the Library premises.

The companies or institutions for internship are selected using formal criteria of the suitability approved by the University. The hosting institution must be able to supervise an internship. There is an orientation towards business organisations. The SER (p. 72) notes that the "Cycle I study programme has a specialised list of cooperating organisations which can be offered for a student to apply for the accomplishment of the internship if a student has difficulties in individually finding the place for internship." The University provides regulations around internships at the page https://www.vu.lt/en/studies/academic-info-for-students/regulations.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

According to the SER (pp. 22, 31, 59), the University mainly cooperates with business organisations. There is no evidence that the Faculty cooperates with libraries. No representatives of libraries were present at the site visit meeting with social partners. The Expert Panel found conflicting information on the main University website and the Faculty of Communications website about this issue, e.g., https://www.vu.lt/en/studies/academic-info-for-students/regulations;
https://www.vu.lt/en/business/innovations-and-research/partners; and
https://www.vu.lt/apiemus/partneryste.

For example, the main University website referred to, only in Lithuanian, The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA); however, this information was not provided in English.

The infrastructure is largely appropriate for the study programmes at both first and second cycles. Computers and other learning facilities are updated and modernised. The library has new modern equipment installed. The funds for acquisition of print and electronic

resources are appropriate. The library provides a rich collection of e-resources, including subject specialist databases relevant to study in Information Services. While these specialist resources provide a potential foundation of information for the study of Information Services, both cycles of study programmes with their outlook to the business field do not allow for their utilisation.

The management of the pandemic situation is also commendable, since the University provided the possibility to use the software and other resources from home. However, during the site visit, VU staff indicated that the capacities of the classrooms are up to the limit, and need to be shared with the faculties nearby. The capacity of rooms should be reviewed and reconsidered in future planning.

The Faculty of Communication and the University have successfully coped with the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and students were provided with additional equipment and/or software for successful distance learning and teaching.

The VHS and MD players could be reconsidered as part of the equipment for the first and second cycle study programmes that are oriented towards more progressive digital practices.

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

(1) Factual situation

During the site visit, the Expert panel asked about planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out Information Services field studies. The response was that, currently, the volume of the premises, intended for delivering studies and achieving the study results, and their infrastructure, means and equipment, used for the studies, are suitable and sufficient.

The University is going to move to a VU Cloud infrastructure; they will not purchase new computers, but will provide opportunities for first and second cycle students of the Information Services field to use the Cloud infrastructure (software, storage, etc.) and connect to these with their own devices.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The digital infrastructure should be constantly updated, and it is positive to see the University is working toward this. The inclusion of older technologies, such as VHS and MD, requires a rationale.

Library information resources are not oriented to the field study of Information Services, because the panel did not find evidence of links between the usage of Information Services-oriented resources in teaching and learning activities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The physical spaces and facilities provided by the University and the Faculty are in good condition.*
2. *Teachers and students have access to a rich and constantly updated print and e-resource collections.*
3. *The Library premises and facilities are available 24/7. Librarians provide support and resources.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *The capacities of the rooms are up to the limit, and solutions should be identified by the central university administration.*
2. *Library information resources are not oriented to the field study of Information Services, because the panel did not find evidence of links between the usage of Information Services-oriented resources in teaching and learning activities.*

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 internal quality assurance system involves a committee which gathers information about multiple aspects of the Faculty of Communication (FC) and uses this to prepare a significant report. Specifically, the SER notes that study quality assurance and management are implemented at all three levels: University (Senate), Faculty (FC) and Study programme Committee (SPC). Changes to Information Services field study programmes are considered by the SPC, and if the changes are substantial, they are considered and approved by the Core Academic Units (CAU) board. If the title, study field, awarded qualification (degree), professional qualification or scopes of the study programme are altered, the alteration must be considered and approved not only by the study programme committee and the council of the CAU, but also by the University Senate. The SER states that the programme updating process is supervised by VU Study Quality and Development Department.

(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.

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

(1) Factual situation

The VU Regulation on Study Programmes stipulates that the Study Programme Committees are responsible for the quality assurance and continuous improvement of study programmes. The committees' activities are based on the Regulations of the Vilnius University Study Programme Committee. The committee is formed of the lecturers, delivering the programme, social partners, and student representatives.

For this quality review, the internal quality assurance committee includes members of the Faculty of Communication, as well as students of first and second cycle study programmes in Information Services field representation.

The Faculty of Communication reports that it responds to student feedback as it arises. The Faculty of Communication also plans for programme development.

According to the SER social partners and alumni are willing to work with the Faculty of Communication.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During the site visit an expert panel found that the student representative on the internal quality review committee did not appear to have a participatory role on the committee. A role for student representatives is described in vague terms in the SER. Students should understand the purpose of the quality review committee and their role in supporting this committee's work. A more structured role which enables fuller student participation in this process would be beneficial to the quality assurance committee and to the programme's ongoing development.

During the site visit social partners spoke well of their learning from the first and second cycle study programmes, though some mentioned improvements are needed around timetabling of courses. Social partners are willing to commit more time to working with the Faculty of Communication to organise timetabling.

The social partners stated that they value the links between the programmes and the workplace. Some wished to strengthen collaboration around start-ups.

During the site visit Alumni spoke well of the programmes, with some noting improvements in second cycle study programmes since they were students. Some alumni noted that they stay in touch with their lecturers. Alumni feel connected to the Faculty of Communication.

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 SER notes data that are included in internal assessment of quality. Student feedback data are presented in the SER. The internal quality assessment committee concluded that student feedback is collected appropriately and that students are included appropriately in the quality assessment process. Data regarding programmes, including courses, faculty, and theses, are also provided.

The internal quality assessment committee also provided suggestions around what they might do in future for quality assessment.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The student feedback data presented, e.g., in SER Table 34, offer some insight into the student experience with the programmes. However, greater exploration of feedback is needed and trends in the data should be analysed and presented. For example, there are some positive trends in Table 34 in student satisfaction regarding quality of teaching in different terms and years. "What might have had an impact on this feedback? Covid? Other potential impacts pre-Covid? Provide an appropriate narrative that tells your department's story of education."

An additional qualitative exploration of the student experience would facilitate deeper engagement with the quality review process. An additional overall SWOT analysis of data presented about the Faculty of Communication's activities would be helpful to the Faculty and the University.

While offering suggestions for future quality assessment activities demonstrates that the Faculty of Communication has considered the nature of quality assessment, it is unclear why the faculty has not already implemented these measures.

It should be noted that the data gathered pertain to the subject area of Business. Evidence pertaining to outcomes relevant to Information Services study field are needed.

3.7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the SKVC or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI

(1) Factual situation

The Faculty of Communication has provided some data around student feedback, pertaining to student satisfaction of the first and second cycle study programmes and teaching. Students' opinions are taken into account, e.g., from the SER, when students reasonably express dissatisfaction with the work of lecturers, the problem is discussed with them, and, if no mutual solution can be found, the lecturers are replaced. The SER notes that the information collected during student surveys and problems raised are analysed in the Study Programme Committee; the information is discussed with teaching lecturers, who regularly update the syllabi of subjects referring to the remarks of the students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

A deep engagement with students and alumni is essential for determining the quality of educational offerings and processes. The Faculty of Communication provides some data, but analyses and presentations could be improved quantitatively and qualitatively.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. *The Faculty of Communication requests student feedback which is helpful for assessing quality.*
2. *The Faculty of Communication is responsive to students when issues arise.*

(2) Weaknesses:
1. *A full SWOT would help the Faculty of Communication conduct a fuller analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.*
2. *While this quality assessment is intended to be about Information Services, a programme of this nature would seem to be missing from the review apart from a programme title and small traces. The Faculty of Communication should conduct a full review of its first and second cycle study programmes in the Information Services field and decide either to continue or to discontinue these programmes as Information Services programmes, and then similarly develop or remove traces such as placements. Essentially, the Faculty of Communication needs to consider carefully its overall goals for these programmes and to follow through with appropriate planning.*

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

The Faculty of Communication should be commended for continuing to provide its study programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Flipping teaching across the first and second cycle study programmes in the field of Information Services to the online environment is a significant task. In the view of the expert panel, the Faculty 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	• Learning outcomes across programmes should be revised to provide appropriate generic and subject-specific learning in the field of Information Services. • Courses and credits on offer should be revised to support learning in the subject area of Information Services. • Assessment should be revised to probe subjects' areas in depth and to encourage students to achieve beyond surface learning.
Links between science (art) and studies	• The relationship with social partners and alumni should be maximized upon to keep programmes relevant to new developments in the labour market. • Research ethics should be taught, monitored, and remedied where necessary across programmes. • Students in first and second cycles should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular research activities.
Student admission and support	• Mobility practices should be revised to support students in finding appropriate Information Services placement matching to their home programme at other universities throughout the EU and further abroad. • Limitations on entrance to second cycle programmes should be removed, so that students from all fields receive additional points towards admission.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	• Greater attention to teaching the various aspects of research ethics is needed. • Attention to the future careers of students for the field of Information Services is necessary.
Teaching staff	• For the second cycle study programmes, more teachers with higher qualifications should be hired. • At least some teaching should be provided in the English language to support mobility students visiting the Faculty of Communication.

Learning facilities and resources	• All premises should be adapted to meet standards for accommodating students with special needs. • Central university administration should identify and implement solutions to increase room capacities for teaching. • Library information resources oriented to the field study of Information Services should be provided and used for teaching and learning.
Study quality management and public information	• The Faculty of Communication should conduct a comprehensive SWOT analysis of its strengths and weaknesses and act upon the outcomes to improve the overall work of the Faculty. • An appropriate Information Services programme should be created and/or revised in consultation with Lithuanian library associations and using international associations and best practice, and then implemented.

*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 the Vilnius University (hereafter – the University, VU) administration (senior management and faculty administration staff), staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff and stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, social partners). While the Faculty of Communication have significant work to do to improve their first and second cycle study programmes in the field of Information Services, the expert panel gives a positive evaluation to the implementation of the study field of Information Services, first cycle and second cycle at Vilnius University with all areas assessed as satisfactory and good.

The greatest strength of the study programmes on offer is the learning facilities and resources for the first cycle. Further development is needed for the second cycle.

Research activities are a recurring element in the first cycle study programme (both in methodological courses and substantive courses, as well as internships and thesis work). Lecturers of Information Services field studies refer to their own research activities when giving classes and involve students herein, which we consider a good practice. The first and second cycle study programmes have established a variety of relationships with social partners and the labour market in research.

The first and second cycle students get sufficient study counselling and individual consultations. They are well supported in different spheres of their University experience. The conditions enabling access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs are well ensured. Having dedicated personnel to deal with the individualisation of study plans and making sure the students are well taken care of is especially commendable. The students get proper individual counselling and their progress is well monitored.

Areas requiring improvement include an appropriate implementation of the first and second cycle study programmes in the field of Information Services. Beginning with programme aims and objectives, each programme should be reviewed and strengthened overall. The courses and credits on offer do not support learning in the subject area of Information Services, as the programmes focus on preparing graduates for a business setting. There is a small portion of students that actually participate in extracurricular research activities. The first and second cycle study programmes should continue to think of ways to increase the number of students participating in these projects. The career of students is oriented to the business field more than to the field of Information Services, which also affects the possibilities of their academic mobility.

Although significant time and work will be required, it is possible for the Faculty's programmes to be revised to meet international standards for preparing students to enter positions in the field of Information Services. The Faculty of Communication should conduct a full review of its first and second cycle study programmes in the Information Services field and decide either to continue or to discontinue these programmes as Information Services programmes, and then similarly develop or remove traces such as placements. Essentially, the Faculty needs to consider carefully its overall goals for these programmes and to follow through with appropriate planning.

Expert panel signature:

Associate professor Diane Marie Pennington (panel chairperson)