



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of Public Health

at Klaipėda University

Expert panel:

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3. **Dr. Eleanor J Hothersall**, *academic member*;
4. **Ms Irena Taraškevičienė**, *representative of social partners*;
5. **Mr Ömer Faruk Sönmez**, *student representative*.

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Public Health</i>	<i>Public Health Education</i>
State code	6121GX018	6211GX019
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First	Second
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years)	Full-time (2 years)
Credit volume	180	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Health Sciences	Master of Health Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	University Bachelor's degree
Registration date of the study programme	2 August 2001	5 June 2014

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The expert panel conducted the site visit to the HEI on 23 October 2023.

1. Prof. Dr. Agneta Yngve (Sweden), panel chairperson - academic member, Professor Emeritus at the Department of Nutrition, dietetics and food studies, Uppsala University;
2. Prof. Dr. Róza Ádány (Hungary), panel member - academic member, Professor and founding Dean of the Faculty of Public Health of the University of Debrecen;
3. Dr. Eleanor J Hothersall (Scotland), panel member - academic member, Head of MBChB (Programme Director) at University of Dundee Medical School;
4. Ms Irena Taraškevičienė (Lithuania), panel member - representative of social partners, the Head of the Public Health Safety Department at the National Public Health Centre under the Ministry of Health;
5. Mr Ömer Faruk Sönmez (Turkey), panel member - student representative, first-year Master's student of Public Health at the University of Sheffield, School of Health and Related Research; member of ESU Quality Assurance Student Experts Pool.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Course descriptions and outcomes for the first cycle programme in public health, sent as a folder including files for each of the course modules.
2.	Course descriptions and outcomes for the second cycle programme in public health, sent as a folder including files for each of the course modules.
3.	Examples of final theses.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD STUDIES AT KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

Klaipeda University (KU) is a University in the Western region of Lithuania. It has three faculties (Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Faculty of Marine Technologies and Natural Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences) and two institutes (Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology, Institute of Marine Research). The Faculty of Health Sciences of KU has been implementing 7 undergraduate and 8 postgraduate study programmes in eight fields of study. In 2022 there were 0 matriculated students for the undergraduate public health programme and 10 matriculated students for the postgraduate public health education programme.

KU has a focus on marine sciences and studies, and Baltic Region research. The Public Health (PH) courses are part of a wider range of eight fields of study, and all postgraduate study programmes in Western Lithuania are run by KU. There is an intention to use EU-CONEXUS to develop programmes and collaborations. KU also has a Health Research Scientific Centre, which is part of the Faculty of Health Sciences and has a close collaboration with Klaipeda city and district health care institutions.

A previous external evaluation of these programmes was carried out in 2010, and a number of recommendations were made at that time. There is documentation within the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to indicate how these were addressed.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the *Public Health* study field at Klaipėda University is given a **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	2
3.	Student admission and support	2
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
Total:		19

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

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

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

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

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

The *second cycle* of *Public Health* study field at Klaipėda University is given a **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	2
3.	Student admission and support	2
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
Total:		19

*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. AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND CURRICULUM

Aims, learning outcomes, and curriculum are evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market

(1) Factual situation

The Public Health programmes are related to the updated projections (STRATA) from 2021 regarding the need for public health professionals. The programmes have been designed in line with the Lithuanian Health Programme 2014-2025. The strategic aim of the study programme requires all sectors of the economy and communities to work together for the health of the country's population. There is a reference to marine science and Baltic research as well as to the EU-funded EU CONEXUS (The European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability), a network which connects universities in 9 countries, and to a Health Research Scientific centre in the region. The university states that the public health study program focuses on the health needs of the ageing society and the community and on the search for evidence-based measures to meet the needs. The rationality of the number of study programmes is based on the demand for specialists in Western Lithuania and employment opportunities. Learning outcomes and quality planned for in the study programmes are based on analysis of jobs offered to public health specialists, requirements of employers for the skills and competencies of graduates and input from students for the improvement of the quality of study programmes.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The programmes build on the boost for public health professionals that came out from the COVID pandemic and are related to the WHO "one health" dimension related to the interrelated areas of personal and community health. The aims and outcomes of the study programmes were built on a holistic approach to public health, climate change research, as well as demands from Public Health bodies and kindergartens. The current ongoing health care reform is guiding the university in regard to training PH specialists to be employed in future primary health centres. There are 3 medical doctors in the senior management team, who provide good strategic input. The links to the mentioned EU project EU CONEXUS when it comes to public health studies are not totally clear as Klaipeda University targets the same public health labour market as other universities but in the region of Western Lithuania. Public health study programmes at KU need specifics to this coastal region in respect of the industries, engineering and recreational facilities common to this region which are not currently addressed. Study programmes are not specialised by the area of the public health activity (lifestyle medicine, environmental health, public health promotion, etc.) and the graduates possibly will not be

eligible for jobs as lifestyle medicine specialists who according to the legal requirements have to graduate from a lifestyle medicine study programme.

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

(1) Factual situation

The programmes in Public Health at Klaipėda are developed from the context of social, demographic and economic aspects of health, which is the basis of the uniqueness of the training programmes in Public Health at Klaipėda University compared to other universities that also teach general courses similar to medical study programmes.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The KU has its strength in its marine research, the connection to the EU CONEXUS where great possibilities exist for the exchange of teachers and students as well as joint research. A Centre of Excellence is under planning, which will ensure connections between engineering and Public Health. It is not totally clear how this might impact future research and design of course programmes in the area of Public Health especially taking into account that major attention is given to cover the demand of municipal Public Health Bureaus.

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

(1) Factual situation

The programmes in Public Health have been developed in accordance with national laws and regulations, including the decision of the Health Sciences and Sport Study Groups Committee in 2022.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The programmes in Public Health have been developed in accordance with national laws and regulations, as can be seen in Tables 1 and 2 below. Bachelor's study programme, however, is also offered in a 'shortened' study mode with the scope of the mode being 100 ECTS. While the duration of studies may be shortened due to the recognition of specific modules from prior studies according to the existing requirements regarding the procedure for crediting the results of partial studies (order dated August 6, 2020, No. V-1174), the duration of the registered programme under state code 6121GX018 is 180 ECTS and should not be declared or advertised as shorter, as is currently being done, for example, on KU's website.

Table No 1. Public Health Study programmes' compliance to general requirements for first cycle study programmes (Bachelor's).

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	120
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	60
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	18
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 15 ECTS	15
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	>20%
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	>30%

Table No 2. Public Health Study programmes' compliance to general requirements for second study programmes (Master's).

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	60
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	18
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30
Contact hours	No less than 10 % of learning	Varies by module but >10% for all
Individual learning	No less than 50 % of learning	>50%

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER states that the aim is to ensure the application of theoretical knowledge in practice, and objective assessment of learning outcomes, with the use of cumulative assessment. Learning outcomes are assessed by interim assessments, with the final grade calculated from the interim assessments and examinations. Study methods are very varied and cross a wide

range of modalities, ranging from traditional study methods (lectures, seminars, laboratory work), and problem-based learning (tutorials, discussions, brainstorming, independent study), to distance or blended learning, or virtual study.

Students are given the opportunity to participate in decisions on the methods and criteria for assessing study achievements, the number and scope of assignments. The correlation between learning outcomes, study methods most used and assessment methods were provided in the Annexes of the SER. The School is currently looking to develop teaching in English.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Both programmes appear to comply with the National requirements for the first and second cycle (Bachelor's and Master's). Taught and assessed content is determined by an ongoing evaluation of the needs of the public health workforce, taking into account the various frameworks which determine necessary content for public health specialists. The modules and courses appropriately offered an increase in complexity across both the Bachelor's and Master's programmes. Assessment methods are not outlined in detail (apart from the thesis), however seem appropriate to the taught content.

Developing teaching in English would be valuable to increase international opportunities but it should be noted that students did not think this was attractive for them.

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

(1) Factual situation

The first cycle programme contains 32 modules specific to Public Health, plus modules on Professional English, Philosophy and Professional Language. This totals 180 ECTS credits over 6 semesters. A wide range of public health topics are covered, including 2 modules on Epidemiology & Biostatistics, modules on Economics & Management, Body Image and Public Health, and Social Policy in Lithuania. There are specific modules titled Public Health Practice which run in Semesters 2, 3 & 4. Selective Speciality Subjects, which are optional, are listed below (3.1.6). The thesis is 15 credits.

There is an additional mode of the Bachelor's programme in the first cycle titled "half time studies" which offers 100 ECTS credits over 4 semesters. The modules taken in this course appear to be the same as those undertaken by full-time students. In light of the insufficiently clear information provided, both from the SER and the on-site visit, the expert panel finds it unfeasible to definitively confirm the attainment of learning outcomes through this mode of study. Consequently, there is an imperative need for a more explicit articulation of the governance and implementation of the half time study mode in the first study cycle.

The second cycle consists of 18 modules over 2 semesters totalling 120 ECTS credits. There is a range of topics, across Public Health (for example, Research Methodology and Management), education (such as Health Education Theories and Modelling), and a general medical module on Common Health Problems, First Aid and Prevention. Optional modules are listed below (3.1.6). The thesis is 30 credits.

Detailed information about learning outcomes and assessment was provided for each module, in addition to overall documents outlining the programme.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Students felt that there was a lack of teaching on: Language skills, Public speaking, IT skills, Project management skills, First aid skills and Public health indicator estimation skills. These were also not clearly identifiable in the content information received.

Taught content is appropriate and mapped to relevant subject areas. Competencies are to some extent developed across the programmes though this could be more clearly articulated. In particular, as Public Health moves towards an explicitly competency based approach, these should be built into module design, as well as embedded in school strategy.

Clarity is required regarding the half time studies option (100 ECTS). The panel understands that the additional credits may come from accreditation of prior learning, but this should be made more obvious in the course documentation and publicly available information.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER states that 9% of credits are student selected elements, with the remainder all core content. There is some flexibility in the form of a part-time option (see above), and students can choose to take more or fewer modules in a given semester. Optional modules listed for the first cycle programme are: Addiction (Drug Addiction) Prevention in Community; Public Health Specialist Activities in Community; Basics of Healthy Lifestyle; Management of the Establishment of Blood Donation; Introduction into Non-Remunerated Blood Donation.

Optional modules listed for the second cycle programme are: Primary Health Care and Community Health; Addiction Prevention in Community; Active and Healthy Ageing; Health Care Quality Management; Educational Leadership (Coaching).

(2) Expert panel judgement

There are limited opportunities to personalise studies - students select some optional modules from a list, but otherwise all students are following the same programme. It is noted that one of

the first cycle optional modules has a significant overlap with one of the second cycle programmes (B000B051 and B680M101), which further limits choice for students progressing from Bachelor's to Master's in the institution. Additional opportunities such as ERASMUS are poorly taken up by students, who perceive significant barriers, particularly around language, part-time employment and finance. Increasing teaching in English may address some of these issues.

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

(1) Factual situation

Sample theses were provided for review during the visit.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Thesis topics were appropriate. As all theses were written in Lithuanian, only the abstracts could be reviewed. These seemed to be written to a good standard.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Programmes are continuously adapted to include new and relevant topics.
2. Emphasis on lifestyle medicine, when fully developed according to the legal requirements is appropriate for new workforce requirements in Lithuania.
3. The School has strong links with environmental health studies (through marine science).

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Study programmes are not specialised by the area of employment in the Public Health sector.
2. Lack of information about governance and implementation of the half time programme in the first study cycle; an inaccurate representation of a 180-credit programme also being offered as a 100-credit programme under the same code (6121GX018).
3. The strong links with marine science, climate change and sustainability could be emphasised more strongly in teaching in Public Health.
4. Students have very limited opportunities to study in English and do not seem to see any value in internationalisation.
5. Student choice is very limited with only 9% of teaching time being optional.
6. Students felt that there was a lack of teaching on: Language skills, Public speaking, IT skills, Project management skills, First aid skills and Public health indicator estimation skills.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

Links between science (art) and study activities are evaluated according to the following indicators:

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

(1) Factual situation

The priorities for Public Health research are identified in the SER as follows: 1) Promoting a culture of healthy lifestyles and health literacy; 2) The impact of environmental and social factors on health inequalities, assessing the costs and benefits of preventive interventions in different sectors, and anticipating and promoting change and action to develop a safe and secure environment at regional and national levels; 3) Diseases and conditions of major Public Health importance (cancer, heart disease, mental health, obesity, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, tuberculosis and HIV, trauma and ageing) and management of their risk factors. Research is carried out in collaboration with researchers of the other KU faculties/institutes and foreign academic partners from universities in Latvia, Armenia and Russia.

During the evaluation period, 25 publications were published in international journals with citation factors and indexed in the Web of Science database. In addition, it is also mentioned that the number of publications increased from year to year, from 2 in 2019 to 10 in 2021.

The SER acknowledges that “To improve the planning and accountability of faculty activities, a more systematic planning of research activities and the introduction of interim reporting on the achievement of scientific results in departments and fields of study is to be implemented.”

(2) Expert panel judgement

There is no list of publications in the SER for the evaluation period. As Annex 5 on teaching staff shows, among the three most important publications per teacher over the last five years, there are no publications in international peer-reviewed journals in which a teacher in the public health field is the first or last/corresponding author. A significant number of publications are conference proceedings/abstracts, and the communications in which staff members are first authors were published in local/national journals.

During the site visit, teachers said that targets for publications are set at the national level, but not properly identified at the level of university/Public Health teaching staff.

The expert panel agrees with the SER’s statement that “to improve the planning and accountability of faculty activities, a more systematic planning of research activities and the introduction of interim reporting on the achievement of scientific results in departments and fields of study is to be implemented.”

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

(1) Factual situation

In order to increase students' interest and to respond to the research priorities identified by the World Health Organisation and the Lithuanian Health Strategy for 2014-2025, which both focus on the adverse health effects of lifestyle factors (such as unhealthy diet, smoking, alcohol consumption and physical inactivity), students are motivated to participate in initiatives to increase Public Health literacy, such as the European Public Health Week (students participated in the EUPHA international workshops Students' Safety Talks in 2021 and 2022, as well as in the Youth for Change Month events).

(2) Expert panel judgement

Participation of the staff and students in international Public Health initiatives is highly supported by the expert panel. The UN Agenda 2030, Decade of Healthy Ageing and the related, as well as other WHO strategic documents should be an inner part of the Public Health curriculum. Today's most pressing emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases must be given due weight in training. In addition, scientific papers on the biggest challenges of Public Health and their possible solutions, including environmental aspects and sustainability, should also be inserted into the study programmes, in alignment with the research focus of the KU.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students are involved in applied research activities and conduct research on topics relevant to the Public Health themes developed at KU. Students use the research data to prepare their final theses and present them at national and international scientific conferences organised by KU.

During the evaluation period, the number of students presenting reports at the annual international scientific-practical conference organised by the Faculty of Health Sciences increased. As stated in the SER in the academic year 2019-2020, 1.22% of students participated in the conference, while in the academic year 2021-2022, the number of students presenting their research at the conference increased to 2.95% compared to the total number of students in the Public Health study programmes. The annual KU conference is followed by a conference publication, which also publishes the work of Public Health students.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The proportion of students participating in research projects and attending scientific conferences is very low - even more so in absolute terms, given the low number of students overall. Students' involvement in research projects is limited to local surveys/projects.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The University offers opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation.
2. Public Health priorities are well-defined in the KU research strategy.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The need for a more organised Public Health scientific activity is unmet.
2. The major research areas of KU are not represented in the publication list.
3. The participation of Public Health teachers in international research projects is sporadic.
4. A very small proportion of students are visibly involved in research.
5. Public Health staff members are rarely, if ever, authors in a qualified position (first or last/corresponding authors) in publications.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

Student admission and support are evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process

(1) Factual situation

Klaipėda University demonstrates a standardised student selection and admission process, aligning with national regulations. Information is disseminated to prospective students through both the KU website and the Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for General Admission (LAMA BPO). SER provides data on admissions, including applicant numbers and agreements signed, distinguishing between state-funded and non-state-funded positions. Despite the trends in student interest and programme competitiveness being acknowledged, the admission and application rates decreased in the last 3 years.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Although KU's efforts in recruiting more and better students are evident, the University has not tested the effectiveness of these efforts and was unable to improve the admission rates, which are low. It is recommended to evaluate the student recruitment activities and introduce a new strategy to address the admission rates.

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

(1) Factual situation

KU has a procedure for recognising foreign qualifications, partial studies, and non-formal and informal learning, as detailed in the SER. KU recognises foreign qualifications based on national regulations along with the decisions made by the Head of the Department and Dean of the Faculty. The institution also employs the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to facilitate student mobility, signing Erasmus+ agreements, and transferring study credits. Furthermore, KU aligns with EU practices for recognising non-formal and informal learning, though specific data on the recognition of competencies over the last three years is not provided in the report.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Recognition of outside qualifications is rarely demanded by students, but still students should be better informed and encouraged about possible ways of getting their prior learning recognised. SER indicated that the decisions regarding recognition of outside qualifications are made by the Head of the Department and the Dean of the Faculty. To make the recognition process more evidence-based and transparent, it is recommended that the decisions of recognition should be taken by an expert committee rather than by selected individuals.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

(1) Factual situation

KU promotes academic mobility with a focus on the Erasmus+ programme. The university initiates numerous bilateral cooperation agreements and participates in the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), offering support services to incoming students. However, KU notes a decline in student participation in the Erasmus+ Study Abroad programme, attributed to concerns about state-funded study positions, language skills, and employment. The Covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical situations have also impacted student mobility. KU emphasises information dissemination through seminars and competitions, with the goal of supporting students in their international endeavours. While KU's efforts in fostering mobility are evident, there has been no student taking part in exchange in the last 3 years.

(2) Expert panel judgement

International mobility remains a weakness for the University with the potential reason being that Lithuanian students are working or have other commitments as well as having language barriers. Also, there are no incoming students, and no blended mobilities taking place. It is strongly recommended that KU increases the number of international agreements, ensures that there is no credit loss in mobilities and motivates students to mobilise for at least summer internships over shorter periods. KU needs an internationalisation strategy and needs

assessment in order to address this issue, not the least encompassing the language barriers of the students and academic staff.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER underscores the support services available to students, covering academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal aspects. KU offers a wide range of academic support services, providing guidance on programme selection, financial assistance, individual study plans, and access to lecturers for academic guidance. Financial support includes multiple scholarships and tuition fee reductions available based on academic performance. KU emphasises social engagement through interactions with alumni, thesis defences, and student conferences. The University also prioritises the psychological well-being of students, offering individual counselling and spiritual support. KU Students' Union and student councils enhance personal support and community building. The SER provides data and insights into the effectiveness of these support services. The student dormitory offers convenient access to on-campus housing.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The panel has acknowledged high student satisfaction with support services, however, the University is still encouraged to assess the effectiveness of these services and to identify possible improvements. Indicators such as (not limited to) the number of psychological consultations, number of students getting scholarships, number of participants in social activities, student success over the years should be constantly monitored in order to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the support services. The response rates of surveys are very low and cannot provide precise judgement. Interpretation of survey results and action plans should be handled in cooperation with students.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

SER highlights that during the first week of the semester, first-year students are introduced to the study programme, including objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment methods, as well as essential information like the study schedule. Appointed curators offer support to students during the adaptation period, maintaining communication through phone or email. KU Library contributes to students' information literacy. SER does not inform about how the University tries to enhance the description of continuous support mechanisms for a more comprehensive assessment of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The KU has disseminated information about Public Health studies across students using various channels and offers constant support with the help of curators, tutors and student representatives. KU has a relatively small number of students enrolled in the Public Health Master's programme, which is why student counselling services can be held on an individual level. Students need to be informed on how to reach information that is publicly available. There should be, early on in the study programmes, more support provided in terms of possible Public Health careers after graduation which seems to be a hazy area among students.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Supportive environment and student-centred approach.
2. Student dormitory provides easy access to housing on campus.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Notable decrease in admission in the last 3 years.
2. Limited awareness and participation in international mobilities and recognition procedures.
3. Limited assessment of the effectivity of student support service.
4. Low survey response numbers and a lack of other systematic feedback-collecting mechanisms.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

(1) Factual situation

Details of all modules covered were provided during the visit. For each module in the first and second study cycle, there is a detailed document outlining prerequisites, learning outcomes (with teaching/learning methods and assessment methods), a detailed syllabus of each teaching session, with the details of the responsible lecturer, key references, distribution of work tasks and influence on the final grade. All modules are listed as being taught in Lithuanian, the majority are listed as being taught in English, and a number are also listed as being taught in Russian. The range of topics covered is mentioned in section 3.1.5, and assessment is discussed in 3.4.3.

(2) Expert panel judgement

While the module descriptors state that a number of modules are available in English, this is not consistent with the feedback received from students, which was that they had had no teaching in English. This may be due to a lack of student demand since the student group also seemed to be keen to avoid English if possible.

The learning outcomes included were appropriate to the material covered, although there are topics which are covered less well than expected by students (see section 3.1.5). No teaching or assessment materials were provided, so a detailed analysis of teaching methods is not possible, but the formats described are appropriate. It would be appropriate to review the forms of assessment and the feedback provided that were specifically mapped to the intended learning outcomes.

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

(1) Factual situation

A range of adaptations are listed in the SER as being available to students with additional needs who wish to study at KU. Student psychological and financial support are mentioned. Access to study and research information is ensured for students with individual needs. Users with special needs can use special software and tools that translate text into audio format (Dolphin - EasyConverter, EasyReader, JAWS 14.0 for Windows, WinTalker Voice, SARA CE), magnify the image on the computer screen (Dolphin - SuperNova Magnifier, TOPAZ XL HD V 246 HL), and print text in braille (VP Columbia). The library is equipped with special keyboards for the visually impaired, ergoM1R-1000/680E electrically adjustable tables and matching chairs.

Any member of the KU academic community who is confronted with violations of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination may address a written complaint to the Chairperson of the KU Academic Ethics Committee. Academic integrity is ensured by the OXSICO coincidence identification system. KU provides psychological counselling and spiritual pastoral services to both students and other University community members. Individual psychological counselling is provided by a University psychologist. Spiritual pastoral counselling is provided by the Academic Pastoral Chaplain.

(2) Expert panel judgement

There has been consideration of how students with disabilities can access education in an equitable way. Yet, there has been no evaluation of student outcomes to identify whether there are any differences in academic performance between groups, for example, students with disabilities or those from socially vulnerable groups.

There is mention of adaptations for students with disabilities, but no mention of what this might actually mean from an academic perspective. During the visit of the review panel, obstacles to access the premises were observed for physically disabled persons. The staff of the University

assured that upon the reception of information about a disabled person waiting to access the library, special doors are opened so that the person does not have to climb stairs. Such doors usually are closed.

3.4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

(1) Factual situation

The process of evaluation of student progress is outlined in the SER, for both first and second cycle programmes. A wide variety of assessment methods are listed, including examination, colloquium, group work, control work, seminar, presentation, paper. Student data is regularly collected and analysed to determine student progression. Self-assessment opportunities are provided to students.

(2) Expert panel judgement

No sample examination or marking scheme was provided. No detail was provided for self-assessment opportunities. The theses presented for review did not include a marking scheme, only final marks. Assessment data is clearly collated to determine student progress, but despite descriptions of self-evaluation for students, and monitoring of data, it is not clear how this process is supported by the institution, nor what resources are available to students in difficulty. The overall strategic purpose of this process is not clear, and it does not seem to be clearly linked to student support.

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

(1) Factual situation

The Career Management Information System, which has been in operation since 2015, collects and continuously updates data from the State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (SODRA) and the Register of Students. With reference to this data, statistical reports are produced by the responsible persons at the KU for a period of five years after a student's graduation. With reference to the Career Management Information System, the monitoring of graduates' employability at KU has been centrally launched and analysed from the June 2020 batch of graduates. According to the 2020 Graduate Career Monitoring Statistical Report, the employability percentage of graduates working in the public health area was 87.10%. The requirements of legal acts promise good employment rates in the nearest future.

Students are advised about career opportunities through lectures and meetings with alumni and future employers, who are also invited to student thesis defences and student conferences. Information on the job vacancies is available on the KU website. The demand for the postgraduate programme in Public Health is partly a result of cooperation with stakeholders of

the programme like Public Health Bureaus, whose representatives give lectures to undergraduate students and motivate them to continue their studies at the postgraduate level and thus gain the qualification that could improve their employability.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The employment of the graduates of Public Health study programmes is rather good. Some employers have advantages over others when it comes to influencing the programmes' content and teaching process. Some teachers, who are also employers, select the best-performing students to work in Public Health offices when they co-work with students during the academic year.

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

(1) Factual situation

Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are in place at the University. The SER states that the study process at KU is tailored to socially disadvantaged student groups and students with special needs. Students of the Public Health field are offered individual consultations by teaching staff; individual study plans are available for students with special needs; students with special needs can have a free study timetable; students have the right to account for coursework in alternative ways if they have a disability that prevents them from completing tasks in accordance with the established procedures; and students are provided with psychological counselling. In the period 2019-2022, the KU Academic Ethics Committee did not receive any complaints about violations of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are in place at the University but are not presented on the website of the university thus it is advised to do so.

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

(1) Factual situation

Appeals shall be submitted and dealt with in accordance with the "KU Appeals and Complaints Procedure" and KU Study Regulations. Within no later than 5 calendar days from the date of publication of the examination grade, a KU student shall have the right to submit appeals to the Dean regarding: the assessment of the semester learning outcomes of the course unit/module; violations of the procedure for assessing the semester learning outcomes of the course unit/module; and the pass and fail final grades of the final results of the studied course unit/module. In accordance with the University rules an appeal regarding the assessment of

the content of the thesis is not accepted. In this case, the decision of the Qualification Panel is final. Appeals are accepted in cases where a student is dissatisfied with the assessment of the coursework; a student considers that he/she was unlawfully denied the opportunity to defend the thesis; a student considers that there has been a probable violation of the thesis defence procedure (the defence did not take place at the time stipulated in the Rector's order, the student did not have the opportunity to present his/her thesis or to respond to the questions) which has had a negative effect on the grade of the final thesis; and members of the Qualification Panel have violated the standards of academic ethics. The University states that there were no student appeals in the period of 2019-2022.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Students confirmed that they know the order of submission of appeals.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Clear curriculum with modules for each area.
2. Students are offered self-evaluation opportunities.
3. Adaptations to some extent are in place for students with disabilities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Need for clearer alignment between teaching and assessment for all learning outcomes.
2. Need for a clear strategy on how assessment and self-assessment data inform student support and future learning.
3. No systematic process for checking for differences in attainment by disability (or other characteristics such as language, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, country of origin, gender, etc).
4. Clearer detail is needed relating to what kind of support is offered for students with learning disabilities or for socially vulnerable groups in the geographic area.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching staff are evaluated according to the following indicators:

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

(1) Factual situation

The number of teaching staff in the Public Health field of studies in the three-year period was 17 in 2019, 15 in 2020 and 15 in 2021. In 2018-2021, there was a low turnover of teaching staff

in the Public Health field, with 14-15 full-time teachers and one or two lecturers employed on an hourly basis. In 2021-2022, there were 16 full-time teachers, one of whom retired and the department was filled with two new teachers. The list of teachers in Appendix 5 shows that 2 teachers have 20-30 years of teaching experience, 7 teachers have 10-19 years of experience, 3 teachers have 5-9 years of experience and 3 teachers have less than 5 years of teaching experience. 78% of the teachers involved in the first training cycle have a scientific degree and 94% of the teachers involved in the second training cycle have a scientific degree.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Compared to the current number of students, the number of teachers seems to be sufficient. The number and composition of the teaching staff should be reconsidered in view of the fact that the continuation of teaching in Public Health may be questionable in the future without a significant improvement in student numbers.

The expert panel supports the plan introduced at the site visit that, until the year 2027, 3-5 researchers in the field of Public Health are going to be invited. There is a lack of coherence between research interests and subject matter. Modern biostatistical methodology is not adequately represented either at the level of research interests or in the type of subjects taught.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staff academic mobility

(1) Factual situation

Competitions for Erasmus+ teacher mobility, academic and administrative staff placements, and experience partner placements are announced every year, in which teachers in the field can participate. During the three-year evaluation period, the Public Health lecturers gave lectures as part of the Erasmus+ Lecturer Mobility Programme at the Medical University of Bialystok (Poland) and Vienna University of Technology (Austria). In addition, Public Health lecturers participated in international placements under the Erasmus+ (Partners 4 Value Initiative) category at the Austrian Road Safety Board/KFV, Vienna (Austria) and the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (THL), Helsinki (Finland).

(2) Expert panel judgement

Even taking into account the mobility constraint due to the COVID epidemic, mobility was low during the evaluation period. Although the Public Health partners have cooperation agreements with Klaipeda University for academic mobility, and faculty mobility in Public Health studies is provided in accordance with the general rules and conditions approved by the KU, Public Health faculty members do not make much use of the opportunities.

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

(1) Factual situation

In accordance with the Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania “On Approval of the Guidelines for Improving the Competences of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions”, KU considers continuous improvement of the qualifications of its teaching staff, taking into account the objectives of the organisation, student feedback and the results of teachers’ activities. When planning activities for the academic year, the teachers also plan activities to improve qualifications, which are reported in the annual activity report. During the evaluation period, most of the teachers in the department participated in local pedagogical, digital and research competence development training courses. To demonstrate these activities, KU events and international courses in Portugal are listed.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The importance of improving the competencies of the teaching staff is well recognised and relevant courses are organised by KU. Participation in international Public Health conferences is presented only as a small number of published abstracts or conference proceedings and membership in relevant national and international boards is not presented. The improvement of competencies is mainly limited to teaching competencies, while research and consultancy competencies are not considered. Time for research among teachers is regulated depending on position and according to national regulations. There are collaborative efforts in writing up research but it is difficult to identify published papers with teachers from KU on first, second, and last position on published papers, as well as few papers in the Public Health relevant areas during the last years since the previous evaluation.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. KU is committed to the continuous improvement of the qualifications of its teaching staff, taking into account not only the organisation’s objectives but also student feedback and teachers’ preferences.
2. Erasmus+ mobility opportunities are regularly communicated.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The mobility of teachers is low.
2. There is little focus on improving the international Public Health skills of teachers.
3. Difficult to identify Public Health research publications authored by teachers.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Study field learning facilities and resources are evaluated according to the following indicators:

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

(1) Factual situation

Several improvements have been made over the years and reorganisation of the Klaipėda city hospital network creates favourable conditions for the development of clinical training facilities. The SER mentions multidirectional cooperation with stakeholders that facilitates students' access to a wide range of practical work experience during their studies.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The facilities are located on a nice campus, together with a dormitory. The library is nicely located on campus and includes access to electronic journals, books, and computers with web access. The books on Public Health were sorted under "medicine", electronic books and access to journals were available at the library. Wifi and necessary software, such as those used for statistical work are provided. It is apparent that the collaboration with the Klaipėda city hospital network will provide a framework for internships, especially in the newly developed area of primary health centres. There is psychological support provided to students when needed and the same localities are used to train students in counselling techniques. The number of working places for students is adequate for the current number of students and also suitable to achieve the learning outcomes. The University supports opportunities for the students in regards to participation in sports or in arts. Access to localities was possible for mobility-disabled students, even though in some cases through a longer route than otherwise.

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

(1) Factual situation

Procurement procedures approved by the Rector are used and carried out each of the budgetary years.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The low number of students will most probably have a negative impact on the available resources in the long run. The Hospital in Klaipėda will most probably be a valuable resource in the further development of the study programmes.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The collaboration with the Klaipėda Hospital and the planned lifestyle medicine area.
2. Nice campus and buildings, including a dormitory for students, library and computer access.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The low number of applicants to the study programmes could make it difficult to justify continued procurement of resources and upholding of resources.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Study quality management and publicity are evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies

(1) Factual situation

The internal quality evaluation system is building on the Quality Management System Standard ISO from 2015 and operates in accordance with written recommendations such as Description of a Study programme design, evaluation and improvement process, and Description of Study Implementation process as well as several other documents. They comply with the European Quality Assurance Guidelines for higher education.

(2) Expert panel judgement

The quality evaluation system seems to operate in accordance with the national as well as the European Quality Assurance Guidelines.

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

(1) Factual situation

Study programmes improvement and self-analysis are built on feedback from employers and practitioners. These are collected through roundtables and interviews. The Department also holds meetings to consider the use and harmonisation of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the evaluation methods. The KU provides feedback to stakeholders through several pathways. Public Health study programmes are improved by cooperating with stakeholders like Public Health Bureaus, whose representatives give lectures to undergraduate students. At least once a year, the Department of Public Health organises a roundtable discussion with employers, stakeholders, alumni, and associated employer organisations. Teaching staff of the Department of Public Health participated in a remote meeting with representatives of the Association of Public Health Bureaus to discuss the competencies of graduates and identified the ones that should be given greater attention. This allows programme designers to clarify aspects relevant to the development of vocational knowledge, practical and transferable skills. The procedure for Quality Assurance of Klaipėda University Study Programmes is in place at the University. At the end of each semester, students are given the opportunity to complete feedback surveys on the teaching quality and outcomes achieved. Annual roundtables with

social stakeholders and graduates are organised to continuously review the relevance of the programmes to labour market needs. The social stakeholders provide suggestions for improving the content of the programmes and the study process, as well as analysing the level of preparation of students for the labour market, and the need for new competencies.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Good connections seem to exist, which provide good feedback from social partners. Student evaluation seems to be less valued/used with low response rates. The Department improves study programmes mostly considering the needs of municipal Public Health Bureaus but other possible employers should also be invited to participate in the quality improvement of the study programmes of the field.

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

(1) Factual situation

A number of actions are described when it comes to the collection of data regarding the views of stakeholders, including quality assessment committee and making results public as well as implementing change resulting from the data collection. Information about Public Health studies at the University is presented in Lithuanian language on the website of the University.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Local stakeholders or social partners seem to be involved in the planning of the programmes when it comes to content as well as design of studies, internships and practice periods. A yearly conference is held locally where students can present their thesis work and alumni and social partners are invited. Information about Public Health studies on the website of the University could be more comprehensive, application or complaints forms used at the University could be uploaded there.

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

(1) Factual situation

Regular student surveys are performed, discussed at the department meetings and implemented suggested changes in courses. Mostly positive feedback was reported. Survey responses are very low and unable to provide robust data. There have been some improvements and changes recorded according to survey results.

(2) Expert panel judgement

Expert panel noted that KU has carried out meetings, surveys with students and a few changes were implemented. There is not enough evidence about how KU motivates students to provide feedback or to take part in decision-making. The panel noted a few claims from students, such as gaps between lectures being too long and not much information being available about the opportunity to study and work at the same time.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Adherence to National and European Guidelines for quality assurance of studies.
2. Collaboration with social partners in regard to the design and planning of studies.
3. Yearly conference where theses and research can be presented to social partners.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Too little participation of students in the areas of module- as well as programme design, evaluation and general decision-making.
2. In practice, employers in only one field are involved in improving study programmes.

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. Review core content to consider the inclusion of areas identified as missing from the students' perspective. 2. Create a map of core competencies for graduates from both cycles and map modules and learning outcomes to these competencies. 3. Consider engagement with marine science colleagues to increase an offer for students relating to local coastal developments/environmental health/sustainability. 4. Review the provision of teaching in English and consider its expansion. 5. Clarify the process for progression and qualification in the half time mode of study (first cycle) and make sure that it is not advertised as a separate 100-credit study programme.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A more strategic focus on publications would be beneficial - a departmental research and publication strategy that staff can use to guide themselves and students may be useful. 2. International research collaborations should be improved. 3. Insertion of the most relevant Public Health research findings and policy documents into the curriculum should be facilitated. 4. Increased involvement of students in research activities would be beneficial.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended to evaluate the student recruitment activities and introduce a new strategy to address the admission rates. 2. Review and increase marketing of the study programmes to ensure student applications. 3. Students should be better informed and encouraged about the possible ways of getting their prior learning recognised. 4. KU needs an internationalisation strategy and needs assessment to address the lack of mobility encompassing the language barriers of the students and academic staff. 5. Assessment of the effectiveness of student support services should be improved. 6. Survey response numbers and other systematic feedback-collecting mechanisms should be improved.
Teaching and learning, student performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review assessment outcomes to identify differential attainment related to different types of impairment.

and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Evaluate the relationship between taught content, intended learning outcomes, and assessment, including self-assessment. 3. Ensure that student feedback is collected to a higher degree and that the collected results are used to promote positive development for the individual learner as well as to improve teaching in future.
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number and composition of staff should be reconsidered in line with the future scale of Public Health teaching. 2. International mobility should be facilitated. 3. Multiple ways of improving competencies in Public Health/Health promotion should be considered.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore strategies to increase the number of applicants in order to sustain an ongoing resource procurement.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality management should to a greater extent involve students. 2. In accordance with the low number of students applying to the study programmes, information about the studies needs to be produced and spread to diverse audiences, including the public as well as to presumptive students in Lithuania and neighbouring countries. 3. Diversify the employers involved in improving the Public Health study field.

V. SUMMARY

Many thanks to colleagues from Klaipeda University for the provision of their documentation, and their time and information when the panel visited. The experience was highly useful and provided a lot of necessary information. The new facilities at the University are first rate and the students and staff clearly appreciate their surroundings. The access to own housing in a student dormitory is an asset.

The panel was impressed by the range of subjects taught within the Public Health programmes, and the unique nature of the Masters programme, with a focus on Public Health Education. We noted the potential for expansion of topics by increasing a focus on Environmental Health through future collaboration within the University, and would be supportive of this development. Greater clarity is needed to allow understanding of the contribution of the half time programme in first cycle studies.

The increasing emphasis on lifestyle medicine in the curriculum is understandable given the increasing requirements for specialists in this area in Lithuania. It is noted that this emphasis may mean that other areas of Public Health are reduced within the programme and that a compromise may be needed while the required new lifestyle medicine competencies are clearly identified. It is clear that this is a likely destination for many Public Health graduates, and so it is vital that they are ready for this field of work. It should be remembered that other specialist areas of Public Health will continue to need competent, skilled practitioners. Mapping out the core competencies and focusing teaching on them will allow the curriculum to be designed to meet these different needs, while retaining consistency. In addition to this, the creation of a clear strategic overview, indicating how each of the modules contributes to the development of the learner, with explicit mapping of learning and assessment (including self-assessment), would allow a much greater understanding of the students' progress.

The panel perceived a lack of confidence from both students and staff when discussing international experiences. This was most noticeable when students were discussing teaching in English, which seemed to be a worrying prospect, and seemed to be related to a lack of ambition to take their practice beyond Lithuania. Similarly, while staff appreciated the appeal of international working, there was little practical experience of doing so, and a perception that this would not be strongly supported. Staff also seem to have limited research impact, with a low number of publications where they are the first or last author. Increasing their opportunities for collaboration may improve both of these issues.

It is noted that there is significant under-recruitment into the first cycle study programme, with very few applications in the last years. If the University truly wishes to have a thriving Public Health programme in the first and second cycle, work needs to be undertaken in order to improve the marketing of the programmes, with a clear message about what the programmes achieve, and highlighting the strengths of the institution, including a clear internationalisation- and research strategy.

Furthermore, there was a notable lack of response to student evaluations of the study programmes. This should be improved.

Expert panel chairperson signature:
Prof. Dr. Agneta Yngve