



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD

MANAGEMENT

at General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Management of Defence Technologies</i>	<i>Management of Defense Resources</i>
State code	6121LX004	6211LX098
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3.5 years)	Part-time (2 years)
Credit volume	210	90
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Business Management	Master of Public Administration
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian, English
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Bachelor degree
Registration date of the study programme	2017.03.17	2019.06.17

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS	4
1.2. EXPERT PANEL	4
1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION	5
1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT GENERAL JONAS ŽEMAITIS MILITARY ACADEMY OF LITHUANIA	5
II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	6
III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS	8
3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM	8
3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES	27
3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT	29
3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT	32
3.5. TEACHING STAFF	38
3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	40
3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION	42
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS	46
V. SUMMARY	50

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on *17th of May, 2023*.

Prof. Dr. Bartscher, Thomas (panel chairperson) *School of Management, Deggendorf Institute of Technology, University of Applied Sciences, Germany;*
Lect. Jakob Ravn, *Copenhagen Business School, Denmark ;*
Assist. Prof. dr. Sofia Gaio *University Fernando Pessoa, Portugal;*
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Ms Ieva Vengrovskaja, *psychology study programme, 3rd year course student, Vytautas Magnus University;*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Motivational interview pass/fail numbers;

1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT GENERAL JONAS ŽEMAITIS MILITARY ACADEMY OF LITHUANIA

The General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) is a state-owned military training institution and university. The Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania exercises the owner's rights and obligations. The Academy operates as a budgetary institution on military territory. The government adopts and amends the Academy's statutes on the proposal of the Minister of National Defence. The Academy benefits from certain exemptions under the Law on Science and Studies, such as in the approval of its Statutes and the development of joint study curricula and including the legal status of cadets and students and the development of joint study curricula. It provides a unique combination of university studies, military training, and leadership development.

The Military Academy of Lithuania integrates university studies, military training, and leadership development. The curriculum is designed to meet national officer competence standards and Professional Military Education guidelines, as well as the Sectoral Qualification Framework for Military Officers Profession and the European Higher Education Area quality standards. The academy is actively involved with the European Security and Defence College platform and prioritises advanced study methods and a supportive learning environment. MAL offers university studies in three groups of study fields: Social Sciences (J), Business and Public Management (L), and Public Security (S). These fields provide various first, second, and third cycle studies in Political Science, Management, Public Administration, and Defence Studies.

Since the study field has not yet been reviewed by external experts, the internal team of experts has identified the following strengths and areas for further development.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Management study field and first cycle at General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Management study field and second cycle at General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	22

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

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

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

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

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

The Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) is a unique university that combines university studies, military training and leadership development to produce responsible military leaders. The Academy is exempted from some provisions of the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, including those that relate to its establishment, statutes, management, and organisation, as well as the development and implementation of joint university-college study curricula. The Academy provides military training based on national standards for officer competences, as well as Professional Military Education (PME) guidelines and an appropriate, effective, and up-to-date military training and leadership development curriculum that is relevant to the current activities of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The Academy develops the competencies of future officer-leaders through a combination of university and military studies, which aligns with the European Commission's initiatives on the Sectoral Qualification Framework for Military Officers Profession (SQF-MILOF) and through the active involvement of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) platform. The Academy applies advanced study methods and provides a fully supportive environment for students' abilities' development.

The Academy is structured as a military unit and is integrated into the national military organisation. The Commandant of the Academy, who is directly subordinate to the Minister of National Defence, heads the Academy and plans, organises, and controls its activities. The Vice-Rector for Studies and Research supervises the university studies and scientific activities of the Academy. The Academy's Senate, a collegial advisory body, contributes to the achievement of the Academy's purpose by carrying out its tasks and functions in the fields of university studies and research. The Academy's Council, an advisory body, is responsible for the strategic direction and management of the Academy, its activities, and development.

The Academy offers university studies in three groups of study fields: Social Sciences, Business and Public Management, and Public Security. The first cycle university curricula are full-time and part-time, whereas the second cycle curricula are part-time only, and the third cycle curricula are full-time. Students in full-time first cycle curricula are called 'cadets', while students in part-time curricula at all cycles are called 'students.' All study places are publicly funded. Given the specific nature of the study fields and curricula, the first cycle university studies involve a group of 10-28 cadets in a squad unit, while the second cycle university studies involve a group of up to 15 students.

The MAL Management (L02) field offers two study curricula, one in the first cycle and one in the second cycle of university studies. The first cycle studies cover the subjects required for a level 6 qualification (according to the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, LTQF), while the second cycle studies develop analytical and managerial competences at the strategic level required for a level 7 qualification (according to the LTQF), building upon the competences acquired in the first cycle studies. There is no overlap or duplication of content between the two curricula. Both L02 study curricula align with the needs of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, as outlined in the Strategic Action Plan for 2021-2023 of the Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania. This plan states that up to 110 cadets are admitted to the MAL each year, with up to 38 of them enrolled in the study curriculum for Management of Defence Technologies, and up to 15 students admitted to the study curriculum for Management of Defence Resources. The State finances the studies of officers, non-commissioned officers, civil servants, and officials of institutions with which the Ministry of National Defence has concluded agreements for studies.

The **Management of Defence Technologies program's first cycle study curriculum** has been created and implemented to meet the Management field description's requirements. It reflects the needs of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and other military institutions while aligning with the overall context of military school education. The curriculum is designed to train highly qualified soldiers, such as officers with the rank of lieutenant, who can lead platoon-sized military units with full responsibility from day one. The curriculum has undergone a significant improvement from the previously accredited Modern Management of Defence Technologies curriculum in 2017. The reasons for the curriculum overhaul were due to the following factors:

The security situation in Lithuania has undergone significant changes since 2014, with the threat of Russian military aggression becoming more than just a theoretical concept. The annexation of Crimea and other eastern parts of Ukraine in 2014, and the military actions in Ukraine in February 2022, confirmed this. Russia's ability to use a combination of civilian and military tactics has heightened the demand for officers in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The Logistics Board of the Lithuanian Armed Forces has highlighted the need for approximately 15 new officers annually with knowledge of logistics and its elements (planning, implementation, and control), while the Information Technology Service of the MoD has identified a similar number of officers needed in the IT field.

The competencies required of officers have changed. The 2009 NATO Allied Command document "Multiple Futures Project: Navigating Towards 2030" predicts that NATO will need to enhance capabilities in various fields. Additionally, the Generic Officer Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum, endorsed by NATO Allies on September 7, 2011, provides guidance for officer education in NATO countries on the application of NATO standards in officer education. This emphasises the need to study armaments, cyber and information warfare, and resource management (logistics).

Increasing post-employment opportunities. Graduates of the Academy can transition from officer to civilian status at any age between 22 and 56. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the former officer can integrate into the modern labour market confidently. The updated

Bachelor's degree curriculum in Management of Defence Technologies equips graduates with knowledge in management, IT, and logistics, as well as analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills, communication and teamwork skills, required for working in public institutions, international governmental and non-governmental organisations, and the private sector in Lithuania and abroad. In light of these factors, the Management of Defence Technologies study curriculum aims to train officers with fundamental knowledge of management, weapons required for national defence, and innovative technologies, specialising in cyber security and military logistics.

On the other hand, the **second cycle study curriculum in Management of Defence Resources** has been developed in close collaboration with various military units, including the Defence Headquarters of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, the Logistics Board, the Ministry of National Defence, and the NATO Force Integration Unit. The curriculum's concept was presented to the Minister of National Defence and the representatives of the above-mentioned units in 2018, and they all agreed that the curriculum is necessary and indispensable for improving the human resources' competencies in the national armed forces system. Enrollment in this program started in 2019, and the State finances the studies for 15 students per year, including officers, non-commissioned officers of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, civil servants, and officials of institutions with agreements for studies with the Ministry of National Defence.

The need for a Management of Defence Resources (MDR) curriculum, like the Management of Defence Technologies (MDT) curriculum, is primarily driven by the unpredictable and evolving security environment of the country (and the region in general) in the long term. The NATO alliance, responding to Russia's military actions and other global threats, is increasingly focusing on developing its collective defence capabilities and enhancing preparedness to respond to hybrid threats. To achieve Lithuania's national security policy objectives, as defined in the National Security Framework Law, National Security Strategy, Military Strategy, and Military Doctrine, the country needs a modern, well-trained Lithuanian Armed Forces with competent officer-specialists who can appropriately and efficiently use limited resources to maintain and increase combat power. These circumstances have led to the launch of the second cycle of university studies, the Management of Defence Resources, which aims to train officers and civil servants capable of critically analysing and evaluating the system of material, human, and information resources required for the country's defence, and to plan and implement decisions ensuring the proper functioning of this system based on the principles of shared responsibility, sustainability, and international cooperation in times of peace, crises, and war.

To sum up, the MAL curricula in management offer unique benefits and added value in both the first and second cycles, including: (1) Equipping the country's armed forces, especially the national defence system, with officers who possess theoretical knowledge and practical skills in management, contributing to the development of a modern, well-trained and educated Lithuanian Armed Forces. (2) Providing professionals who are knowledgeable in hybrid threats, logistics/resource management and cyber security, thereby facilitating the implementation of vital security processes based on efficient use of limited national resources, while also promoting sustainable national development. (3) Improving the adaptability and employability of officers who have left or retired from service in the civilian sector, addressing

issues of social integration and adaptability in the modern labour market. (4) Enhancing the image of the MAL as a competitive and attractive institution of higher education that upholds the traditions of defence universities in Western Europe and the USA, while also strengthening Lithuania's reputation as a credible NATO member state.

The Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) offers several advantages as a military academy. Here are the key points:

1. **Integrated Approach:** MAL combines university studies, military training, and leadership development, creating a unique educational experience. This integrated approach ensures that students receive a comprehensive education that prepares them to become responsible military leaders.
2. **Exemption from Regulations:** The Academy is exempted from certain provisions of the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania. This exemption grants the Academy more flexibility in its establishment, management, and organisation, allowing it to tailor its curriculum to the specific needs of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.
3. **Military Training Based on Standards:** The Academy provides military training based on national standards for officer competences and follows the guidelines of Professional Military Education (PME). This ensures that students receive up-to-date and effective military training and leadership development, relevant to the activities of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.
4. **European Alignment:** The Academy aligns its programs with the European Commission's initiatives on the Sectoral Qualification Framework for Military Officers Profession (SQF-MILOF) and actively engages with the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) platform. This alignment promotes international cooperation and ensures that graduates meet European standards.
5. **Advanced Study Methods:** The Academy applies advanced study methods, creating a modern learning environment. These methods contribute to the development of students' abilities and provide them with the necessary skills for their future roles as officers.
6. **Structure and Management:** The Academy is structured as a military unit and is integrated into the national military organisation. The Commandant, directly subordinate to the Minister of National Defence, oversees the Academy's activities, while the Vice-Rector for Studies and Research supervises the academic aspects. The Academy's Senate and Council contribute to the achievement of its goals through advisory and strategic roles.
7. **Diverse Study Fields:** The Academy offers university studies in three groups of study fields: Social Sciences, Business and Public Management, and Public Security. This diverse range of study fields allows students to choose a field that aligns with their interests and career aspirations.
8. **Publicly Funded Study Places:** All study places at the Academy are publicly funded, ensuring that access to education is available to a wide range of individuals. This commitment to providing education to qualified candidates helps foster a more inclusive and diverse student body.
9. **Focus on Management:** The MAL Management field offers study curricula in both the first and second cycles of university studies. These curricula specifically address the needs of the Lithuanian Armed Forces in terms of management of defence technologies and defence

resources. Graduates gain knowledge and skills in management, logistics, information technology, and resource management, which are essential for effective leadership in the armed forces.

10. **Post-employment Opportunities:** MAL recognizes the importance of post-employment opportunities for its graduates. By equipping officers with relevant knowledge and skills in management, IT, logistics, and critical thinking, the Academy ensures that former officers can successfully transition into civilian roles and contribute to the modern labour market confidently.
11. **Enhancing National Defense:** The Academy's curricula in management contribute to the development of a modern, well-trained, and educated Lithuanian Armed Forces. Graduates possess the theoretical knowledge and practical skills required to manage hybrid threats, logistics, resource management, and cyber security effectively. This helps maintain and increase the combat power of the armed forces while promoting sustainable national development.
12. **International Cooperation and Reputation:** By aligning with European standards and engaging with international platforms, the MAL strengthens Lithuania's reputation as a credible NATO member state. The Academy's commitment to upholding the traditions of defence universities in Western Europe and the USA enhances its image as a competitive and attractive institution of higher education.

Overall, the Military Academy of Lithuania offers a comprehensive and specialised education that prepares future military leaders to meet the challenges of the modern security environment while fostering their personal and professional development.

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

The unique curricula of the MAL offer highly qualified military officers the necessary academic competencies to perform their duties effectively and integrate into the civilian sector after their service. The Management of Defence Technologies (MDT) and Management of Defence Resources (MDR) curricula focus on developing specific knowledge and skills in logistics, cyber security, and resource management. While there is potential for expanding the L02 field of study, the MAL's strategy prioritises maintaining and enhancing the quality of the existing curricula to establish the Academy as a centre of excellence for national security and military studies. The curricula aim to provide fundamental (MDT) or advanced (MDR) management knowledge to professionals in the armed forces, primarily the Lithuanian Armed Forces, responsible for logistics and cyber security (MDT) or defence resourcing decisions. These aims align with the Academy's mission and purpose, as outlined in its 2018-2024 Strategy. The Academy strives to be an exceptional Lithuanian university that offers both university studies and military education, trains responsible military leaders, conducts research, and implements lifelong learning principles that meet the needs of the NDS. The curriculum also supports the Academy's vision to become a modern, internationally recognized university and centre of excellence for national security, defence, and military studies, with attractive study curricula, high-level research, and effective partnerships with social and academic partners.

The Academy's Statutes establish two objectives for the institution's activities, which align with the goals of the L02 curricula: (1) To provide university education that cultivates officers, military and national security specialists, delivers research-based higher education at the cutting-edge level of cognition and technology, provides higher education qualifications, and fosters a well-rounded, ethically responsible and creative individual. (2) To sustainably develop scientific knowledge in the fields of warfare and national security, conduct basic and applied research and experimental activities at the international level, offer university education based on these activities, and provide higher education.

The Curriculum's objective is consistent with, and its expected outcomes contribute to, the implementation of the Academy's 2018-2024 Strategy and are reflected in the Strategy Implementation Plan (SIP) 2018-2024, specifically:

(1) To enhance the Academy's identity as a major centre of excellence for officer training and attractive university education. The goal is to elevate the Academy's profile and establish it as a credible military training and university education institution and centre of excellence for officer education.

(2) To ensure modern implementation of high-quality university education and military training at the MAL in pursuit of the second strategic direction. This involves implementing high-quality university education and adhering to the Bologna Process requirements, introducing third-cycle studies, achieving high indicators of internationalisation of study curricula and participating in ERASMUS+ and EMILYO activities, clarifying and realising the concept of student-oriented studies and the appropriate infrastructure for its implementation, developing and realising the concept of military education based on national standards and the PME, and developing and implementing military training and infrastructure at the MAL to achieve the integration of military training, university education, and leadership development.

(3) To conduct research of relevance to national security and defence at international standards, which is achieved by involving cadets and students in research.

(4) To enable continuous development of educational, leadership, and subject competencies in line with the needs of the MAL and the NDS by implementing the LLL principle. The first objective is to ensure that MAL staff have the necessary competencies, meet qualification requirements, and can develop their qualifications. To achieve this objective, the educational, leadership, and subject competencies of university lecturers and military trainers are identified and continuously maintained to ensure the expected results of studies and military training.

The both study programmes at the Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) aligns with the institution's mission, objectives, and strategy in several ways. Firstly, the curricula of the Management of Defence Technologies (MDT) and Management of Defence Resources (MDR) programs aim to provide military officers with the necessary academic competencies to perform their duties effectively and integrate into the civilian sector after their service. This

aligns with the Academy's mission to train responsible military leaders and its objective to provide university education that cultivates officers and national security specialists.

Secondly, the MDT and MDR curricula focus on developing specific knowledge and skills in logistics, cyber security, and resource management, which are essential for professionals in the armed forces responsible for defence resourcing decisions. This aligns with the Academy's strategy to maintain and enhance the quality of existing curricula and establish the Academy as a centre of excellence for national security and military studies.

Thirdly, the MAL's 2018-2024 Strategy outlines five objectives for the institution's activities, and the L02 curricula's expected outcomes contribute to the implementation of these objectives. The first objective is to enhance the Academy's identity as a major centre of excellence for officer training and attractive university education, which involves establishing the Academy as a credible military training and university education institution. The second objective is to ensure modern implementation of high-quality university education and military training at the MAL, which includes introducing third-cycle studies and achieving high indicators of internationalisation of study curricula. The third objective is to conduct research of relevance to national security and defence at international standards, which involves involving cadets and students in research. The fourth objective is to enable continuous development of educational, leadership, and subject competencies in line with the needs of the MAL and the National Defence System (NDS), which involves implementing the Lifelong Learning (LLL) principle.

In conclusion, both study field programmes (first and second cycle) at the Military Academy of Lithuania confirms the aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities, and strategy of the institution. The curricula align with the Academy's mission to train responsible military leaders, its objectives to provide university education that cultivates officers and national security specialists, and its strategy to establish the Academy as a centre of excellence for national security and military studies. The expected outcomes of the curricula also contribute to the implementation of the Academy's 2018-2024 Strategy, specifically its objectives to enhance the Academy's identity, ensure modern implementation of high-quality education and training, conduct research of relevance to national security, and enable continuous development of competencies.

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

The curricula for management studies are conducted in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) to ensure quality assurance and management. The Management of Defence Technologies curriculum adheres to the ESG guidelines as of July 31, 2008. The requirements for the MDT curriculum were established in the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania ISAK-2294, which approved the Regulation of the Study Field of Management and Business Administration on July 31, 2007. Similarly, the requirements for the MDR curriculum were specified in the aforementioned regulation and in the description of the study field of

Public Administration, which was approved in 2012. These requirements are further detailed in Annex 4 SER.

Table No. 1 Study programmes' *Management of Defence Technologies* compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes (bachelor)*

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	210 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	151 ECTS (72 %)
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	59 ECTS (28 %)
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	20 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 15 ECTS	15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	50 – 70 %
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	30 – 50 %

Table No. 2 Study programmes' *Management of Defence Resources* compliance to general requirements for *second cycle study programmes (master)*

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for the study field Information Services	No less than 60 ECTS	60 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	30 – 50 %
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	50 – 70 %

The **Management of Defence Technologies curriculum** is a 3.5-year program consisting of 210 credits (5250 hours), with 20-30 credits per semester. There are 45 credits in the first year,

60 credits in the second and third years, and 45 credits in the fourth year. The number of credits per year meets the mandatory minimum, but varies due to military training, which is conducted on military training grounds in the first three cycles. From 2019, full-time studies are organised in modules, with each course/module lasting 3-6 weeks and consisting of contact hours and independent work. Subjects fall into two categories: 72% in the field of study and 28% general university subjects, including relevant courses for level II officers. English language proficiency is emphasised, with specialised English studied in the third and fourth semesters. Cadets have two internships, each worth 10 ECTS, and complete a final thesis in the seventh semester, with methodological support provided during the first cycle final thesis seminar.

The curriculum for the **Management of Defence Resources program** spans two years and comprises 90 credits, equivalent to 2250 hours of study. It is delivered continuously over four semesters, with the first three semesters consisting of 20 ECTS credits each and the final semester comprising 30 ECTS credits. The program covers nine subjects (ranging from 5 to 10 ECTS credits) and includes 30 credits for the Master thesis. The course is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of resource management issues, including their contextual and complex nature, their emergence, and the methodologies and techniques used to manage them. The subjects studied in the program cover various theoretical and practical aspects of defence institutions management, supply organisation, emergency situations, innovation, finance and project management, decision-making models, and qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The program's framework ensures the effective achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Each semester is divided into three sessions: introductory, distance, and examination. The introductory session is two weeks long and focuses on the methodology and theoretical framework of the subjects. The lecturers try to fit in as many contact hours as possible, up to a maximum of 70 hours over the two weeks. This is to meet the requests of LAF units to reduce the number of hours remaining in the distance session, which takes place during the service period when the students are at their duty stations. The examination session includes approximately 6 to 10 contact hours (5 and 10 ECTS respectively) per subject and includes summarising lectures, tutorials, and an examination.

Based on the information provided (SER, discussion with the expert panel), it can be argued that the cycle study programmes in Management of Defence Technologies (MDT) and Management of Defence Resources (MDR) are in line with legal requirements.

Firstly, the curricula for both programs adhere to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), which is a legal requirement for quality assurance and management in higher education institutions in Europe. Secondly, the requirements for the MDT and MDR curricula were established by the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania ISAK-2294, which approved the Regulation of the Study Field of Management and Business Administration on July 31, 2007. These requirements are further detailed in Annex 4 SER. This indicates that the programs have been designed and approved according to legal regulations.

Thirdly, the number of credits for both programs meets the mandatory minimum, with the MDT program consisting of 210 credits (5250 hours) and the MDR program consisting of 90 credits (2250 hours). The programs also cover a range of theoretical and practical aspects of defence institutions management, supply organisation, emergency situations, innovation, finance and project management, decision-making models, and qualitative and quantitative research techniques, which are relevant to the field of study. Fourthly, the programs are delivered in a structured manner, with each semester divided into three sessions: introductory, distance, and examination. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of the subjects and effective achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

In conclusion, based on the information provided, it can be argued that the study programmes Management of Defence Technologies and Management of Defence Resources are in line with legal requirements.

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

The alignment of the objectives and results of study curricula with the results of study subjects, study methods and assessment methods is laid down in PROC 33 "Planning and Coordination of Study Curriculum Content" of the MAL Internal Rules of Procedure, which regulates the procedure for the preparation of study descriptions. It formulates recommendations for lecturers preparing course descriptions. The outcomes of the curricula assessed (see Tables 1 and 2 SER, p. 14-16) are formulated to adequately prepare the graduate for complex professional activities consisting of a variety of interrelated tasks corresponding to levels 6 and 7 of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (LTQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). To achieve these outcomes, the subjects of study and the methods of study and assessment used in these subjects have been purposefully selected.

The Curriculum Committee reviews the curriculum, including the subjects and their order, before each semester. The updated curriculum is approved by the MAL College of Science and Studies, taking into account feedback from participants, such as cadets/students, lecturers, and social partners, as well as innovations in the field. The development, monitoring, and improvement of study curricula are outlined in PROC 33 "Planning and Coordination of Study Curriculum Content." Detailed information on the management of study curricula in the management field can be found in Part 7 of the "Management and Publicity of Study Quality" report, with curriculum plans provided as Annex 1, SER.

The learning outcomes, teaching activities and assessments in the study curricula are aligned in a constructive manner to achieve the intended results. To achieve the curriculum's objectives, various teaching and assessment methods are used, depending on the subject/module. The learning, teaching and assessment methods are designed to achieve the curriculum outcomes, with clear learning outcomes and methods specified for each module. The assessment process is cumulative and based on the outcomes of the course/module. The curriculum emphasises three levels of achievement, with assessment criteria and levels defined for each assignment. The assessment methods are appropriate to the level of study and qualification. The study curricula are balanced and not overloaded, with no single subject

having been awarded more credits than necessary to achieve the intended learning outcomes. All this information is provided in the course descriptions. The Study Curriculum Committee ensures that the curriculum aligns with the mission, strategy and legal requirements of the institution. The Committee reviews the implementation of the curriculum at least twice a year, considering feedback and initiating necessary improvements.

Based on the provided information (SER and participants' discussions with the expert panel), it can be argued that the aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning methods, and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programs are compatible with each other. Here's a breakdown of the supporting points:

1. Alignment with study descriptions: PROC 33 "Planning and Coordination of Study Curriculum Content" ensures that the objectives and results of study curricula align with the results of study subjects, study methods, and assessment methods. This ensures a cohesive and coordinated approach to curriculum development.
2. Preparation for complex professional activities: The outcomes of the curricula are formulated to adequately prepare the graduates for complex professional activities at levels 6 and 7 of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (LTQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This indicates that the learning outcomes are designed to meet the necessary competency levels for the field.
3. Purposeful selection of study and assessment methods: The subjects of study and the methods of study and assessment have been purposefully selected to achieve the desired outcomes. This suggests that the chosen teaching and assessment methods are aligned with the curriculum objectives and intended results.
4. Curriculum review and approval process: The Curriculum Committee reviews the curriculum, including the subjects, their order, and the feedback from participants, such as cadets/students, lecturers, and social partners. This regular review process ensures that the curriculum remains up to date and relevant to the field.
5. Constructive alignment: The learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessments are aligned in a constructive manner to achieve the intended results. Clear learning outcomes and methods are specified for each module, and the assessment process is cumulative based on the course/module outcomes. This alignment ensures a coherent and logical progression of learning.
6. Balanced and appropriate credit allocation: The study curricula are balanced and not overloaded, with no single subject being awarded more credits than necessary to achieve the intended learning outcomes. This indicates that the credit allocation is appropriate and supports the effective achievement of the curriculum objectives.
7. Ongoing monitoring and improvement: The Study Curriculum Committee reviews the implementation of the curriculum at least twice a year, considering feedback and initiating necessary improvements. This continuous monitoring and improvement process ensures

that the curriculum remains effective and aligned with the mission, strategy, and legal requirements of the institution.

In conclusion, the aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning methods, and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programs are compatible with each other based on the provided information. The curriculum design, review process, and ongoing monitoring and improvement efforts demonstrate a commitment to maintaining alignment and quality assurance in the educational programs.

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

The **Management of Defence Technologies curriculum** is designed to cultivate officers who possess a foundational understanding of management principles, as well as knowledge of contemporary weaponry and innovative technologies, with a specialisation in cyber security and logistics. The sequencing of subjects within the curriculum is designed to align with this objective. During the first four semesters, cadets study 19 subjects that cover both the field of study and general university education. These subjects provide fundamental knowledge of management studies, humanities, and engineering and technological disciplines. This structure is intended to harmonise with military training and leadership development. Cadets may also transfer to other higher education establishments after the first semester, including VilniusTech (formerly VGTU), Antanas Gustaitis Aviation Institute (which offers study curricula in aircraft piloting, aviation mechanics, avionics, and flight control), or Lithuanian Maritime Academy (which offers study curricula in navigation, mechanics, electromechanics, and logistics).

In the fifth semester, cadets deepen their knowledge of management and acquire the necessary competencies for research, as well as the evaluation and management of innovations and technological processes. This semester includes an internship with the Lithuanian Armed Forces. These competencies are essential for further studies, which may include specialising in logistics or cyber security in the sixth semester, acquiring unique competencies necessary for service in Lithuanian Armed Forces units, or taking part in the "mobility windows" offered by the Erasmus+ programme and selecting a semester of studies in military academies of other countries.

During the seventh semester, cadets focus primarily on preparing their final thesis. They attend the Final Thesis Seminar, where they prepare the theoretical part of their thesis, and the Specialty Practical Training, where they conduct research on the topic of their thesis in chosen LAF units or civil enterprises. Along with their final thesis, cadets study Military Theory, International Humanitarian Law, and Military Campaigns and Operations, which prepare them for their future service in LAF units.

The competencies developed in the Management of Defence Technologies curriculum are crucial for officers, as they are the leading personnel of the armed forces. The exercise of armed forces functions is dynamic and uncertain, and the armed forces must adopt and apply the latest technological and managerial techniques to effectively deter and, if necessary, defeat potential

adversaries. Knowledge and application of innovative management techniques, logistics principles, and new technologies, including cyber technologies, are essential to ensure that the armed forces can develop their capabilities in a timely and efficient manner, suitable for the performance of their functions in peacetime, crisis, and war.

The **Management of Defense Resources curriculum** aims to enhance the resource management skills of both officers and civilian personnel in the armed forces, while also preparing graduates for civilian life. The curriculum is structured in the following manner: In the first semester, students gain an understanding of the functioning of defence institutions and specific aspects of resourcing and financial management. This provides a comprehensive view of the supply system and its components. The second semester focuses on both the theoretical and practical aspects of project and risk management, teaching students how to manage uncertainty and successfully provide resources under various conditions. The competences necessary to conduct qualitative research are also developed in this semester. In the third semester, students study innovation and change management, quantitative research methods, and decision-making theory and practice. This not only equips them with the skills necessary to conduct research for their Master's thesis, but also familiarise them with advanced techniques for making decisions and working under conditions of uncertainty, volatility, and complexity. The final semester is devoted to preparing and publicly defending the Master's thesis.

Based on the provided information (SER, discussion with the expert panel), it can be argued that the subjects/modules in the cycle study programs ensure a consistent development of competences among students. Here's a breakdown of the supporting points:

1. Sequencing of subjects: The subjects/modules within the Management of Defence Technologies curriculum are designed to align with the objective of cultivating officers with a foundational understanding of management principles, contemporary weaponry, and innovative technologies. The subjects are structured in a sequence that allows for the development of knowledge and competencies in a logical and progressive manner.
2. Fundamental knowledge across disciplines: The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects, including management studies, humanities, engineering, and technological disciplines. This interdisciplinary approach ensures that students acquire a comprehensive understanding of various relevant fields, which is crucial for their future roles as officers in the armed forces.
3. Deepening knowledge and acquiring competencies: In the fifth semester, cadets deepen their knowledge of management and acquire competencies for research, evaluation, and management of innovations and technological processes. This semester also includes an internship with the Lithuanian Armed Forces, providing practical experience and enhancing their understanding of the subject matter.
4. Specialisation options and international exposure: The curriculum offers specialisation options in logistics or cyber security, allowing students to acquire unique competencies necessary for their service in specific units of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Additionally,

students have the opportunity to participate in the "mobility windows" offered by the Erasmus+ program, enabling them to study in military academies of other countries. These options further enhance their expertise and broaden their perspectives.

5. Focus on final thesis preparation: The seventh semester is dedicated primarily to preparing the final thesis. Students attend the Final Thesis Seminar and engage in practical research in chosen LAF units or civil enterprises. This process further develops their research, analytical, and problem-solving skills, which are essential competencies for officers.

6. Relevance to armed forces functions: The competencies developed in the Management of Defence Technologies curriculum are directly relevant to the role of officers in the armed forces. The curriculum emphasises the adoption and application of the latest technological and managerial techniques to effectively deter and defeat potential adversaries. This ensures that graduates are equipped with the necessary skills to perform their functions in peacetime, crisis, and war scenarios.

7. Similarly, in the Management of Defense Resources curriculum, the subjects/modules are structured to enhance resource management skills and prepare graduates for both military and civilian roles. The curriculum covers various aspects of defence institutions, resourcing and financial management, project and risk management, innovation and change management, decision-making theory and practice, and qualitative and quantitative research methods. This comprehensive coverage ensures a holistic development of competences related to resource management in various contexts.

In conclusion, the subjects/modules in both cycle study programs ensure a consistent development of competences among students. The sequencing, interdisciplinary approach, specialisation options, practical components, and relevance to the armed forces functions contribute to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the roles of officers and resource managers in the armed forces.

3.1.6. Evaluation of opportunities for students to personalise the structure of field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes

The **Management of Defence Technologies study curriculum** provides various opportunities for students to tailor their studies to their individual interests and needs. These include: (1) The Mobility Window in the fifth and sixth semesters, which allows cadets to study or train at foreign defence universities through ERASMUS+ and bilateral exchange programmes. (2) A choice of two specialisations in the sixth semester for students studying the Management of Defence Technologies curriculum. (3) Informal opportunities for improving English skills, which are required at a minimum level 2 for officers in the NATO environment. (4) The right to choose a place of practice based on individual interests. (5) Flexibility in choosing the topic of their thesis from a list of suggested topics or proposing their own topic that aligns with their personal interests and the curriculum's purpose.

For students in the **Management of Defence Resources curriculum**, individualisation of the timetable is possible based on the availability of their service, as many students are active military personnel who may need to suspend their studies during missions or redeployments. Upon their return, students are placed in an appropriate group and given an individual study schedule if necessary to accommodate any differences in their curriculum.

The Management of Defence Technologies and Management of Defence Resources study curricula offer several opportunities for students to personalise the structure of their field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes.

In the Management of Defence Technologies curriculum, students have various avenues for customization. First, the Mobility Window in the fifth and sixth semesters allows cadets to study or train at foreign defence universities through ERASMUS+ and bilateral exchange programs. This opportunity enables students to gain international experience, broaden their perspectives, and acquire knowledge from different educational systems. Second, in the sixth semester, students studying the Management of Defence Technologies curriculum have the option to choose from two specialisations. This allows them to focus their studies on either logistics or cyber security, aligning their education with their specific interests and career goals.

Third, the curriculum acknowledges the importance of English language proficiency for officers in the NATO environment. While not explicitly stated, the mention of informal opportunities for improving English skills indicates that students have the flexibility to enhance their language abilities according to their individual needs. Fourth, students are given the right to choose a place of practice based on their individual interests. This implies that students have the freedom to select a practice location that aligns with their career aspirations or allows them to explore specific areas of interest within the field of study. Lastly, students have flexibility in selecting the topic of their thesis. They are provided with a list of suggested topics, but they also have the option to propose their own thesis topic that aligns with their personal interests and the curriculum's purpose. This enables students to delve deeper into a subject they are passionate about or explore research areas that are relevant to their intended career paths.

In the Management of Defence Resources curriculum, individualization of the timetable is possible based on the availability of students' service. As many students are active military personnel, they may need to suspend their studies during missions or redeployments. Upon their return, students are placed in an appropriate group and given an individual study schedule if necessary, allowing them to continue their education and progress in the curriculum without being disadvantaged by their service commitments.

These opportunities for personalization and flexibility in the curriculum structure demonstrate the commitment of the educational institution to cater to students' diverse needs and enable them to align their studies with their personal learning objectives and intended outcomes.

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

The methodological guidelines for written works approved by the Commandant of the MAL outline specific requirements for each type of written work, including Bachelor and Master theses. The Bachelor thesis is an independent analytical work that demonstrates knowledge and skills acquired during studies, while the Master thesis requires research skills and the ability to solve theoretical and practical scientific problems. Both types of theses must contain managerial solutions based on research. The process of preparation and defence of theses is detailed in SUBPROC 34-02 and involves independent work by the cadet or student, involvement of social partners, periodic monitoring, and an impartial Final Thesis Defence Committee. All final theses must undergo a mandatory Turnitin check before public defence.

The compliance of final theses is addressed through the methodological guidelines and regulations established by the Commandant of the educational institution. The key points are:

1. Specific requirements for each type of written work: The methodological guidelines outline the requirements for both Bachelor and Master theses. These requirements are tailored to the nature and purpose of each thesis. The Bachelor thesis is expected to demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired during the studies, while the Master thesis places additional emphasis on research skills and the ability to solve theoretical and practical scientific problems.
2. Managerial solutions based on research: Both types of theses, whether Bachelor or Master, must incorporate managerial solutions that are grounded in research. This indicates that the theses are not solely focused on theoretical analysis but also require practical implications and recommendations.
3. Process of preparation and defence: The text mentions SUBPROC 34-02, which outlines the detailed process of preparing and defending theses. This implies that there are established procedures and guidelines that students must follow. The process involves independent work by the cadet or student, periodic monitoring, and the involvement of social partners. These aspects contribute to the robustness and quality of the theses.
4. Mandatory Turnitin check: Before the public defence, all final theses must undergo a mandatory Turnitin check. Turnitin is a plagiarism detection tool that helps ensure the originality and integrity of the work. This requirement highlights the institution's commitment to maintaining academic honesty and ensuring that the theses are free from plagiarism.

Overall, the compliance of final theses is addressed through the methodological guidelines, regulations, and procedures put in place by the Commandant of the educational institution. These guidelines ensure that the theses meet specific requirements, include managerial solutions based on research, undergo plagiarism checks, and follow a well-defined process of preparation and defence. By adhering to these guidelines, the institution aims to uphold the academic standards and integrity of the final theses produced by students.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

The strengths of the two-cycle study program in the field of Management at the Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) can be seen as follows:

1. **Integrated Approach:** The program combines university studies, military training, and leadership development, providing students with a comprehensive education that prepares them to become responsible military leaders.
2. **Alignment with European Standards:** The program aligns with the European Commission's initiatives on the Sectoral Qualification Framework for Military Officers Profession (SQF-MILOF) and actively engages with the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) platform. This ensures that graduates meet European standards and promotes international cooperation.
3. **Focus on Management:** The program specifically addresses the needs of the Lithuanian Armed Forces in terms of management of defence technologies and resources. It equips graduates with knowledge and skills in management, logistics, information technology, and resource management, which are essential for effective leadership in the armed forces.
4. **Practical and Modern Study Methods:** The program applies advanced study methods to create a modern learning environment. These methods contribute to the development of students' abilities and provide them with the necessary skills for their future roles as officers.
5. **Personalization Options:** Students have opportunities to personalise their study program according to their interests and career goals. They can choose specialisation options in logistics or cyber security and have flexibility in selecting the topic of their thesis.
6. **International Exposure:** The program offers mobility windows and exchange programs that allow students to study or train at foreign defence universities. This international exposure enhances their perspectives and knowledge.
7. **Emphasis on Post-employment Opportunities:** The program recognizes the importance of post-employment opportunities for graduates. By equipping officers with relevant knowledge and skills in management, IT, logistics, and critical thinking, the program ensures that former officers can successfully transition into civilian roles and contribute to the modern labour market confidently.
8. **Relevance to National Defense:** The program's curricula in management contribute to the development of a modern, well-trained, and educated Lithuanian Armed Forces. Graduates possess the theoretical knowledge and practical skills required to manage hybrid threats, logistics, resource management, and cyber security effectively.
9. **Inclusive and Publicly Funded:** All study places at the Military Academy of Lithuania are publicly funded, ensuring that access to education is available to a wide range of individuals. This commitment to providing education to qualified candidates helps foster a more inclusive and diverse student body.

Overall, the two-cycle study program in Management at the Military Academy of Lithuania offers a comprehensive education that combines academic and military training, aligns with

European standards, and prepares graduates for leadership roles in the armed forces. It emphasises practical skills, personalization, international exposure, and post-employment opportunities, contributing to the development of competent and responsible military leaders.

(2) Weaknesses:

Based on the information provided, there are several areas for potential improvement in the two-cycle study program in management at the Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL). These improvements can enhance the educational experience and align the program with evolving needs and best practices. Here are some areas of improvement to consider:

1. **Practical Application and Experiential Learning:** The curriculum could place greater emphasis on practical application and experiential learning. This could involve incorporating more hands-on exercises, simulations, case studies, and real-world projects to enable students to apply their knowledge and skills in practical contexts. By providing practical experiences, students can bridge the gap between theory and practice, preparing them for future challenges.
2. **Industry Partnerships and Guest Lecturers:** Strengthening partnerships with industry organisations, defence institutions, and relevant professionals can bring additional expertise and perspectives into the program. Collaborating with practitioners through guest lectures, workshops, and mentoring opportunities can provide students with insights into real-world challenges, industry trends, and best practices. Such exposure can enhance students' understanding of practical management principles and expand their professional networks.
3. **Integration of Emerging Topics:** The program should continuously monitor and integrate emerging topics and trends in management. Management practices, technological advancements, and global security challenges are constantly evolving, necessitating regular updates to the curriculum. By integrating topics such as sustainability, digital transformation, data analytics, strategic foresight, and ethical decision-making, the program can remain relevant and prepare students for future leadership roles.
4. **Soft Skills Development:** While the program emphasises technical and management competencies, there is room for further developing students' soft skills. Effective leadership, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and critical thinking are essential for military leaders in complex and dynamic environments. Offering opportunities for students to enhance their soft skills through leadership workshops, communication training, and teamwork exercises can contribute to their overall development as well-rounded officers.
5. **International Exposure and Exchange Programs:** Expanding and promoting international exposure can provide students with a broader perspective and a deeper understanding of international security dynamics. Strengthening partnerships with international defence academies and organisations, facilitating study abroad opportunities, and promoting cross-cultural collaboration can enhance students' intercultural competence and broaden their global outlook.
6. **Continuous Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms:** Implementing continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms throughout the program can support students' progress and identify areas for improvement. Regular assessments, individual feedback sessions, and

self-assessment tools can help students track their development, reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and take necessary steps for improvement. This ongoing feedback process can contribute to students' self-awareness, engagement, and motivation in their learning journey.

7. **Alumni Engagement and Mentorship:** Establishing a robust alumni network and mentorship program can provide students with guidance, support, and networking opportunities beyond their time at the academy. Engaging alumni who have successfully transitioned into civilian roles or made significant contributions in the military can offer valuable insights, career advice, and mentorship to current students. Alumni events, networking sessions, and mentorship programs can foster a strong sense of community and facilitate knowledge sharing.
8. **Emphasis on Ethical Leadership:** Given the importance of ethical decision-making and moral responsibility in the military, integrating modules or courses specifically dedicated to ethical leadership can further enhance the program. Addressing ethical dilemmas, exploring moral decision-making frameworks, and promoting discussions on values, integrity, and accountability can foster a strong ethical foundation among students.

To comprehensively improve the study program, it is crucial to consider three interconnected arguments. Firstly, achieving synergy between Academic Studies, Military Training, and Commander/Leader Education is paramount, but it currently lacks a systematic approach. To maximise effectiveness and prevent duplication of activities, a deeper integration of these areas is needed. This holistic approach ensures that the three components complement and enhance each other.

Secondly, the initiation of programmatic management of research support provides an opportunity to incorporate practical material into the curriculum. However, this requires closer collaboration between academic departments, military institutions, and other social partners to align research support with the curriculum and enrich the learning experience for cadets and students.

Lastly, to promote academic mobility, converting more courses within the field curricula into EMILIO modules is advisable. This expands the availability of cross-institutional learning experiences, benefits from diverse perspectives, and broadens academic horizons. This requires coordination between institutions and the development of partnerships to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources.

Addressing these arguments simultaneously fosters a more integrated and dynamic learning environment, encouraging collaboration, reducing duplication, incorporating practical insights, and promoting international engagement. Ultimately, this enhances the educational experience for all participants.

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

HEI demonstrates a commitment to integrating the latest developments in science and technology and fostering students' abilities to carry out scientific and artistic activities. The evaluation of HEI scientific research and experimental development (SR&ED) activities, as well as its participation in research projects, indicates a positive trajectory in meeting this criteria. The weighted sum of scores for research papers has consistently increased over the past three years (2018-2021), indicating a continuous improvement in the quality of scientific output (SER, p. 21-26).

Previous evaluation identified areas for improvement, such as limitations in international scientific activities and the need for greater participation in international conferences and projects. HEI has made significant progress in resolving these shortcomings, although there is still room for improvement.

HEI Strategy for 2018-2024 specifically includes a strategic direction to conduct research relevant to national security and defence in line with international standards. To achieve this objective, the MAL focuses on conducting policy, management, and interdisciplinary research recognized internationally. It actively participates in project-based and competitive research activities, aiming to continuously improve the level and quality of research in the fields of Management (S 003) and Political Science (S 002).

HEI engages in research cooperation with other Lithuanian and foreign scientific institutions, emphasising applied research aligned with the needs of the National Defence System (NDS). HEI's membership in international associations such as the International Association of Military Academies (IAMA) and the International Society of Military Sciences (ISMS) further facilitates the exchange of knowledge and scientific competences. Participation in international conferences and symposia provides opportunities for the MAL's teaching staff to present research and engage in discussions with high-level scientists, experts, and officials from various countries.

Based on the available information, the study field demonstrates a strong commitment to integrating the latest developments in science and technology. The academy's research activities, participation in national and international projects, and collaboration with defence institutions contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the development of students' scientific and artistic abilities.

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

Research areas are identified in line with scientific advancements and are refined through collaboration with the National Defense System (NDS) and other social partners. This collaborative approach ensures that courses remain relevant and reflect the latest challenges in various fields, such as public governance, risk, crisis, change and defence innovation management, project management, logistics and supply chain management, cybersecurity, economics, and defence finance.

Study field reviews the content of courses annually. This comprehensive review includes updating course descriptions, incorporating the latest literature, and reviewing and editing course material in the Moodle environment. Lecturers are motivated to recommend the most up-to-date scientific sources to students. This expectation has been incorporated into the course assignments and assessment criteria. For example, the highest level of assessment (9-10 points) is achieved by utilising the most recent foreign scholarly sources (SER, Pg. 26).

Although, MAL efforts to link between content of studies and latest developments in science, art and technology, the experts panel considers that there is still room for improvement, namely in enhancing collaboration with non-defence partners as expanding collaborations with partners from diverse sectors, including academia, industry, and the arts, can provide a more comprehensive perspective on the latest developments in science and technology.

The experts find equally important strengthening interdisciplinary connections encouraging collaboration and knowledge exchange across different study fields within the institution can enhance the cross-pollination of ideas and promote a holistic understanding of the latest developments in science, art, and technology.

By addressing these areas for improvement, the study field can strengthen the link between the content of studies and the latest developments, ensuring that the curriculum remains dynamic, relevant, and aligned with the rapidly evolving landscape of science, art, and technology.

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

Students are exposed to the latest scientific trends and research findings through their study materials, including compulsory and supplementary literature. They are also encouraged to conduct independent research and engage in tasks related to their curriculum, such as writing essays, coursework, or final theses. The use of creativity-enhancing methods, such as design thinking and creative problem solving, is promoted to encourage students to seek and utilise research-based data and solutions.

Since 2021, HEI has also organised a presentation of the final thesis results to social partners, the National Defence System (NDS), the Ministry of the Interior, and other stakeholders. Summaries of these theses are published in dedicated publications. In addition, students are encouraged to contribute to scientific publications, participate in conferences, and deliver presentations, either collaboratively with teaching staff or independently. As recognition for

their scientific activities, students may receive a letter of appreciation or a nominal gift from their supervisor, upon the recommendation of the research group leaders.

Nevertheless, the good practices mentioned above, the experts panel reinforces that, as stated in SER (Pg. 27), there is room for improvement in what concerns the need for greater involvement of students and cadets in research activities. To address this, a system needs to be developed to engage teaching staff and students more effectively in research activities, providing better incentives for joint research and the dissemination of research results.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Commitment to integrating the latest developments in science and technology: HEI demonstrates a strong commitment to incorporating the latest advancements in science and technology into its programs. This ensures that students are exposed to cutting-edge knowledge and are equipped with the necessary skills to engage in scientific and artistic activities.
2. Collaboration with defence institutions and international associations: HEI actively engages in research cooperation with other Lithuanian and foreign scientific institutions, particularly in the field of national security and defence. Its membership in international associations facilitates knowledge exchange and collaboration with experts from various countries, enriching the research and academic environment.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Limited collaboration with non-defense partners: While the HEI has made progress in collaborating with defence institutions, there is a need to expand collaborations with partners from diverse sectors, including academia, industry, and the arts. This broader collaboration can provide a more comprehensive perspective on the latest developments in science, art, and technology.
2. Inadequate student involvement in research activities: Despite efforts to involve students in research activities, the experts panel notes that the level of student engagement is still weak. Developing a system that effectively engages teaching staff and students in research activities, along with providing better incentives for joint research and dissemination of research results, is necessary to address this weakness and enhance student participation.

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

The admission numbers for both cycles were appropriate and stable, only one anomaly is within the year 2022 where admission numbers to Defence Technology Management first cycle

program dropped from 44 admitted students down to 33 admitted students. This could probably be explained by the start of Russian invasion to Ukraine and uncertainty in the region.

During the evaluation, it was observed that one of the largest student dropouts occurs during the first year of bachelor studies. During the meeting, it was discussed how fully the higher education institution presents itself to future students (bachelor students are called cadets) and how much the cadets understand what kind of studies await them. The proposal to pay more attention to the proper presentation of studies so that students are not disappointed with their studies and understand what their study plan will be, how much physical training will be required, etc. A proposal from the expert panel is to revise the selection criteria and assess how capable students are entering the study program.

The system of admission to higher education institutions is carried out on a national scale (LAMA BPO), so everything is systematically clear.

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

During the meetings, it was said that the administration responds benevolently and helps with the crediting of various competencies, knowledge, and work experience. Although the system is not clear to every student, no problems have been identified, so the most important thing is communication and dissemination of information, so that potential applicants know what crediting options are available in higher education, how the system works and who they can contact.

Overall, the criterion meets the requirements and no shortcomings were identified with recognition of qualifications.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

Students have the opportunity to go on various exchanges and study abroad, as the study grid is arranged in this way. This is a very good practice that could be applied more widely, the proposal would be to expand the opportunities to which countries students could go. Also, to increase the possibility of short-term exchanges, such exchanges can be much more attractive to the student if he could accumulate study credits in a short time or do a short-term internship.

The outgoing mobility is used by cadets and the expert panel appreciates the use of EMILYO format and also the use of Erasmus+. For example, in 2022 65 percent of third year cadets went abroad using different mobility programs. This is particularly important as Lithuania is a NATO country and multicultural, foreign experiences are needed not only to enhance the studies but to also be prepared to work with other NATO and allied countries military personnel after graduation.

The percentage of students coming from foreign countries is small, so the proposal to promote and increase cooperation with foreign higher education institutions and increase the number of foreign students would also help Lithuanians studying to expand their horizons and improve

their knowledge of the English language. Students, both at the bachelor's and master's level, and teachers especially need to improve their English language skills in order to create the conditions for quality English learning, which would be properly coordinated in the study grid.

Despite, the outgoing mobility is high in MAL, the proficiency of English is very important and MAL should pay more attention to the language level of students.

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

The university provides dignified financial conditions to the student, allocating accommodation, clothing and other means necessary for studying. The infrastructure is adapted for students to study independently and do group work. The goal of adapting the academy to individual needs mentioned in the self-analysis was discussed during the meeting but it remained unclear what individual needs and how the academy can be adapted. The suggestion is to pay more attention to the infrastructural, cultural and future career opportunities of studying at the military academy and to successfully apply the acquired knowledge to students with individual needs after graduation.

Students know about the possibility of using psychological help, it is provided. There is no exact data on how many students use this opportunity and how much it brings benefits. As well the academy's administration mentioned that they have not only a reactive approach to emotional and psychological support but also proactive.

Students said they could report problems at the academy anonymously, but they did not use this option. Students are not clear enough about appeals options and procedures for ethical violations: where to turn, who could help. It is necessary to be informed about these possibilities, clearly present them, etc. Although it was mentioned that students can express all comments by writing directly to the teacher, this cannot be the only means of expressing comments in order for students to feel safe.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Teachers advice and help students, the low desire and involvement of students in scientific activities was observed by the expert panel, so it is important to invest more in the promotion of students' scientific activities, not forgetting the encouragement of teachers.

The academy has a very clear structure and hierarchical system, the aim would be to maintain the hierarchical model in the part of studies that includes physical and military training, if it is necessary, but separate the part of academic studies that requires closer, more open and better communication between the administration and students.

Frequent various meetings where students can express their comments, remarks and suggestions for improving the quality of studies. Such meetings are necessary not only within the limits of the study committee, but also in general with the course. When discussing the

progress of the semester, it is very important that the comments are taken into account after such meetings.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Studies abroad are included in the study grid, which encourages students to take advantage of this opportunity and go abroad and the students use mobility programs.
2. The students' financial situation is very good: free accommodation, large scholarships, clothing required and provided for studies and other expenses related to studies are covered by MAL.
3. Career opportunities for students after graduation are sufficiently well developed, as there is a close connection with all institutions that require a military academy education.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Future students of study programs should be more familiar with what awaits them in their studies, how they differ from studies at other universities in order to reduce the number of student dropouts.
2. In order for the studies to be of high quality for students, more attention must be paid to the possibility of improving the competences of teachers (especially their cooperation with students), promoting cooperation with other universities.
3. Pay more attention to cooperation with the student representation in improving the quality of studies, collecting feedback from students about studies, organising meetings and cooperating with students, raising students' competences by participating in representation activities.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

The structure of the study curriculum is either modular or subject based. While both types cover the same content, modular studies have a significantly higher intensity of study. Both the curricula employed active learning methods, going beyond traditional academic knowledge and focusing on developing competencies.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on empowering students to excel in areas such as time management and prioritisation. It achieves this by adopting various active learning methods and incorporating competencies beyond academic knowledge. Notably, the curriculum stands

out by combining management courses with military training, providing future military professionals with essential leadership skills.

To evaluate the performance of cadets and students, multiple types of assessments are used, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation. Moreover, the relationship between lecturers and students fosters a welcoming environment for informal assessments and a culture of friendly feedback. This feedback culture is vital for continuous improvement and supports the overall learning process.

One distinguishing feature of this curriculum is the student-centred learning environment. Cadets/students actively participate in the organisation of the study process by serving as members of the Senate and the Study Curriculum Committee. This involvement allows them to contribute to periodic quality reviews of the study curriculum, ensuring their needs and expectations are taken into account.

To improve the study curriculum further, all cadets/students have the opportunity to provide feedback anonymously through surveys after each course/module. However, it is crucial to ensure that this feedback is acknowledged and acted upon. The collected feedback outcomes, along with any planned or implemented improvements, should be communicated back to the students, fostering a mutual feedback culture.

To enhance the learning process and methods, systematic feedback collection should be conducted from graduates of the programs, allowing for an evaluation of the qualifications gained and the overall teaching process. Higher education institutions (HEIs), whether through governmental agencies like STRATA or independently initiated efforts, gather and analyse this data.

The HEI demonstrates a strong commitment to internationalisation and student mobility through its well-developed Erasmus program. It offers numerous opportunities for exchange studies and participates in various course training and exchange programs worldwide. This not only enriches students' educational experiences but also helps develop their English language skills and fosters an international approach.

Overall, the curriculum aims to provide a comprehensive education that not only focuses on academic knowledge but also develops competencies, leadership skills, and an international perspective.

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

The study curriculum described by the military academy asserts that there are no students with special needs, given the specific physical and emotional demands placed on soldiers. Nevertheless, the institution recognizes the importance of adapting its facilities to cater to individuals with special needs, including students, teaching staff, scholars, guests, and veterans. While some adjustments have been made to the study facilities, there is an acknowledgment that further attention should be devoted to this ongoing concern. It is crucial to foster an

inclusive environment and provide appropriate support services and resources to meet the diverse needs of individuals with special needs, ensuring equal access to education and facilities within the institution.

The management of the higher education institution (HEI) assures that if a situation arises where a student or teacher with special needs enrolls, all necessary adjustments will be made to support their requirements. This commitment demonstrates the institution's willingness to address and accommodate any specific needs that may arise, ensuring equal access and opportunities for all students and teaching staff, irrespective of their individual circumstances. Moreover, the HEI provides comprehensive financial support, accommodation, and meals to all bachelor program students, setting it apart from other institutions in the market. This approach creates an environment conducive to focused studying and military training.

The HEI's provision of full financial support, accommodation, and meals for all bachelor program students distinguishes it from other higher education institutions in the market. This comprehensive support system contributes to a more favourable studying environment, where students can concentrate on their studies and military training. By alleviating financial burdens and ensuring basic needs are met, the HEI prioritises students' academic and training pursuits. This commitment to student welfare and academic success sets the institution apart and enhances the overall learning experience for its students.

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

At the subject/module level, the lecturer employs a cumulative assessment score to track the progress of cadets/students. This assessment score takes into account multiple assessment methods, including examinations. The lecturer provides constructive feedback, both written and oral, to the cadets/students regarding their learning achievements and progress. This feedback aims to guide and support their ongoing development.

At the study curriculum level, the Study Curriculum Committee monitors the progress of students. This committee considers the results of progress monitoring and gathers feedback from surveys to make decisions on improving the organisation of the study process.

The Studies Management Section, at the organisational level, is responsible for monitoring students' study progress. They collect and organise data related to study progress, survey results, and other quantitative information to assess the progress of cadets effectively.

Furthermore, students have the option to have a mentor, often with a military background, to provide support and guidance throughout their study program. However, it is noted that not all students take advantage of this opportunity, as mentors can be demanding and push students to excel even further. This mentorship option is particularly beneficial for second-year cadets who already have a certain level of understanding of the study and military training requirements.

One of the challenges discussed in the meeting is the need for better dialogue between faculty, program directors, and military management at the academy. This challenge arises because many subjects and competencies are interconnected and have common elements. Improving the communication and collaboration between these stakeholders would help ensure a cohesive and integrated learning experience for the cadets/students.

Overall, the study curriculum incorporates cumulative assessment at the subject/module level, with feedback provided to students. The Study Curriculum Committee monitors student progress and makes decisions for improvement, while the Studies Management Section collects and analyses data. Additionally, the availability of mentors and the importance of effective communication between stakeholders are highlighted.

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

Based on the information provided, graduates from Management of Defense Technologies have a 100% employment rate. Upon graduating, cadets receive the rank of lieutenant and continue to serve in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Graduates of the Management of Defense Resources study curriculum already work in the national defence system and continue to serve after completing their studies, with their higher education contributing to their careers.

The General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania has an Alumni Organization that facilitates connections between alumni and current students. Regular meetings are organised where alumni share their professional experiences, provide advice on developing important competencies for career advancement, and present successful career examples from their own backgrounds.

It is positive to note that the Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) receives feedback from military units or social partners regarding the professional readiness of graduates one year after graduation. This feedback serves as valuable information for the academy to assess the effectiveness of its programs and make improvements in the future training of cadets. By considering the feedback received, the academy can identify areas where graduates excel and areas that may require further attention or enhancement. However, it is acknowledged that the current feedback collection process may not be systematic and requires improvements. Establishing regular surveys as part of the feedback collection process would be beneficial.

Considering that some master's program graduates may already be contemplating alternative career paths, it is important for the academy to maintain connections with the labour market. To enhance attractiveness and competitiveness among management programs, the academy could invest in introducing more "non-military" or "part military/part business" cases into the master's program and incorporate real-life cases and analysis for students to consider career options beyond the military. This increased flexibility could create more opportunities for students and expand the appeal of the management programs.

Additionally, one topic of discussion has been the possibility of allowing nonmilitary background students to attend master's degree studies at the military academy. This could

potentially broaden the student pool and bring in diverse perspectives and experiences to enrich the learning environment.

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

The Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) places a strong emphasis on academic ethics, and the community shares a common understanding of these principles. The MAL Statutes, Internal Rules of Procedure, and Code of Academic Ethics outline the fundamental principles of ethical behaviour, including integrity, fairness, trust, respect, responsibility, and equality.

To ensure adherence to these principles, the academy has established an Academic Ethics Committee. The committee is responsible for promoting and overseeing the provisions of the Code, monitoring its relevance and implementation, and addressing potential breaches of academic ethics. The committee can initiate investigations independently or in response to reports, complaints, or requests regarding possible violations of academic ethics within the academic community.

In order to provide a safe and confidential reporting mechanism, the MAL has implemented a Report Box. This allows both staff and students to report perceived inappropriate behaviour or discrimination without fear of reprisal. However, it is worth noting that despite the availability of the Report Box, no cases of breach of academic and behaviour ethics were recorded in the field of study during the analysed period.

This suggests that the academic community at MAL is committed to upholding academic integrity and that no significant violations of academic ethics occurred within the field of study during the specified time frame. The absence of reported cases may indicate a strong ethical culture and a collective commitment to maintaining high academic standards within the academy.

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

The Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) has established an effective appeals procedure that aligns with "Study Planning, Curriculum Implementation, Quality Assessment, and Feedback Analysis" and Instruction No. 34-00-08.

If a student is dissatisfied with their assessment or has concerns about its objectivity, they have the right to discuss the validity of the assessment with the respective lecturer. If a compromise cannot be reached, the student has the option to submit an appeal. To handle appeals, a committee is formed based on the proposal of the Vice-Rector for Studies and Research and by order of the Commandant of the MAL. The Committee reviews the appeal and documents its decision in a protocol.

It is worth noting that there were no cases of appeals, complaints, or expulsions from the MAL for dishonesty in the field of study under review during the analysed period. This indicates that

the assessment process is generally fair, and there have been no significant issues or disputes related to academic integrity within the specified field of study.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Bachelor program that combines management studies with military training at the Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) offers a unique educational experience. This combination allows students to gain both theoretical knowledge in management and practical skills in military training. Such a program provides graduates with a distinct set of competencies that sets them apart in the job market, equipping them with leadership, decision-making, and organisational skills that are valuable in various career paths.
2. The MAL provides students with opportunities to participate in various learning activities through different study methods. This can include lectures, seminars, workshops, practical exercises, simulations, and field training. By offering a diverse range of learning activities, the academy ensures that students receive a comprehensive education that combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience. This approach enhances students' understanding and application of management concepts within a military context.
3. One of the notable advantages of the both programs (bachelor and master) at MAL is the assurance of employment. Graduates from management study curricula receive the rank of lieutenant and continue to serve in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. This employment guarantee provides a clear career path and stability for students, contributing to the attractiveness of the program.
4. The relationship between students and teachers at MAL is reported to be good. The positive rapport between students and faculty members is essential for a conducive learning environment. A healthy student-teacher relationship promotes effective communication, encourages student engagement, and fosters mentorship opportunities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. It is noted that surveys from graduates regarding the competencies gained and areas for improvement are missing. Conducting surveys among graduates can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the program and help identify strengths and areas for development.
2. Communicating survey findings back to students is important for transparency and creating a feedback loop. Additionally, sharing survey findings fosters a culture of continuous improvement and demonstrates the academy's commitment to responding to student feedback.
3. Strengthening the connection with the labour market and businesses is crucial to provide both programs' students with real-life cases and broaden their career opportunities. Collaborating with industry partners and engaging in internships, apprenticeships, or industry projects can expose students to practical challenges and allow them to apply their management skills in real-world contexts.

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

A list of permanent teaching staff of the field is provided, with information about number, and years of experience in relation to scientific, didactic and professional experiences.

The number of teaching staff to the number of students is 1:5.25 in first cycle studies and 1:2,5 in second cycle studies. This is an adequate ratio. The total number of teachers is small which makes the education vulnerable to turnover of teaching staff. In the SER, it is stated that the turnover has stabilised in recent years and that MAL have developed a plan for renewal of teaching staff.

The scientific competences of the teaching staff are evaluated through a list of publications. It demonstrates that the teachers publish in relevant subject-areas for their teaching and have recent publication activity. The published articles are not in high-end journals, for example AJG 3, 4 and 4*, and there is a potential for improving the quality of research outputs among teaching staff. Senior management states at the site visit that research quality is one of three current prioritised areas for quality improvements. Despite this, the institution does not have an explicit research strategy with clear goals and action plans for how to increase the quality of the research outputs.

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)

Mobility takes place either through Erasmus+, Emilio or as individual missions funded by the academy. The process for applications are well-described and well-structured.

The number of exchanges for teaching and for training is low but increasing in the five-year period, COVID-19-years excepted. In 2018 the total number of exchanges was 8 and in 2022 it was 22. At the site visit senior management states that MAL is attractive for foreign country academics, and that they have more applications for incoming exchange than applications for outgoing exchange.

Structurally, an international semester is coordinated across academies through the Emilio programme.

All in all, conditions for teaching staff academic mobility are adequate, but with a potential for increasing the interest for outgoing exchange.

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

It is compulsory for new lecturers to attend training and seminars in didactics and it is compulsory for all teaching staff to periodically update knowledge and skills over a five-year period.

MAL has a Leadership and Methodological Training Centre which organises the lecture-training courses. At the site visit, teaching staff confirms that they are offered continuous professional development and that funding is available for this.

Formal work-load distribution between research and teaching is in place. The teaching staff confirms at the site visit that they have the dedicated time for research as stated in the regulations, but they do experience it is a challenge to accommodate ambitions in both teaching and research. This is not uncommon in higher education institutions.

Teaching staff is organised in research groups instead of departments. Research groups are supposed to increase research collaboration within an area of research, but the entire group is small and everyone is physically located in the same building and knows each other. The research groups are allocated a small amount of funds for competence development, conferences and visits and for publishing. Based on the interviews with teaching staff and administrative staff at the site visit, the research groups do not seem to be of high value in order to increase quality in research and teaching. On the other hand, research collaboration does not seem to be a problem, which is also evidenced by a newly published book, authored by a large group of the teaching staff, across the research groups.

All in all, conditions for competence development are adequate and organised through a training centre. Teaching staff regularly attend courses and offerings organised by the training centre.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Small, well-integrated team of teaching staff with high level of collaboration among team members.
2. High level of structured processes and procedures which increase transparency in competence development and international exchange.
3. High interest for incoming exchange of teaching staff.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Research outputs are of mediocre level of quality.
2. Small number of teaching staff makes the programmes vulnerable to turnover. Replacement of scientific and didactically qualified teaching staff may be a challenge.
3. Low level of outgoing international exchange - but increasing.
4. Low level of international research collaboration.

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

The Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) is equipped with sufficient material and technical facilities to effectively conduct university studies, military training, and non-formal education. The auditoriums at the academy vary in size and are designed for various purposes, including mass gatherings, streaming and learning classrooms, specialised auditoriums for foreign languages, computers, and design thinking rooms. This ensures that students have appropriate spaces for different types of activities and learning experiences.

In terms of information resources, the MAL has sufficient and relevant systems in place to support successful study processes. These systems include Moodle, cloud.vu.lt, and Edina, which provide digital platforms for learning, collaboration, and accessing educational materials. These resources contribute to the effective delivery of the curriculum and support student learning.

The MAL Library serves as the library for the entire national defence system, providing strong support for study programs in the fields of national security and defence, as well as for the academy's study curricula. The library continuously updates its resources to meet the evolving needs of the studies, and sufficient funding is allocated annually to ensure the availability of relevant and up-to-date materials.

However, it is worth mentioning that despite having adequate facilities and resources, the infrastructure of the academy appears to be outdated and, in some cases, in need of renovation and modernization. Updating the infrastructure would not only improve the physical environment but also enhance the overall learning experience for students and create a more modern and conducive setting for academic and military activities.

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

During the period under review, the Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) has completed several infrastructure projects. These include the renovation of auditoriums, the sports complex, and dormitories. Additionally, a reading room has been installed in the library, and automation equipment has been implemented.

The completion of these infrastructure projects demonstrates the academy's commitment to enhancing its facilities and providing an improved learning and living environment for students. Renovated auditoriums, sports facilities, and dormitories contribute to a more modern and comfortable setting for academic and extracurricular activities. The installation of a reading room and automation equipment in the library indicates a focus on improving access to resources and enhancing the learning experience for students.

Furthermore, the National Defence System Planning Guide 2022-2031 provides guidelines for the development and implementation of additional infrastructure projects at the MAL. While specific information regarding these projects and their funding is not available as the document is non-public, the existence of a long-term planning guide underscores the academy's commitment to ongoing infrastructure development and improvement.

All in all Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) has recently completed several infrastructure projects, improving various facilities, which reflect the academy's commitment to enhancing its overall environment and providing better resources for its students. Furthermore, the existence of a long-term planning guide demonstrates MAL's dedication to continuous infrastructure development and improvement.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) is well-equipped with all the necessary resources to effectively organise the learning process. This includes various facilities and amenities that support different aspects of education and training.
2. The ongoing improvements at the academy are systematically carried out and aligned with the budget plans for 2022. This indicates that there is a strategic approach to infrastructure development and improvement, ensuring that the academy's resources are allocated efficiently and effectively.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Continuous improvements in infrastructure are necessary, particularly in areas such as bathrooms, sport rooms, and the cafeteria. Modernising these facilities can contribute to a more comfortable and convenient environment for students.
2. Arranging more hybrid teaching rooms that reflect the complexity of cadets' daily routines and potential force majeure situations is essential. This flexibility is crucial, considering the demanding nature of cadets' schedules and the potential need for rapid adaptation in unforeseen circumstances.
3. Offering higher computer mobility to students would expand the possibility of hybrid lectures. Providing laptops or other portable devices to students allows them to participate in hybrid lectures and access educational resources from various locations. This increased mobility can enable cadets to engage in remote learning while maintaining their military obligations.

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

The management and decision-making structure of the curriculum at HEI is appropriate for the size and specificity of the institution. The internal quality assurance system and decision-making structure have been redesigned in 2019, resulting in well-regulated processes and clear lines of responsibility.

The quality assurance system operates at three levels: subject/module, study curriculum, and institutional level. Adequate processes ensure the quality of subject/module development, with lecturers being responsible for subject development and the Study Curriculum Committee assisting in updating subjects based on curriculum objectives and feedback.

Study curriculum development and quality assurance processes involve the Study Curriculum Committee, chaired by the Head of the Study Curriculum. Manuals have been developed to ensure quality and improvement of the curriculum. The Head of the Study Curriculum plays a vital role in monitoring curriculum results and module coherence.

At the institutional level, the quality of studies is ensured through periodic monitoring of the internal quality assurance system, analysis of feedback, and improvement decisions made in relevant meetings. The Senate provides recommendations to the Commandant on significant curriculum changes or proposals for new curricula.

The evaluation of study curriculum performance occurs at regular intervals. Feedback from cadets, students, and lecturers is collected and analysed to propose solutions for improvement. The Secretariat of the Commandant prepares feedback reports with recommendations, which are discussed and acted upon to enhance study module performance.

HEI strategy for 2018-2024 prioritises the quality of institutional activities and studies. The Academy's close collaboration with partner institutions, particularly VilniusTech and LMA, contributes to the study curriculum's relevance and effectiveness.

To enhance the study curriculum's attractiveness and quality partnerships with the Lithuanian Armed Forces (LAF) and other institutions are maintained. Guest presentations, lectures, internships, and thesis-related information are delivered by LAF partners and companies from various fields, including transport and logistics and research and innovation.

Overall, HEI is committed to continuous improvement and maintains a structured and regulated internal quality assurance system to ensure the high quality of its study curriculum and institutional activities.

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

HEI follows PROC 38, "Management of Partnership Activities.", which provides responsibilities and authority to the Study and Research Management Group to develop activities related to HEI missions.

MoD and representatives of the Lithuanian Armed Forces are highly involved in HEI activities. They are responsible for allocating and approving the budget and staffing list, admission rules, and quotas of cadets and students. Regular meetings with these stakeholders discuss HEI contribution to training military specialists for the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

Representatives from the MoD and the Lithuanian Armed Forces participate in various stages, from curriculum development to the defence of final theses and curriculum development committees. Nevertheless, HEI recognizes the need for more measurable and comparable learning outcomes aligned with the requirements of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Military Officer Profession (SQF-MILOF).

Expectations expressed by social stakeholders are evaluated by the administration, assessed for implementation costs, and then integrated into the study curriculum by the Study Curriculum Committee.

HEI has a formal system for involving cadets and students in internal quality assurance through the activities of the Cadet Council. Student representation is ensured in the Senate (20% of members) and two out of six members of the Study Program Committees are cadets of the MDT curriculum. Graduating students become representatives of the MoD and the Lithuanian Armed Forces, participating in further quality management of the curriculum.

Lecturers delegate their members to HEI Senate and other collegiate institutions, further contributing to decision-making processes. Faculty members express a strong sense of mission and importance in their work at HEI, as indicated in the meeting with teaching staff.

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

Information on study curricula is publicly available and relevant information on studies, evaluations, improvement initiatives, planned investments, and management processes is hosted on a closed military network, which ensures that relevant stakeholders have easy access to the information.

Study field collects, compiles, and analyses comprehensive information related to the study process, including enrolment results, session results, academic leave, termination and return to studies, and more. Feedback from students, graduates, and lecturers is an integral part of the assessment process. Students provide feedback every semester, while graduates share their input 1-2-3 years after graduation. Periodic staff surveys are conducted to gather feedback from lecturers. Additionally, qualitative feedback is obtained through meetings between lecturers and the head of the curriculum each semester, as well as meetings between student groups and the curriculum head after each session.

All feedback from students, lecturers, and alumni is shared with the curriculum committee and summarised for the administration. Based on this information, decisions are made to improve courses, the curriculum, and the learning environment. Lecturers receive immediate notification of student feedback after each module and semester, keeping them informed about the results.

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

Students of the study field have generally positive opinions about the quality of their studies. However, it is noted that cadets tend to be more critical, possibly due to the realisation that more time needs to be dedicated to studying rather than focusing solely on military subjects. Disappointment at not being able to pursue desired studies at VilniusTech may also contribute to their critical views.

Student feedback regarding their studies is considered valuable and is discussed in the meetings of the Study Curriculum Committees. Students appreciate the professionalism of the lecturers, the acquisition of new knowledge, and the practical skills provided, which they recognize as valuable not only in military service but also in civilian sectors.

However, students have identified some weaknesses in the curriculum. These weaknesses include challenges related to writing assignments within time constraints, the volume of assignments during independent studies, and the lack of study literature in Lithuanian. The aim is to address these concerns and ensure continuous improvement in the quality of studies.

Surveys from graduates regarding the competencies gained and areas for improvement are currently missing. Conducting surveys among graduates can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the program and help identify strengths and areas for development. It is important to establish a feedback loop by communicating survey findings back to students, promoting transparency and emphasising the academy's commitment to addressing student feedback.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Appropriate management and decision-making structure: The curriculum management and decision-making structure at HEI is suitable for the size and specificity of the institution. This ensures efficient processes and clear lines of responsibility, allowing for effective curriculum development and quality assurance.
2. Redesigned internal quality assurance system: The internal quality assurance system and decision-making structure have been redesigned in 2019. This redesign has resulted in well-regulated processes that ensure the quality of the curriculum and provide a framework for continuous improvement. Clear responsibilities and procedures are in place to monitor and enhance the study curriculum.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Need for more measurable and comparable learning outcomes: HEI acknowledges the need for more measurable and comparable learning outcomes aligned with the requirements of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Military Officer Profession. This indicates a potential weakness in the current system's ability to effectively assess and measure student learning outcomes.
2. Challenges with writing assignments and study literature: Students have identified challenges related to writing assignments within time constraints, the volume of assignments during independent studies, and the lack of study literature in Lithuanian. These weaknesses in the curriculum may affect the overall learning experience and need to be addressed to ensure a high-quality educational environment.
3. Lack of surveys among graduates: Currently, surveys among graduates regarding the competencies gained and areas for improvement are missing. Gathering feedback from graduates can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the program and help identify strengths and areas for development. Implementing graduate surveys would enhance the institution's understanding of the curriculum's impact and inform necessary improvements.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practical Application and Experiential Learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate more hands-on exercises, simulations, case studies, and real-world projects into the curriculum. ● Provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in practical contexts. ● Bridge the gap between theory and practice by offering practical experiences. 2. Industry Partnerships and Guest Lecturers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen partnerships with industry organisations, defence institutions, and professionals relevant to the program. ● Invite guest lecturers to share their expertise, industry insights, and best practices. ● Arrange workshops and mentoring opportunities to provide students with exposure to real-world challenges and industry trends. 3. Integration of Emerging Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regularly update the curriculum to reflect emerging topics and trends in management. ● Incorporate subjects such as sustainability, digital transformation, data analytics, strategic foresight, and ethical decision-making. ● Ensure the program remains relevant and prepares students for future leadership roles. 4. Soft Skills Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide opportunities for students to develop effective leadership, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and critical thinking skills. ● Offer leadership workshops, communication training, and teamwork exercises. ● Emphasise the importance of soft skills in complex and dynamic military environments. 5. International Exposure and Exchange Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen partnerships with international defence academies and organisations. ● Facilitate study abroad opportunities and cross-cultural collaboration. ● Promote intercultural competence and a broader understanding of international security dynamics. 6. Continuous Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement regular assessments and feedback sessions throughout the program. ● Provide individual feedback and self-assessment tools for students. ● Support students' progress, self-awareness, and engagement in their learning journey. <p>7. Alumni Engagement and Mentorship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish an active alumni network and mentorship program. ● Engage successful alumni to provide guidance, support, and career advice. ● Organise alumni events, networking sessions, and mentorship programs to foster a sense of community and facilitate knowledge sharing. <p>8. Emphasis on Ethical Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrate modules or courses dedicated to ethical leadership. ● Address ethical dilemmas and moral decision-making frameworks. ● Promote discussions on values, integrity, and accountability in the military context.
<p>Links between science (art) and studies</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop a structured system that facilitates and encourages the involvement of students and teaching staff in research activities. This system could include clear guidelines and procedures so that students and teaching staff have a better understanding of how to engage in research activities and contribute to the generation of new knowledge. 2. To organise a broader range of research-related events, such as workshops, seminars, and symposiums, to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and networking among students and teaching staff. 3. To maximise the impact of research conducted by students and teaching staff, a strong emphasis should be given on disseminating and publicising research results. 4. To increase research collaboration platforms, like research clusters, interdisciplinary research groups where researchers with shared research interests can come together, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects. 5. To support research mentorship and guidance where experienced researchers can serve as mentors, providing guidance, support, and expertise to those involved in research activities.
<p>Student admission and support</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Future students of study programs should be more familiar with what awaits them in their studies, how they differ from studies at other universities in order to reduce the number of student dropouts.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. In order for the studies to be of high quality for students, more attention must be paid to the possibility of improving the competences of teachers (especially their cooperation with students), promoting cooperation with other universities. 3. Pay more attention to cooperation with the student representation in improving the quality of studies, collecting feedback from students about studies, organising meetings and cooperating with students, raising students' competences by participating in representation activities.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To implement a systematic approach for the feedback collection process from graduates (regular surveys. Conducting surveys among graduates can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the program and help identify strengths and areas for development. 2. To communicate survey findings back to students is important for transparency and creation of a feedback loop. 3. To strengthen the connection with the labour market and businesses as it is important to provide students with real-life cases and broaden their career opportunities. 4. To provide annual training to all mentors in order to gain best practices for coaching and mentoring of students.
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase number and quality of research publications in leading international journals, for example through establishing incentives and more support for high end publications. 2. Increase interest for outgoing exchange of teaching staff, which can also contribute to more international research collaborations.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue improving infrastructure is necessary, particularly in areas such as bathrooms, sport rooms, and the cafeteria. Modernising these facilities can contribute to a more comfortable and convenient environment for students. 2. To broaden hybrid teaching and learning possibilities. This flexibility is crucial, considering the demanding nature of cadets' schedules and the potential need for rapid adaptation in unforeseen circumstances. 3. To offer higher computer mobility to students. Providing laptops or other portable devices to students allows them to participate in hybrid lectures and access educational resources from various locations. This increased mobility can enable cadets to engage in remote learning while maintaining their military obligations.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop clear and measurable learning outcomes for each subject/module that align with the SQF-MILOF. 2. Implement assessment methods that allow for effective measurement and comparison of student learning outcomes.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Evaluate the workload and time constraints associated with writing assignments and consider adjustments to ensure a balanced workload for students.4. Develop a comprehensive survey Implement a systematic process for conducting the graduate surveys, ensuring a high response rate and representativeness to gather feedback from graduates regarding their experiences, competencies gained, and areas for improvement.5. Establish a feedback loop by communicating survey findings back to students, faculty, and relevant stakeholders to demonstrate transparency and commitment to addressing student feedback.
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V. SUMMARY

The Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) offers a comprehensive program that integrates science and technology, collaborates with defence institutions, combines management studies with military training, provides diverse learning activities, offers employment guarantees, fosters strong student-teacher relationships, boasts a well-integrated teaching staff, maintains efficient curriculum management, implements a redesigned internal quality assurance system, and strategically develops its infrastructure. The Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) stands out in four key aspects:

Integration of Science and Technology: MAL places a strong emphasis on incorporating the latest advancements in science and technology. This ensures that students are equipped with cutting-edge knowledge and skills, preparing them for scientific and artistic activities at the forefront of their field.

Collaboration with Defense Institutions and International Associations: MAL actively collaborates with defence institutions and international associations in the field of national security and defence. This collaboration promotes knowledge exchange and cooperation with experts from different countries, enriching the research and academic environment at the academy.

Unique Combination of Management Studies and Military Training: MAL offers a distinctive educational experience by combining management studies with military training. This integration equips students with theoretical knowledge in management and practical skills in military training, providing them with a valuable set of competencies applicable in various career paths.

Diverse Learning Activities: MAL provides students with a wide range of learning activities, including lectures, seminars, workshops, practical exercises, simulations, and field training. This diverse approach ensures that students receive a comprehensive education that combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, enhancing their understanding and application of management concepts in a military context.

To enhance the effectiveness of the study program, the Expert Panel recommends the following interconnected strategies. Firstly, develop measurable and comparable learning outcomes aligned with the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Military Officer Profession to ensure effective assessment of student progress. Address challenges with writing assignments and study literature by revising the curriculum to improve the overall learning experience. Continuously improve infrastructure, including bathrooms, sport rooms, and the cafeteria, to create a better learning environment.

For greater flexibility and technological advancement, arrange hybrid teaching rooms and provide portable devices to enable remote learning and accommodate cadets' schedules. Enhance research quality and student involvement through effective engagement of teaching staff and students in research activities.

To address staffing challenges, build partnerships with industry and defence institutions to enhance teaching expertise and ensure teaching staff stability. Promote outgoing international exchange and research collaboration to enrich the academic environment and stay relevant.

Additionally, consider three interconnected arguments to comprehensively improve the study program. Achieve synergy between Academic Studies, Military Training, and Commander/Leader Education by integrating these areas more systematically. Incorporate practical material into the curriculum through closer collaboration between academic departments, military institutions, and social partners. Promote academic mobility by converting more courses into EMILIO modules, fostering cross-institutional learning experiences and international engagement.

By actively promoting its strengths and implementing the recommended improvements, the Military Academy of Lithuania (MAL) has the potential to create a dynamic, integrated, and engaging learning environment that effectively prepares students for future leadership roles in the military officer profession. This concerted effort will further enhance MAL's reputation as a leading institution in developing competent and responsible military leaders.

At the end of this report we, the Expert Panel, would like to express our sincere appreciation to the entire team at General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania for the comprehensive and substantive Self-Evaluation Report (SER), as well as for the warm welcome and the engaged discussions during our site visit.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Prof. Dr. Thomas Bartscher

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