SKVC

CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of Management

at Lithuanian Sports Univerisity

Expert panel:

1. **Prof. Dr. Douglas Gilbert (panel chairperson),** *academic member;*
2. **Prof. Dr. Joanna Paliszkiewicz,** *academic member;*
3. **Prof. Dr. Inga Lapiņa,** *academic member;*
4. **Ms Reda Stankevičienė,** *representative of social partners;*
5. **Mr Eren Çanga,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator – *Ms Austėja Pliupelytė*

Report language – English
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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	*Sport and Tourism Management*	*Tourism and Sport Management*
State code	6121LX002	6211LX003
Type of studies	Bachelor University Studies	Master University Studies
Cycle of studies	First	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)	Full-time (2 years)
Credit volume	180	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor in Business Management	Master in Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian and English	Lithuanian and English
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Bachelor's degree
Registration date of the study programme	2006 12 29	1997 05 19

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluations of study fields in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are based on the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport on 17 July 2019, Order No. V-835, and are carried out according to the procedure outlined in the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) on 31 December 2019, Order No. V-149.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, Order No. V-149. The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on 24 May 2023

1. Prof. Dr. Douglas Gilbert (USA), panel chair - academic member, CEO at Lone Tree Academics LLC, Visiting (Fulbright) Professor in Entrepreneurship at Vilnius University.
2. Prof. Dr. Joanna Paliszkiewicz, (Poland), panel member - academic member,, Professor at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Visiting professor at ISM University of Management and Economics.
3. Prof. Dr. Inga Lapiņa (Latvia), panel member - academic member,, Professor and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs at Riga Technical University, Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management.
4. Ms Reda Stankevičienė (Lithuania), representative of social partners, Executive director at Kaunas Region Industrialists and Employers Association, project manager at TSMA Ltd.
5. Mr Eren Canga (Türkiye), students' representative, fourth-year student of study programme Business Administration at Hacettepe University, member of ESU Quality Assurance Student Experts Pool.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of document
1.	Examples of final theses

1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT LITHUANIAN SPORTS UNIVERSITY

Lithuanian Sports University (hereinafter, LSU), founded in 1934, is a specialised public higher education institution that has developed its unique traditions in sport, leisure and health sciences. The university operates from a single campus in Kaunas.

LSU is affiliated with multiple sports science and educational networks including the European Network for Sport Science, Education and Employment (ENSSEE), the European Observatory for Sport and Employment (EOSE), the Baltic Sport Science Association (BSSS), the European Association of Sport Management (EASM), and the European College of Sport Science (ECSS).

LSU operates six first cycle (Bachelor's) and ten second cycle (Master's) study programmes and conducts research in several fields of sport science. Two study programmes are offered at LSU in the field of Management: the first cycle programme Sport and Tourism Management (STM) and the second cycle programme Tourism and Sport Management (TSM).

STM includes a full-time study programme delivered in Lithuanian and English and a part-time study programme delivered in Lithuanian.

TSM is a full-time study programme delivered in Lithuanian and English. TSM underwent an external evaluation by SKVC in 2016 and received a positive evaluation.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the *Management* study field at Lithuanian Sports 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	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	25

*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.

The **second cycle** of the **Management** study field at Lithuanian Sports 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	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	25

*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

(1) Factual situation
According to the institution Bachelor's and Master's "Sports and Tourism Management study programme is the only university programme in Lithuania that trains sport and tourism specialists in the field of management. [...] Graduates of the study programme Sports and Tourism Management will be able to work as managers, supervisors or administrators in Lithuanian or foreign sports organisations (associations, federations, sports or fitness clubs) and state institutions responsible for the development of sport in the regions; as an organiser of leisure or sporting events; and to set up a sports or tourism business" (SER, p. 8).

(2) Expert judgement
During the evaluation, speaking to different stakeholders of the university, it became clear that the study programmes meet the needs of society and the labour market. Programmes of the management study field allow to train specialists who are welcome in the labour market in the field of sports: in sports organisations, government institutions, and confederations. In practice, it is recommended to look for more diverse forms of feedback from students and the labour market. Measure and evaluate how the programmes meet real needs and whether they ensure the development of the intended competencies.

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 aim of the Strategy for Sport, Leisure, and Community is to focus on the "involvement of community members in sports leisure activities and to promote active participation in world-class sports events, thus, increasing recognition of the University and Lithuania" (SER, p. 9). Students of the Bachelor's study programme actively volunteer in various events, such as European Sports Platform, Sports Forum, UEFA Futsal Champions League, etc.

(2) Expert judgement
The goals and results of the Bachelor's and Master's study programmes correspond to the mission, operational goals and strategy of the higher education institution. The purpose of the strategy of sports, leisure and community is implemented by actively promoting the involvement of students in the organisation of events of social partners - sports organisations

such as basketball and football federations, and opportunities for students to volunteer. Through participation, students gain practical skills and competencies needed for learning.

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

(1) Factual situation
"The development and improvement of the first cycle study programme Sports and Tourism Management have been guided by the normative legal acts, strategic documents of the state and individual sectors, European Commission documents on sport, physical education, tourism and leisure <...> This study programme is in line with the Sports Development Programme of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, which is the manager of the Development programme for 2022-2030, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No.240 of 16 March 2022, with the main objective to strengthen national and civic identity, increase the absorption of culture and creativity of the society, in order to multiply the highest achievements of Lithuanian sport; the White Paper on Sport adopted by the European Commission in 2007 (COM(2007) 391), which highlights the improvement public health by promoting greater physical activity, combating doping, strengthening the role of sport in education and training, using sport as a tool for promoting volunteering and active citizenship, using the potential of sport" (SER. p. 9).

(2) Expert judgement
In fact, the field of study and both study programmes meet the requirements of legal acts (*see the tables below*).

Table No. 1. *Management* study field compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes (Bachelor's).*

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	No less than 120 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	No more than 120 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	No less than 15 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 15 ECTS	No less than 15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	No less than 20 % of learning

Table No. 2. *Management* study field compliance to general requirements for *second cycle study programmes (Master's).*

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS
ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 60 ECTS	No less than 60 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	No more than 30 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	No less than 30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	No less than 10 % of learning
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	No less than 50 % of learning

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 responsibility for the improvement of the study programme content, programme delivery and quality assurance at LSU lies with the first cycle study programme Sports and Tourism Management committee <…> The learning outcomes at the programme level are mutually consistent and cover all the knowledge and competencies necessary for the graduates. [...] The study modules are certified according to LSU Procedure for the Design and Certification of Study Modules" (SER, p. 11-12).

Some discrepancies in providing feedback to students about communicating learning objectives and results were observed by the expert team during the site visit. The comments appeared to support that there are some gaps in the implementation of assessment approaches.

(2) Expert judgement
The study modules and programmes correspond to teaching/learning and assessment methods. The process of providing feedback to students about their learning outcomes should be addressed and strengthened. In the conversation with the students, their desire to have more lectures or discussions with practising teachers emerged. Not all learning methods are considered equally valuable by students. For example, discussions or project activities, even theoretical lectures, are much more important for the students. It is also essential to strengthen cooperation with social partners and Alumni, assessing how the market needs are changing.

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

(1) Factual situation
The learning outcomes of the study programmes are divided into blocks of competencies. Students study assigned study modules, some of which can be chosen by themselves. In this way, the main study goals are achieved.

(2) Expert judgement
The study programmes and associated modules support the development of competencies. After each year, each student receives an evaluation of their previous modules with recommendations and grades. It is thus possible to evaluate the current solution and consider what is important for the next stage of learning for the consistency of competence development. The noted gaps in communicating academic expectations and results may lead to the noted uncertainty by some students relative to their status and progress.

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
"Students of the first cycle study programme may choose a preferable module from the list of elective modules made available on LSU information system with respect to the study field and the curriculum according to the LSU Optional Module Selection Procedure" (SER, 14 p.). Students can also receive credits for study results achieved in other higher education institutions, and first-cycle students have the opportunity to create an Individual Study Plan.

(2) Expert judgement
LSU provides various opportunities for students to personalise their study programmes. However, the most important thing is the use of the tools used by the educational institution and the results of the measurements provided.

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

(1) Factual situation
"The final thesis writing guidelines are given in the Regulation on the first cycle final thesis preparation and defence (approved by LSU Senate on 27-11-2019, Minutes No 2). The topics of the final theses are related to the strategic LSU research area Sport and Leisure Management and Economics" (SER, 15 p.). During the period under review, 8 theses were prepared at the request of the social partners. When choosing the topics of the work, student cooperates with social partners and discuss topics relevant to the labour market. The conformity of the curriculum and final theses to the field studies is evaluated.

(2) Expert judgement

The directions and cycles of theses meet the requirements. In the assessment, the student representatives mentioned that when preparing the final theses, they have the opportunity to consult not only with the supervisor from the university but also with a practical supervisor who can provide practical experience examples and, thus, contribute to obtaining the necessary information when conducting research. However, it is necessary to activate the activities of the university's Alumni Club, to promote closer cooperation with social partners. One of the most important priorities is to pursue a combination of topics relevant to the market within the preparation of final theses and research.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. In implementing the goals of the study programmes, LSU selects appropriate modules in cooperation with social partners, aiming for the programmes to assign the appropriate competencies to the students.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Even though LSU uses an annual academic performance evaluation model where each student receives feedback on their achievements and acquired competencies, students would like to receive more frequent feedback on their learning achievements, possibly through more interaction with the practising teachers.
2. Students do not value all learning methods as equally helpful. For example, they place greater importance on discussions, project activities and theoretical lectures. Achieving a balance to meet the needs of students could be an improvement in feedback.
3. The potential of the Alumni Club is not fully leveraged and not all possibilities of cooperation are used.

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[1]

Within the domain of Management, Sport and Leisure Management and Economics holds a position as one of the five strategic research areas at LSU. The main point of their research lies in the niche area of sport management, which adds a distinctive dimension to the broader field of management and administration.

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[1] Based on Self Evaluation Report pages: 16-19, 69-72.

The researchers in these study programmes have also played an active role in international scientific conferences. They have been actively involved in initiating and carrying out various research projects, as well as projects under the Erasmus+ and Nordplus programmes. These endeavours encompass both their roles as principal beneficiaries and collaborative partners, demonstrating their commitment to advancing knowledge and fostering international cooperation in their field of study. Additionally, they have been engaged in experimental development work, contributing to practical applications and innovative solutions.

Collaborations in joint research have been established with scholars from various foreign universities. Partner institutions include the Baltic International Academy, the Jozef Pilsudski Academy of Physical Education in Poland, the Latvian Academy of Sport Education, the University of Valencia in Spain, the University of Palermo in Italy, the University of Cologne in Germany, the University of Murcia in Spain, the University of Novi Sad and the University of Niš in Serbia, Madrid Technical University in Spain, the University of Seville in Spain, and Zhytomyr Polytechnic University in Ukraine. Through these collaborations, researchers exchange knowledge, share expertise, and engage in collaborative research projects, enriching the scholarly landscape and advancing the field of study.

The lecturers of the study programme report their research endeavours on an annual basis through the IS system. These reports encompass a comprehensive analysis of the interconnections between their research and teaching activities, along with a research plan for the upcoming year. In this plan, lecturers also outline the anticipated financial requirements for their research undertakings, which are subsequently submitted to the head of the research group by the end of each calendar year. The financial planning for research activities is then coordinated with the Head of Academic Unit to ensure the optimal allocation of resources. While the strategic research area receives fundamental funding for research work and trips, regardless of outcomes, additional funding opportunities are available based on the specific needs, research potential, and financial capacity of the University.

(2) Expert judgement
Based on the information available in SER, it is apparent that the personnel involved in projects and activities exhibit varying levels of engagement in research endeavours. The overall rate of scientific paper publication is aligned with the mission of the institution, both in terms of the overall number of publications and the publication output per individual per year. Furthermore, publishing papers in reputable journals, preferably through collaborations with authors from local and international institutions, represents an opportunity to further enhance the standing and reach of the study field. The research quality has been deemed suitable by the panel.

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

(1) Factual situation[2]
Research within the field of study is conducted as part of LSU's strategic research area called "Management and Economics of Sport and Leisure." This area encompasses three distinct research groups that focus on various aspects of management and economics related to sports and leisure activities: (1) Sports and Tourism Management, (2) Sport and leisure economics, (3) Managerial Approach to Violence in Sport.

The research conducted by the Sports and Leisure Management research group covers a wide range of managerial aspects in the sport and leisure sector. These include topics such as good governance in sport, e-sport, entrepreneurship and innovation, athlete branding, dual careers for athletes, violence and exclusion in sport, and volunteering.

The Economics of Sport and Leisure research group focuses on analysing the development of sport, tourism, and leisure businesses. They explore opportunities for innovative business models, technologies, and process improvements within these industries.

Additionally, the Managerial Approach to Violence in Sport research group was established as part of the scientific project "Bullying and Harassment in Sport: an Analysis of the Phenomenon.: This project received funding from the European Social Fund to improve researchers' qualifications through the implementation of world-class research and development projects. The members of this group specifically conduct research on the management of violent and destructive relationships within the realm of sport.

The active engagement of lecturers in research, as well as their assessed research competencies, guarantee that they stay updated with the latest scientific advancements. This enables them to incorporate these findings into their teaching, guidance, and supervision of students' final theses. As a result, students have excellent conditions and opportunities to actively participate in research activities.

(2) Expert judgement
During the site visit, it was evident that the teaching staff at LSU is highly committed to actively involving students in the most recent research findings. They achieve this through various assignments, such as case studies, research projects, and collaborative initiatives. This teaching approach ensures that students have valuable opportunities to familiarize themselves with the latest developments in the field.

 The expert committee confirmed during the site visit that a majority of the lecturers at LSU incorporate real-life cases that reflect current market issues or their own research findings as examples in their teaching. This practice enhances the relevance and practicality of the education provided to students. The committee recognises and commends LSU for its efforts in integrating research results into teaching activities.

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[2] Based on Self Evaluation Report pages: 19-20, 72-73.

Furthermore, the collaboration between LSU and external partners plays a significant role in advancing research and teaching in this field. These partnerships contribute to the continuous improvement and innovation within the program, benefiting both students and the broader academic community.

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[3]

The study programme at LSU provides opportunities for students to actively engage in research activities. For example, the entrance regulations for graduate studies at LSU incentivise students who plan to continue their studies at the postgraduate level to participate in research activities. Additional points can be earned through various research achievements. For instance, students can earn 3 points for publishing a research article(s) in the ISI Web of Science database (foreign), 1.5 points for publication in the ISI Web of Science database (Lithuanian), 1 point for publication in the International Database Publications, 0.5 point for presenting research at an International Scientific Conference, and up to 0.2 point for presenting at the Conference of Student Scientific Society. These provisions create a supportive environment for students to actively engage in research, thereby fostering their research skills and promoting a culture of scholarly inquiry within the study programme.

LSU ensures that students have opportunities to participate in scientific events and present their research findings. One example of an event is the annual Student Scientific Society Conference called "A question mark is the key to all sciences."

In the years 2019-2022, students with their thesis supervisors, successfully published their research findings as co-authors in four research articles. Additionally, students were encouraged to apply for research funding under Measure 09.3.3-LMT-K-712. One student had the opportunity to participate in the research project titled "Adaptation of public spaces for the wellness needs of the local community".

(2) Expert judgement

These initiatives demonstrate that LSU tries to provide students with practical research experiences, promoting their active participation in scientific activities. During the site visit, it was confirmed that students have these opportunities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Research groups are formed, and annual reports are required to be prepared by the staff.

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[3] Based on Self Evaluation Report pages: 20-21, 73-74.

2. The teaching staff affirmed their commitment to engage students to the most recent research findings through various assignments, such as conferences, and research projects.
3. The study programmes' curriculum is developed based on the research conducted by the lecturers as well as the outcomes of international project activities.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. There is an opportunity to improve the stature of the study field at the institution by increasing the overall rate of scientific paper publication with scholarly work consistent with the mission of the institution.

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
LSU follows the procedures established by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) for state-funded applicants (adopted by the LSU Senate on 29-10-2020, Minutes No 2). Additional applicants are attracted through publicity of materials from LSU on an annual basis.

(2) Expert judgement
The approach and processes used for admission of students and publicity of student selection criteria appear suitable to the nature and type of programmes offered by LSU. In particular, the use of competitions for admission is highly relevant to the nature and type of the offerings.

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
LSU carries out evaluation of foreign qualifications through an internal process of foreign credential and course evaluation (SER p. 24). Prior non-formal or formal learning is evaluated using a similar process of qualification review by an internal staff member. The comparison is based on the analysis of the achievement of learning outcomes similar or identical to those of similar programmes at LSU.

(2) Expert judgement
The institution's process for recognising foreign credentials, incomplete studies, and earlier non-formal/informal learning appears suitable to the unique type and nature of study

programmes offered and specifically in the case of the sports and tourism programmes SP reviewed.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

(1) Factual situation

Participation of students of the SP in international academic mobility programmes and integration into the European Higher Education Area contribute significantly to the quality of LSU studies. The institution participates in the Erasmus+ programme for both students and lecturers. The process for student mobility is specified in *Procedures for the Organisation and Implementation of Student Mobility for Partial Studies and Placements* approved by LSU Senate on 23-06-2022, Minutes No 8 (SER p. 25).

Students are advised of the options for international mobility through a variety of communication methods including email and information seminars and fairs organised once per academic year before the main call for applications is launched. The level of participation was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic but has recovered post-pandemic to more robust levels. Barriers to participation include difficulties obtaining visas for suitable periods of time.

(2) Expert judgement

The institution has demonstrated a commitment to encouraging academic mobility among its students. There is room to improve and enhance mobility by increasing engagement and participation in exchange programs through greater promotion efforts.

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

LSU offers an integrated approach to academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support to students. Elements of the approach include an induction week which is organised for first-year with orientation to the departments and activities of the university as well as general motivational lectures and other related activities. During the induction week, students meet the programme directors and are introduced to group tutors.

Each student group is assigned a group tutor - a lecturer teaching in the study programme - who consistently advises students from the first to the final year of study on any teaching or learning issues. Tutor's tasks are to support students' academic and personal development and well-being, to encourage students to volunteer and participate in events organised by the University and its social partners, and involve students in research carried out by the faculty researchers. Tutors are available as a referral source for students to solve other problems using the support resources provided by the university.

LSU also documented a cycle of improvement relating to student admission and support (SER, p. 30). By allocating additional resources and funding the institution is able to enhance international partnerships and experiences for students.

(2) Expert judgement
LSU has developed and implemented an integrated and comprehensive set of approaches and methods to support students facing academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal challenges. The combination of these approaches provides suitable and adequate support to students in the particular field of study.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation
Study information and student counselling leverage the tutor system, described in the Factual situation narrative for Criterion 3.3.4 above. Group tutors organise monthly meetings with students to assess study and academic progress and to provide individual counselling according to the students' needs. The frequency of monthly meetings has been documented in Table I-11.

(2) Expert judgement
LSU has demonstrated an integrated and suitable set of approaches to provide study information and access to student counselling resources.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Adherence to mandatory national admission norms combined with innovative approaches to recruiting through other channels.
2. Active encouragement of international student mobility as a key element of programme and job market competitiveness.
3. The tutor system provides a continuity of support to students throughout their studies at LSU both in terms of academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support as well as student counselling and study programme information.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. International exchange programmes have limited visibility in Lithuania and abroad as means to attract more students.
2. Participation of students in partial study exchange programmes is limited and requires additional promotion and encouragement.

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

LSU has an established teaching and learning evaluation system that focuses on students' needs to facilitate their achievement of intended learning outcomes. Key policies governing this system include the Procedure for Evaluation of Student Performance, Regulation on Drawing Individual Study Plans, and Regulations of Studies, which are approved by the university senate and are regularly reviewed.

The Sport and Tourism Management programme, a first-cycle study programme, is full-time delivered in both Lithuanian and English and part-time delivered in both Lithuanian. The programme structure revolves around a modular approach where one credit is equal to 26 hours of contact and self-study. The balance between contact hours and self-study hours is flexible, but at least 20% of the hours must be contact hours.

The Tourism and Sport Management programme, a second-cycle study programme, is full-time and delivered in both Lithuanian and English. The programme structure revolves around a modular approach where one credit is equal to 26 hours of contact and self-study. The balance between contact hours and self-study hours is flexible, but at least 10% of the hours must be contact hours.

The teaching and learning processes can be organised in different modes such as contact, distance, and hybrid to accommodate the varying needs of the students. This is done according to the module procedure approved by the LSU Senate.

In terms of assessment, the LSU uses a systematic and cumulative grading system. Students' performance is continually assessed throughout the semester, with the final grade being an aggregate of all midterm tests and exams. Various teaching, learning and assessment methods are used in the degree programme.

Regarding support services, LSU provides scholarships for students who excel academically. Loans to cover living expenses or tuition fees are also available.

(2) Expert judgement

The LSU has structured an effective teaching and learning process. This process appears to be quite efficient in meeting the needs of students and encouraging their active participation in the learning process.

The modular approach to the programmes facilitates flexible learning, enabling students to balance their self-study and contact hours according to their needs. Using different teaching and learning modes also indicates a clear understanding of diverse student needs and a commitment to inclusivity.

The various teaching, learning, and assessment methods demonstrate a focus on holistic student development. The range of methods used indicates an attempt to cater to different learning styles and preferences, which is commendable.

However, while the cumulative grading system is an excellent method to evaluate students continuously, it may put constant pressure on students throughout the semester. Balancing this with non-graded formative assessment may help to alleviate student stress.

Scholarships and loans are excellent initiatives to motivate and support students financially, which is vital for student retention and success.

Overall, LSU appears to demonstrate a strong commitment to good-quality teaching and learning, student support, and flexibility in delivery methods. As with any system, continuous evaluation and feedback from students will be critical to ensure the university continues to meet their needs effectively.

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

(1) Factual situation
The University provides "equal access and opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities (mobility, hearing, visual or functional impairments), special needs, and socially disadvantaged groups (orphans, single parents, low-income families)" (SER, 83 p.). LSU has students with mobility, hearing and visual impairments. During the period under review one student with visual impairments studied and successfully graduated from the study programme Sports and Tourism Management."

(2) Expert judgement
LSU provides conditions that ensure the opportunity to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. University facilities are adapted for students with physical disabilities, elevators and lifts are available. Teachers are informed on how to work with students with special needs.

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
Key strategic goals of the LSU include the continuous monitoring of students' learning experiences, develop academic integrity and ensure the quality of studies. Monitoring is carried

out based on several types of assessment instruments including case study, group work, simulations, team projects, interactive lectures, etc. The instruments are combined into an overall study evaluation plan and measures.

(2) Expert judgement
LSU implements a suitable study progress and evaluation plan and measures. The applied measures are positively evaluated by both the academic community and students. After talking with the students during the evaluation, it can be said that they would like more direct feedback from the academic institution.

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

(1) Factual situation
"The Studies Division carries out on-going monitoring of graduate employability, which allows the Study Programme Committee to assess the employability of graduates 6-9 months after graduation. The monitoring is carried out by means of a survey according to the Procedure for Collecting Graduate Student Consent for the Purpose of Career Tracking." (SER, p. 86).

(2) Expert judgement
The employment rate of LSU students is high because businesses and organisations working in the sports sector closely communicate with the academic community and students from the very first years. Students are included in teams when organising events and participate in the events of sports organisations as volunteers. LSU's integration into the sports management ecosystem provides students with robust employability opportunities.

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

(1) Factual situation
LSU enforces the Code of Academic Ethics, which applies to the entire academic community. All students are familiarised with this code at the commencement of their studies and are required to sign a Declaration of Academic Integrity when submitting their Bachelor's or Master's thesis. Dishonest behaviour, such as cheating or misusing sources, is severely penalised, with regulations set out in the LSU Regulation on Studies.

The university also has provisions to prevent and address harassment, sexual harassment, or stalking, as stipulated in the Description of Prevention and Examination of Cases of Harassment, Sexual Harassment or Stalking. Victims of such acts are encouraged to make confidential reports, and support is available for those affected.

In addition, LSU promotes academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination through various methods, such as restricting mobile device use during exams and multiple examiners for practical skills assessment. The university also organises events and seminars to raise

awareness about academic integrity, rights, and obligations among students. No violations of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination have been recorded in the past four academic years.

(2) Expert judgement
LSU appears to be rigorously implementing its policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination. The existing Code of Academic Ethics is a mechanism that clarifies the university's expectations and regulations regarding academic conduct. The penalties for dishonest behaviour, which include examination restrictions and potential penalisation, are stringent measures that likely deter violations effectively.

The university's approach towards preventing and handling cases of harassment, sexual harassment, and stalking is commendable. Their inclusive policy offering victims the right to report instances confidentially provides a safe environment for individuals to come forward, which is crucial in maintaining a healthy academic atmosphere. Moreover, LSU's emphasis on promoting awareness and education about academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination seems an effective approach. Holding seminars on diverse topics like research ethics, copyright protection, and recognising fraudulent academic activities ensures students are well-informed and conscious of their responsibilities.

The absence of recorded violations in the past four years is a good indicator of the success of LSU's policies and their implementation. Nonetheless, continuous review and adaptation of these policies in response to evolving societal norms, student behaviours, and technological advances are crucial to maintaining such a record and fostering an environment of integrity, tolerance, and respect. LSU could also consider expanding its programme of seminars to include topics like unconscious bias and cultural sensitivity to enhance its commitment to non-discrimination and tolerance further.

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
LSU has established clear procedures for students to lodge complaints or appeals regarding grades, procedural irregularities in examinations, or final thesis defence. These appeals will be submitted to the respective Examination Appeals Board or Final Thesis Appeals Board within a stipulated timeframe. These boards consist of three members, including a student representative, and operate under the rules set out in the LSU Rules of Academic Appeals.

If students are dissatisfied with the response or decision from these boards, or if a reply is not provided within thirty days, they have the right to approach the LSU Dispute Resolution Board. This board comprises six members: three student representatives and three university staff members. Any decision made by the Dispute Resolution Board may be further appealed to the LSU Senate.

Throughout 2019-2022, no lodged appeals or complaints by students of the Tourism and Sports Management (second cycle) study programme about the assessment of their final thesis or the examination process, and Sport and Tourism Management (first cycle) students lodged one appeal against the evaluation of their final thesis, which was upheld. This could indicate no significant issues with the process, but it might also mean that students are unaware of their rights, or they may be reluctant to file an appeal due to the perceived complexity of the process or fear of repercussions.

(2) Expert judgement
LSU's current appeal and complaint procedures are comprehensive, transparent, and student-inclusive. The fact that each board includes a student representative is an excellent practice, as it ensures that the student perspective is incorporated into the decision-making process. The mechanisms in place to escalate a complaint or appeal, if a satisfactory response is not received, demonstrate a commitment to fair and thorough resolution of student concerns.

The low number of recorded appeals or complaints over the past four years is indicative of the successful application of these procedures, along with the potential effectiveness of the teaching and assessment methods employed in the study programme. However, the absence of complaints does not necessarily imply absolute satisfaction. Therefore, the university should continue to solicit feedback, both formally and informally, from students about the clarity and effectiveness of these procedures. During the interviews, students were positive regarding the cooperation and communication with the LSU faculty and administration, which leads to the conclusion that there is a culture of mutual trust and respect.

As per the self-assessment, there is room for improvement in student interest in participating in surveys. Encouraging more student feedback can provide additional insights into potential concerns or issues that may not escalate to formal complaints or appeals. While the existing procedures are commendable, continuous review and adjustment in response to feedback and evolving educational norms will ensure their continued effectiveness.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The LSU has structured an effective teaching and learning process. This process appears to be quite efficient in meeting the needs of students and encouraging their active participation in the learning process.
2. LSU appears to be rigorously implementing its policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination.
3. LSU's current appeal and complaint procedures are comprehensive, transparent, and student-inclusive.
4. LSU study environment is positively open regarding the cooperation and communication of students with the LSU faculty and administration, which leads to the conclusion that there is a culture of mutual trust and respect.

(2) Weaknesses:

    N/A. However, it is important to further make good use of opportunities for cooperation with social partners – to take into account the relevance of final theses topics to the market, to create opportunities for more and more frequent lecturer internships for students, and to organise valuable, in terms of experience, forms of volunteering.

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[4]

The number of lecturers in the reviewed study field has remained stable, indicating a consistent and competent teaching staff with low turnover. In the 2021/2022 academic year, there was a temporary increase in the number of assistants, which was aimed at involving young teachers and doctoral students in the study process. This measure ensures continuity and provides third-cycle students with the opportunity to gain more experience in pedagogical work. The teachers in the study programmes of this field possess extensive qualifications, continuous professional development, and a combination of academic and practical experience.

The number of lecturers teaching subjects in the study field has remained relatively stable over the past three academic years. In the 2019/2020 academic year, there were approximately 3 students per lecturer. In the subsequent academic years of 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, this ratio increased to an average of 5 students per lecturer. As of the 2022/2023 academic year, there are now approximately 6 students per lecturer. These figures indicate the student-to-lecturer ratio for each respective academic year.

During the past three years, all the lecturers responsible for teaching modules in the field of study have held their teaching positions for more than three years, demonstrating their experience and continuity in the role. The exception is one assistant who joined the teaching staff in the academic year 2021/2022, indicating a recent addition to the team.

The academic staff meets the requirement that a minimum of 50% of lecturers teaching in the field of study should hold an academic degree. In the academic years of 2019/2020, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022, the percentages of teaching staff with academic degrees were 77.8%, 72.2%, and 69.6% respectively. However, in the academic year 2022/2023, the percentage rose back up to 77.8%. Additionally, in the academic year 2021/2022, all lecturers teaching in the field of study held the position of either professor or senior researcher.

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[4] Based on Self Evaluation Report pages: 40-43, 89-92.

(2) Expert judgement

The faculty members engaged in teaching satisfy the general prerequisites for LSU's study programmes, which encompass both didactic and professional experience. The quantity of teachers is considered satisfactory, indicating that the institution possesses an adequate number of qualified and capable educators in the study field to accomplish the desired educational objectives. Nevertheless, the panel observes that a significant portion of lecturers has not demonstrated a substantial level of scholarly publishing activity.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staff academic mobility

(1) Factual situation[5]

LSU actively engages in the Erasmus+ programme, which offers lecturers valuable opportunities to teach at higher education institutions abroad. Through its extensive network of foreign partners, LSU enables lecturers to enhance their overall competencies, both in generic and professional domains. This includes acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities, sharing research findings, gaining experience in international and cross-cultural communication, and raising the university's international profile. LSU has established 99 bilateral cooperation agreements for student and staff mobility within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, further facilitating international collaboration.

During the evaluation period, several visiting teachers from various international institutions were involved in the teaching activities at Lithuanian Sport University. These visiting teachers came from esteemed universities such as Ege University (Turkey), Kazakhstan Academy of Sports and Tourism (Kazakhstan), University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Baltic International Academy (Latvia).

Teachers were going to teach in: Foro Italico University of Rome (Italy), Technical University of Madrid (Spain), University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (Portugal), University of Granada (Spain), Cracow University of Physical Education (Poland), University of Valencia (Spain), Santarem Polytechnic Institute (Portugal), University of Split (Croatia), Academy of Physical Education (Latvia), JAMK University of Applied Sciences (Finland), and Kiel Sports University (Germany). These collaborations fostered international exchange and enriched the learning experience for both students and lecturers at LSU. Number of outgoing teachers was 24 and incoming 6. Over the past three years, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the number of staff members participating in outgoing and incoming mobility activities. Travel restrictions and concerns about the risk of coronavirus infection have greatly affected the ability of staff members to engage in international mobility. The pandemic has limited opportunities for staff members to travel abroad for teaching or training purposes and has also restricted the ability of foreign staff members to visit Lithuanian Sport University. These challenges have resulted in a decrease in the number of outgoing and incoming staff members during this period.

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[5] Based on Self Evaluation Report pages: 43-45, 92-93.

(2) Expert judgement

The academic staff at LSU actively participates in a range of mobility activities, supported by the institution. Efforts to increase staff mobility are recognised and promoted through established mechanisms for acknowledgement and promotion. The Erasmus+ Programme is actively utilised by the academic staff, aligning with the broader goals of international mobility and collaboration. The evaluation panel identified significant potential for further mobility and exchange opportunities. While some staff members have already taken advantage of such opportunities, the panel believes there is room for expansion to ensure inclusivity and involve a wider range of staff members.

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

(1) Factual situation[6]

Teachers at LSU are provided with opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge through seminars, lectures, and English proficiency courses organised by the LSU Knowledge and Innovation Relay Division. The university places great importance on ensuring that academic staff meet modern requirements through continuous professional development. To achieve this, LSU organises monthly training courses and workshops conducted by local and international experts. These sessions cover a wide range of topics, including teaching methods, communication techniques, personal development, and technology utilisation. Additionally, longer-term training courses are offered to specific target groups, such as administration, teaching staff, and researchers.

LSU encourages its administration and teaching staff to share their professional experiences through best-practice transfer workshops led by university lecturers. Furthermore, annual English language courses are provided for administrative and teaching staff to enhance their language proficiency.

The professional development activities of lecturers are planned systematically, with dedicated funds allocated during the university's budgeting process. The Study Programme Director estimates the required funds for faculty professional development and submits the proposal to the Studies Division as part of the budget planning procedure. Once approved, lecturers can apply to the Head of the Sport and Tourism Management Department for funding to attend refresher courses, events, or trips. The University provides financial support for lecturers to participate in external refresher courses both within Lithuania and abroad, utilising various funding sources, including ERASMUS funds and LSU's own funds for professional development.

(2) Expert judgement

Ensuring the continuous development of teaching staff competencies is crucial to uphold the quality of education and effectively address the changing needs of students and the educational environment. The evaluation panel confirmed that the teachers at LSU actively participate in

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[6] Based on Self Evaluation Report pages: 45-48, 93-96.

various training programs and professional development opportunities. It was evident that the university provides ample opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. The staff members meet the overall requirements of study programmes, including didactic and professional experience.
2. Dedicated and enthusiastic teachers who are valued by current students and alumni.
3. LSU promotes academic mobility among lecturers.
4. Teachers have the possibility to take part in different trainings.
5. Low turnover of academic staff.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. The scientific publishing activity of a great part of lecturers is not high.
2. In the future more guest lecturers from foreign higher education and research institutions should be involved in the study process.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURSES

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
During the evaluation, it was noted that the LSU has diligently worked towards furnishing appropriate and adequate physical, informative and fiscal resources to facilitate an efficient educational experience. To enable students access to specialised amenities essential for their area of study, the institution has instituted numerous distinctive sports halls designed for various subjects.

The assessment conducted on the university's infrastructure revealed a favourable outcome. The physical resources were designed efficiently and stayed in good shape. Yet. It shall be noted that some buildings showed signs of ageing; nevertheless. They did not have a significant impact on students' academic performance or presented substantial barriers for faculty members.

The university furnishes students with relevant and up-to-date information technology resources and tools for success. The library houses a vast compilation of scholarly resources encompassing sports-related literature, publications documenting research proceedings as well as relevant academic journals.

(2) Expert judgement

The university facilities are appropriately designed and maintained for the study programmes offered. Especially noteworthy are the diverse and exclusive sports salons customised to meet the needs of various academic fields. These facilities demonstrate a commitment towards providing specialised facilities for productive fieldwork. This effort supports a conducive learning ambience that benefits both learners and instructors alike.

In terms of informational assets, the institution has built a thorough library with a sizable collection of works, periodicals, and research materials relating to sports.

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

(1) Factual situation

LSU has deployed a PDCA based Quality Management System (QMS) through its University Strategy 2018-2022. The quality management systems are structured to inform the planning of the facilities and resources based on addressing needs through a continuous quality improvement process.

(2) Expert judgement

LSU's use of the PDCA continuous quality management system as a basis of planning and implementation of facility improvement adequately has supported its ambitious plans for facility renovation and renewal.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. A variety of fit-for-purpose facilities for highly specialised programmes in sports management.
2. Effective use of a continuous quality improvement system to guide and inform the renovation and renewal of ageing facilities.

(2) Weaknesses:
3. The process of renovation and renewal of facilities is in its early stages and not all buildings have been renovated or renewed.

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

LSU ensures the quality of its study programmes through an internal quality assurance system that operates at multiple levels. The Quality Management System Manual is publicly available online. The process is governed by several regulations and procedures, with the department and Study Programme Committee overseeing the programme's administration, while the Studies Division, International Relations Office, Office of Communications and Marketing, and the Library support the programme's organisation. The quality of studies is continuously monitored and improved through internal evaluation, internal certification of study modules, and student feedback, among other things.

At the institutional level, the LSU Senate approves and monitors the implementation of the internal quality assurance system, supported by various documents that delineate the administration, decision-making sequence, and quality assurance process. The Study Programme Committee at the study programme level ensures and monitors the quality of studies. The Committee is comprised of the Programme Director, committee members, students, and social partners, and conducts student surveys on teaching and study module quality twice a year.

Furthermore, the Committee is involved in the continuous improvement of the programme, striving for compliance with comparable programmes in the European Union, and cooperates with various university bodies, students, and social partners. Changes to the programme are made public upon Senate approval, and regular meetings are held to discuss the programme, involving various stakeholders, including representatives from local industry and students.

(2) Expert judgement

LSU's internal quality assurance system demonstrates integration at multiple levels and a commitment to continuous improvement, supported by a clear governance framework. The system is designed to ensure the study programme aligns with international standards, particularly those of the European Union, which is commendable.

The involvement of different stakeholders, including students and social partners, in the Study Programme Committee indicates a holistic approach to quality assurance. This approach enables the collection of diverse viewpoints and promotes accountability and transparency. However, while student feedback is gathered twice a year, a more frequent and varied feedback system could provide more real-time insights for ongoing improvements.

The University demonstrates a strong commitment to adapt and change the study programmes based on findings and discussions, suggesting a dynamic and responsive system. The regular evaluation and potential adjustment of the composition of the Study Committee each academic year also suggest an adaptable approach. However, ensuring a rigorous, evidence-based approach is consistently applied to programme modifications to maintain academic rigour would be beneficial.

Particularly the internal study quality assurance system appears robust and comprehensive, but there's a need to validate the system's effectiveness in practice. Studies are only a part of the whole LSU; therefore, the system has to be broadened to complete the quality loop and set, cascade and assess the quality indicators. At the same time, the system's effectiveness should be gauged not only on its structures and processes but also on its outcomes - such as graduate employability, student satisfaction, and research output - in relation to the programme's objectives.

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

(1) Factual situation
Social stakeholders have an active role in the Lithuanian Sports University's quality assurance system for the Management area study programmes. They participate in the Programme Committee and working groups, providing valuable input on the improvement of study assessment and processes. They are also included in the Master thesis preparation and defence procedures, offering insights into the practical value of the theses.

Additionally, the university maintains regular contact with other social partners and employers, many of whom are graduates of this study programme and are now established figures in their respective fields. These individuals, including representatives from the Lithuanian Football Federation and the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee, attend university events like seminars and training sessions, further enriching the university's dialogue with industry professionals.

(2) Expert judgement
LSU has implemented commendable practices to ensure stakeholder involvement in its internal quality assurance system. The participation of employers and social partners in processes such as thesis preparation and defence, and their active engagement in the Programme Committee and working groups, provide a broad range of perspectives. This approach helps to align the university's educational offerings with industry needs, improving the employability of graduates. However, for a more in-depth assessment, it would be worth exploring how feedback from these stakeholders is formally integrated into programme improvements.

Maintaining regular contact with graduates now working in their fields of specialisation is an excellent practice. Their involvement allows current students to gain insights about industry trends and expectations, enhancing their learning experience and ensuring the programme's relevance. LSU admits that cooperation with the alumni and industry is more based on personal relationship and has to be further developed with a more systematic approach which shows that LSU takes these matters seriously and understand the need for continuous and systematic improvements

Ensuring a systematic approach to gathering and analysing this feedback could further strengthen the programmes` quality assurance effectiveness. Additionally, tracking graduate

employment outcomes can offer critical insights into the programme's effectiveness and alignment with market needs. Systematic alumni involvement could bring valuable insights based on their real-world experiences post-graduation.

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

(1) Factual situation
LSU regularly assesses the quality of its study programmes, with surveys targeting students, lecturers, graduates, and employers. To maintain and improve the quality of their studies, the university actively seeks feedback on the adequacy of competencies of their trained specialists.

Detailed quantitative and qualitative information on study programmes, research activities, assessment results, and stakeholder opinions is frequently published on the university's website and other channels. The Studies Division manages the publication of study programmes, module descriptions, and accreditation results.

According to the self-evaluation report, the Study Programme Committee, in collaboration with other university departments, is responsible for the study programmes' ongoing development and quality monitoring. The Committee is proactive in analysing changes in student progress, graduate employability, and labour market trends to ensure the relevance of their programmes to market needs.

(2) Expert judgement
The LSU demonstrates a suitable data collection, use, and publication mechanism. The regular surveys of various stakeholders are commendable and show a commitment to continuous improvement. However, it would be essential to follow how the feedback is integrated into the programme enhancement processes and what follow-up mechanisms are in place to address any identified gaps or issues.

The university's transparency in publishing detailed information about its programmes and research activities is praiseworthy. This open approach fosters trust and aids potential students and other stakeholders in making informed decisions.

The ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement approach employed by the Study Programme Committee is essential for maintaining the quality of the programmes. Their engagement with national and international organisations, researchers, and social partners ensures the programme remains relevant in a dynamic environment.

However, the university may benefit from establishing a more formal mechanism to track graduate employability and labour market trends to enhance its understanding of market needs. Furthermore, integrating employers' feedback more systematically into programme improvements could strengthen the course's industry relevance, thereby enhancing graduate employability.

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
LSU has sought feedback from students of the study programmes for the academic year 2020-2021. The students express high appreciation for their ability to influence the quality of studies, the quality of service provided by the Library, the Studies Division, the International Relations Office, and the support provided by the Director and the Coordinator of the Study Programme Committee. The quality of teaching from the lecturers and the University's efforts to improve study quality is also highly valued.

However, students rated the quality of studies, the classrooms, and the study tools used at LSU as average. Feedback is collected at the end of each semester and discussed by the Head of Department with the module coordinator. LSU makes regular investments in classroom upgrades and IT equipment. However, it is still an area where a significant contribution is needed.

In the last external evaluation, it was recommended that students simultaneously employed by the school should not hold dual roles as student representatives on the Study Committee. The University has addressed this by ensuring that no working relationship exists between student members of the Programme Committee and the University.

(2) Expert judgement
LSU's approach to collecting student feedback fits its areas of studies and student population. It is commendable that students feel they can personally influence the quality of their studies. The appreciation for the support provided by various departments and staff members points to a supportive and engaging educational environment.

However, the average rating of the quality of some elements of studies, classrooms, and study tools suggests room for improvement. The university should delve deeper into these aspects to identify specific areas of concern and develop strategies to address them. A more systematic and comprehensive feedback collection approach may provide richer insights into student satisfaction and concerns.

Resolving the dual-role issue raised in the external evaluation is a positive step, eliminating potential conflicts of interest and maintaining the integrity of the student representation process. The university should continue to ensure clear and distinct roles for all stakeholders to support unbiased decision-making processes.

It would be beneficial to see the university take more proactive measures to improve the areas that received average ratings from students. These could include investing in modern teaching aids, creating more engaging classroom environments, or refining study programmes based on student feedback. Regular assessments of these improvements would be key to ensuring their effectiveness.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. LSU has a developed internal study quality assurance system, integrating feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including students, faculty, employers and social partners, and alumni. The involvement of stakeholders in various aspects of the study programme provides a wide range of perspectives and enhances the programme's relevance to industry needs. This system allows for continuous improvement and alignment with international standards.
2. LSU values student feedback and incorporates it into its decision-making processes. The ability of students to influence the quality of studies and their appreciation for support services are notable strengths.
3. The LSU regularly publishes detailed information about study programmes, research activities, and assessment results, demonstrating transparency and fostering stakeholders' trust.
4. The LSU has shown a strong commitment to adapt based on the outcomes of evaluations and discussions, suggesting a dynamic and responsive system.

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Despite the students' overall satisfaction, the study quality in some aspects and areas, such as classrooms, equipment and tools, received average ratings. This indicates the necessity for improvement in these areas.
2. Although LSU collects student feedback, a more frequent and varied feedback system would be beneficial. The existing frequency might be insufficient to capture real-time insights for ongoing improvements.
3. While social partners and industry representatives are involved in various processes, a formal and systematic approach to gathering, analysing, and integrating their feedback into programme improvements is observed to be lacking.
4. Although LSU considers graduate employability and labour market trends, a more formal mechanism for tracking and using this data to enhance its programmes may be beneficial. Alumni have to be more formally engaged in quality assurance.
5. Overall quality assurance has to be broadened to complete the quality loop and set, cascade and assess the quality indicators. At the same time, the system's effectiveness should be gauged not only on its structures and processes but also on its outcomes.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

There are several examples of excellence at LSU as noted below:

1. ***Stakeholder engagement.*** LSU demonstrates a very strong and deep level of engagement with the stakeholders in the sports and sports management ecosystem. The level and types of engagement are well beyond what is seen at a typical higher education institution. Some of the practices of working closely with stakeholders on areas of shared value provide an example of excellence for other institutions.

2. ***Systematic use of a broadly deployed quality management system.*** LSU has deployed a continuous improvement system based on the PDCA Deming model (also used in many ISO management standards). The systematic use of such an approach can have benefits well beyond internal quality improvement and may include assisting students entering a labour market where fluency in quality standards is a desirable knowledge set.

3. ***Tutor-based advising system.*** LSU's advising system utilising a tutor assigned for the duration of studies allows for advising to take on more of a relational rather than transactional basis. The continuity over time of the relationship between tutor and student appears to support effective management of the coming-of-age issues often faced by first-cycle students.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	1. **Involvement of social partners.** It is recommended to look for more and more diverse ways to involve social partners in decisions about practical learning forms of learning. 2. **Enhancing channels of listening and learning to student needs.** It is worth paying attention to strengthening the cooperation between students and the university, allowing students' needs to manifest themselves more regarding forms of science during lectures and feedback. 3. **Focus on sports ecosystems interactions.** With many connections to sports organisations, it is important to find the most appropriate forms to help students participate in events not only in volunteer roles but also to gain the skills and experience needed for learning and experience.

Links between science (art) and studies	1. **Research Groups and Annual Reports**. The formation of research groups and the requirement for staff members to prepare annual reports are commendable practices. To further enhance this strength, consider implementing the following:
	  a. **Cross-Departmental Collaboration**. Encourage collaboration between research groups from different departments to foster interdisciplinary research and expand the scope of research activities.
	  b. **Feedback and Evaluation.** Enhance listening and learning methods to assess the effectiveness of research groups and annual reports, allowing for continuous improvement in research planning and execution.
	2. **Curriculum Development.** Developing the study program's curriculum based on research conducted by lecturers and international project outcomes is a forward-thinking approach. To build upon this strength:
	  a. **Regular and Systematic Program and Curriculum Review**. Continuously assess and update the curriculum to ensure alignment with the latest research trends and industry demands.
	  b. **External Input.** Seek input from external experts and industry professionals to inform curriculum development, ensuring that it remains relevant and up-to-date.

	3. **Student Involvement in Research Activities.** Involving students in research activities is a positive step towards nurturing a research-oriented culture. To expand on this strength: a. **Research Opportunities**. Increase the availability of research opportunities for students, including research internships, summer programmes, and research-focused extracurricular activities.
Student admission and support	1. **Advancing the tutor model.** The tutor model of counselling and advising could be further advanced by developing, tracking, and trending representative performance indicators. These indicators could include both external and internal impacts.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	1. **Gather the university community.** Create systematic methods of engagement for all employees and teachers - more so that they are more involved in the development and implementation of the most suitable forms of education.
Teaching staff	1. **Faculty scholarship and publication activity**. The unique nature of the programmes offered at LSU presents unique challenges for scholarly publication by the faculty. Typical norms of highly stylised quantitative projects in the management study field may not always fit with journals and other publications in the mainstream of academia. To assist with bridging the gap implementation some actions may help, as noted below. a. **Rethink the research model.** Given the applied and effective nature of the curriculum at LSU, embracing a holistic research model and policy, e.g., Boyer's Model of Scholarship, may assist with creating a scholarly focus on subjects suitable to the ecosystem in which LSU graduates operate. In particular research directed at integration and application of knowledge may be very fruitful. b. **Research Support.** Allocate resources and funding to support faculty members in their research endeavours, including access to research grants, collaboration opportunities, and research assistant positions. c. **Research Collaboration.** Encourage collaborative research projects among faculty members, both within the university and with external institutions, to facilitate the publication of joint research findings

Learning facilities and resources	1. **Enhancing the planning model.** LSU may wish to continue its quality journey represented in the planning model by embracing external quality recognition. It is recommended to encourage university staff to look more for appropriate physical and psychological forms that would help integrate students with special needs into the learning process.
Study quality management and public information	1. **Development of the strategy,** allocation of resources and evolvement of the necessary infrastructure, tools and technology improvements to ensure all quality requirements in the study area of Management. 2. **Improvement of the academic quality monitoring system** with a more frequent and varied feedback system to ensure that a rigorous, evidence-based approach is consistently applied to programme modifications to maintain academic quality. 3. **Systematic analysis and evaluation of changes** or improvements made in response to the feedback of stakeholders, setting clear procedures and communication of these processes to ensure that it is an effective tool to improve the quality of studies, transparency and adherence. 4. **Extensive and more formal engagement of Alumni** in the quality system to bring valuable insights based on their experience and keep the valuable ties for further cooperation. 5. **Broadening the quality assurance system**, completing the quality loop and improving the monitoring system by setting measurable goals and continually reviewing the effectiveness of processes. Tracking and analysing the results after the changes have been made is essential to assess their usefulness and effectiveness.

VI. SUMMARY

LSU provides multiple examples of strong and effective academic programming and management in highly specialised subject matter areas. The university operates in a very specific field of study where close and long-standing external relationships are a must. It largely delivers on those requirements for success through highly effective faculty, personalised advising and counselling of students, and innovative programs fitting its market.

Faculty and staff exhibited an engaged and dedicated approach to serving students and other stakeholders. The enthusiasm of the faculty was evidenced in many comments and reactions of students. Among faculty members, there were many examples of excellence in teaching and learning.

LSU has embraced an approach to continuous quality improvement to an extent not often seen in higher education institutions. In many ways, this represents an example of excellence. The use of a continuous improvement system that is externally recognised is valuable to students, who often will participate in jobs where the support elements and facilities demand high-quality and proven management methods.

The expert panel wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the welcoming nature of the staff, faculty and students at LSU and the engagement with the field of study accreditation process.

Expert panel chairperson signature:
     Dr. Douglas Gilbert