STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE FIELD OF STUDY

Kaunas University of Technology

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:

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2. Academic member: Ole Gustavsen
3. Social partner: Ruta Misiunas
4. Student representative: Laura Unda Liepiņa

SKVC coordinator: Ms Radvilė Blažaitytė

Report prepared in 2025
Report language: English

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The field of study evaluations in Lithuanian higher education institutions (HEIs) are based on the following:

- Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport;
- Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC);
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The evaluation is intended to support HEIs in continuous enhancement of their study process and to inform the public about the quality of programmes within the field of study.

The object of the evaluation is all programmes within a specific field of study. A separate assessment is given for each study cycle.

The evaluation process consists of the following main steps: 1) Self-evaluation and production of a self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by an HEI; 2) A site visit by the review panel to the HEI; 3) The external evaluation report (EER) production by the review panel; 4) EER review by the HEI; 5) EER review by the Study Evaluation Committee; 6) Accreditation decision taken by SKVC; 7) Appeal procedure (if initiated by the HEI); 8) Follow-up activities, which include the production of a Progress Report on Recommendations Implementation by the HEI.

The main outcome of the evaluation process is the EER prepared by the review panel. The HEI is forwarded the draft EER for feedback on any factual mistakes. The draft report is then subject to approval by the external Study Evaluation Committee, operating under SKVC. Once approved, the EER serves as the basis for an accreditation decision. If an HEI disagrees with the outcome of the evaluation, it can file an appeal.On the basis of the approved EER, SKVC takes one of the following accreditation decisions:

- **Accreditation granted for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points), or good (3 points).
- **Accreditation granted for 3 years** if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).
- **Not accredited** if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

If the field of study and cycle were **previously accredited for 3 years**, the re-evaluation of the field of study and cycle is initiated no earlier than after 2 years. After the re-evaluation of the field of study and cycle, SKVC takes one of the following decisions regarding the accreditation of the field of study and cycle:

- To be accredited for the remaining term until the next evaluation of the field of study and cycle, but no longer than 4 years, if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).
- To not be accredited, if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points) or unsatisfactory (1 point).

1.2. REVIEW PANEL

The review panel was appointed in accordance with the Reviewer Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC.

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: Patrick Flynn
2. Academic member: Ole Gustavsen
3. Social partner: Ruta Misiunas
4. Student representative: Laura Unda Liepiņa

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 21st November 2024 onsite.

Meetings with the following members of the staff and stakeholders took place during the site visit:

- Senior management and administrative staff of the faculty;
- Team responsible for preparation of the SER;
- Teaching staff;
- Students;
- Alumni and social stakeholders including employers.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) is an internationally competitive, interdisciplinary university of technology that creates and transfers knowledge and innovation. KTU is a state higher education institution that has evolved from the University of Lithuania, founded on 16 February 1922. The University of Lithuania was renamed Vytautas Magnus University in 1930, Kaunas University in 1940, the name of Vytautas Magnus University was re-established in the summer of 1941, it was named Kaunas State Vytautas Magnus University in 1944 and Kaunas State University in 1946. In 1950, the Faculty of Medicine was separated from Kaunas State University which was reorganised into Kaunas Polytechnic Institute, which became Kaunas University of Technology on 31 October 1990. Currently, the University operates as a public institution. Since 1922, more than 153, 000 graduates have graduated from the University.

Overview of the field of study

The implementation of the studies of the Architecture study field complies with the requirements of the European standards of higher education and its further development is ensured by the structure of the University which is efficient in terms of governing and interrelations: the activities of studies are administered and coordinated by the collegial advisory bodies (the Senate and the Study Committee of the Senate, the University Study Quality Committee) and the Vice-Rector for Education (a member of the Rector's team) in cooperation with the Department of Academic Affairs, the Faculty Study Committees, the Fields' Study Programme Committees the Deans of the faculties and their teams.

KTU FCEA School of Architecture is an active member of the European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE) and the Nordic Baltic Academy of Architecture (NBAA). KTU is a member of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU).

Previous external evaluations

As of 23 March 2012, first and second cycle programmes in architecture have been notified by the European Commission's Coordination Group for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, meeting on 23 March 2012.

After obtaining a Bachelor's or Master's degree in architecture and, in accordance with the laws in force in the Republic of Lithuania, obtaining the architect's certificate issued by the Chamber of Architects of the Republic of Lithuania, after a certain period of work and a certain number of completed projects, this enables KTU graduates to work throughout the European Union. Since 2016, in accordance with Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, KTU has been running a programme of integrated studies in Architecture, replacing the previous first cycle programme of studies in Architecture.

Documents and information used in the review

The following documents and/or information have been requested/provided by the HEI before or during the site visit:

- *Self-evaluation report and its annexes;*
- *Final theses*

Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

The following additional sources of information have been used by the review panel:

- Study Plans
- Academic Staff Profiles
- Examples of Thesis
- Research Links & Projects with other Schools

All the discussions were in English.

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

Integrated cycle/LTQF 7

Title of the study programme	**Architecture**
State code	6011PX003
Type of study (college/university)	University studies
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time (5 years)
Workload in ECTS	300
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Master of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English
Admission requirements	
First registration date	02-06-2016
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	

Second cycle/LTQF 7

Title of the study programme	**Architecture**
State code	6211PX026
Type of study (college/university)	University studies
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time (2 years)
Workload in ECTS	120
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Master of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English
Admission requirements	
First registration date	19-02-2007
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	Admissions will be discontinued in a.y. 2024–2025. The programme will be de-registered when the last students complete the studies.

III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **integrated cycle** of the architecture field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points[1*]
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Quality assurance and public information	3
	Total:	23

The **second cycle** of the architecture field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points[2*]
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Quality assurance and public information	3
	Total:	23

1*

1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are substantial shortcomings that hinder the implementation of the programmes in the field.
2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings that need to be eliminated.
3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any substantial shortcomings.
4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings.
5 (exceptional) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

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IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

1.1. Programmes are aligned with the country's economic and societal needs and the strategy of the HEI

FACTUAL SITUATION

1.1.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the needs of the society and/or the labour market

The Programme Management Team presented a *Learning Continuum* Strategy as the Schools plan. It set out both the pre-University programme advertising, the support available to the student while they are in the programme and life-long learning to support the changing needs of the profession.
The aims, outcomes and content of Architecture study field programme are based on long-term EU and national strategies (European Green Deal, UN Sustainable Development Goals, Vision of the Future of the State "Lithuania 2050", and others), prospects for the development of society, EU Directives (Directive 2005/36/EB29 and Directive 2013/55/EU30, which in part replaces Directive 2005/36/EB) requirements and the needs of labour market and students. These were discussed with the staff and the alumni and are adequately addressed by the school.
The School successfully addresses the five competencies for the professional architect as defined by EAAE and ARB UK, namely: professionalism and ethics, design skills, research and evaluation, knowledge of context and architecture and management practices and leadership. The competencies underpin the three priority areas: sustainability, digitalisation and global creativity.

1.1.2. Programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the HEI's mission, goals, and strategy

The aims and learning outcomes are defined as: critical thinking and creativity, ability to seek for the solutions of urgent societal problems in interdisciplinary context, life-long learning – in the programme teams self evaluation report and in the visit through the project work delivered by the students and the examples of project work and facilities seen these were evident. This overall aim is carried through into the module descriptions and work reviewed.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

The programme's aims and learning outcomes align well with societal and labour market needs, addressing key competencies defined by EAAE and ARB UK, including professionalism, design, research, and leadership. The integration of critical thinking, creativity, and interdisciplinary approaches supports the HEI's mission and strategy. The Learning Continuum Strategy further demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning and adapting to professional demands. It provides a clear vision for the school in terms of ladder of progression for the student and potential links to industry.

1.2. Programmes comply with legal requirements, while curriculum design, curriculum, teaching/learning and assessment methods enable students to achieve study aims and learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The Integrated Study Programme in Architecture complies with the requirements of Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 (amending Directive 2005/36/EC), as

regards its commitment to a minimum amount of time studied, orientation towards the needs of the profession and the balance between theoretical and practical aspects of the programme.
The study programmes of the field of Architecture have been developed and are continuously updated in accordance with the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, the Lithuanian Cycles of Studies Description, the General Requirements for the Implementation of Studies approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania, and the Description of the Field of Study in Architecture, whereby the number of credits for each target part of the programmes of study has been selected in such a way as to ensure that the students will be able to achieve the expected learning outcomes successfully (see Tables 2 and 3 in the SER). These were evident in the presentation to the visiting board on the visit day and in follow up meetings with the senior management team.

1.2.2. Programme aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods are aligned

The programme aims to lead to a clear set of learning outcomes and these are constructively aligned with the teaching, learning and assessment methods. This is evident at all scales of the study from urban issues to application of technologies. These align with KTU activity priorities: industrial transformation, digital transformation, smart cities and resilient communities.

1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

Knowledge and Competencies are achieved through general university subjects and core subjects Research Skills are developed through the core subjects and the subjects of the field of study and the final project. Specific Competencies are mainly developed through the core subjects of the field of study and Social and Personal Competencies are developed through all the modules.
The Curriculum uses the principles of Kolb's learning cycle to develop the students skills and is designed to support them through projects of increasing complexity. The applied studio module is supported by other modules to ensure that there is a rigour to the students project work. The internship provides the student with an opportunity to engage in practice based learning. The thesis then provides a platform for the student to demonstrate their abilities.

1.2.4. Opportunities for students to personalise curriculum according to their personal learning goals and intended learning outcomes are ensured

The students have a number of free electives in addition to their core modules to allow them to select their own learning path and support their self-directed learning in the later years. The programme, nonetheless meets the required competencies through the compulsory modules.
The modules of the integrated study programme in Architecture are taught taking into account the vertical and horizontal links between the modules, i.e., the competencies provided by the modules, which are required for the design modules in a given semester. This provides support for the design project and students get to apply the knowledge at the appropriate stage of their career thus supporting deep learning.

1.2.5. Final theses (applied projects) comply with the requirements for the field and cycle

The final thesis projects demonstrate a range of capabilities on the part of the students and show how they have met the required competencies as defined by the EU directive.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The programme complies with legal requirements, including Directive 2013/55/EU, ensuring alignment with professional standards and a balance between theoretical and practical training. Learning outcomes are well-integrated with curriculum design, teaching, and assessment methods, supporting KTU's priorities. The

curriculum fosters progressive competence development through structured modules, internships, and the thesis project.

Opportunities for personalisation through electives allow students to tailor their learning paths while meeting mandatory competencies. Final theses reflect the required field and cycle standards, demonstrating students' comprehensive capabilities.

AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
Integrated cycle				x	
Second cycle				x	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The clarity of the Learning Continuum Strategy is a strong point for the programme. It addresses all stages of learning in the profession.
2. The willingness of the school to embrace current societal challenges in their programme of study.
3. The very detailed and focussed SER is a result of the clear and logical understanding of the Programme aims and the future direction of the programme.
4. The level of understanding and support of the Programme aims and objectives amongst the staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

No comment

For further improvement

1. Addressing climate challenges should not be seen as merely an operational necessity, but a transformative opportunity to shape the programme's future direction. Integrating climate-responsive strategies into both academic and practical dimensions ensures that the programme remains at the forefront of innovation and relevance in a rapidly changing world.
2. The potential to act as a leader of thought separates the programme from practice. The potential for expanding this repository into more parts of the city should be explored.
3. By extending its reach, the programme could act as a bridge between academic research and real-world applications, driving impactful collaborations with city planners, local governments, and community stakeholders. This expansion would not only enhance the programme's relevance, but also position it as a pivotal player in shaping sustainable urban futures.
4. The provision of dedicated studio space for the programme will ensure that the students engage in peer to peer learning and support the development of the 'studio culture' to fully meet the aims and objectives of the programme.

5. The programme has a growing repository of information on buildings in the campus and their energy requirements and is committed to developing sustainability more in the programme. A strong response to climate change is essential for shaping the programme for the future.

AREA 2: LINKS BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC (OR ARTISTIC) RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1. Higher education integrates the latest developments in scientific (or artistic) research and technology and enables students to develop skills for scientific (or artistic) research

FACTUAL SITUATION

2.1.1. Research within the field of study is at a sufficient level

Architecture is linked to the field of art: Architecture with knowledge of Theory and History of Arts and Civil Engineering is also considered essential for the practice of architecture. Within the last four years the research activities of the staff have focussed on these areas and delivered at a national scale as was evident by the scores of 55.97 points in 2021, and in 2022 – 56.17 points in the Visual Arts field. The project for the Vilkaviskis Bus Station was a particularly good example of the quality of work in research at the School.
The funding obtained by the University in the History & Theory of Arts is further evidence of a successful research culture and the Architecture festival demonstrates how that research is being disseminated.
The development of the KTU strategy outlines the overall structure for research and its successful implementation is evident in the establishment of the research groups: Cultural and Spatial Environment, Building Materials, Constructions and Technologies, Sustainable Energy in the Built Environment.

2.1.2. Curriculum is linked to the latest developments in science, art, and technology

The staff is made up of a mix of practicing architects and academics. The practicing architects have engaged in cutting edge design and have won numerous awards at a national level and have had their work form exhibitions. The academic researchers have had publications in fields as diverse as sustainability, landscape architecture and art, urban planning and architecture. The staff have had over 100 papers published in foreign publications in the last four years. This demonstrates an active interest in research combined with a link to practice both of which are essential for a high standard of architectural education.

2.1.3. Opportunities for students to engage in research are consistent with the cycle

Students are encouraged by the staff to present their research and contribute to the writing of scientific articles in the field of Architecture. This is supported by the KTU Student Affairs Department where faculty students have the opportunity to get involved in the activities of the Faculty's research centres or are assisted with research papers or semester projects. In 2018, the Centre for Smart Cities and Infrastructure was established which provides an important link and a ‘living lab’ for the University.
Every year, students of the Architecture integrated study programme actively participate in the project competition "Smart City" organised by "Structum" magazine, which brings together Lithuanian municipalities and architecture, urban planning, engineering, construction professionals and higher education students.
This brings relevant community based learning into the classroom to support the students learning journey.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

The programme effectively provides students with research opportunities by incorporating site-specific projects, such as the Vilkaviskis bus station, into the curriculum. These projects enable students to address real-life challenges and apply the latest developments in research and technology to their proposals. Furthermore, the staff actively engage in their own research, which is integrated into the courses. Additionally, the programme's close proximity and strong relationship with the engineering faculty provide students with opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning. However, further exploration of interdisciplinary learning through group projects would enhance this aspect of the programme.

AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
Integrated cycle			x		
Second cycle			x		

COMMENDATIONS

1. The high level of research in all fields and the matching impressive rate of publications. The acknowledgement of the level of research is evident in the quality of publication houses and locations along with the breath of fields of study.
2. The applied nature of the research is fitting for a Technical University with the study of the city having a particular benefit to the local profession as well as having the potential to deliver valuable research at a national and international level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. The School's research could benefit from further dissemination. In particular the School could develop their international links more and explore how the research could form part of conferences or additional foreign publications.

For further improvement

1. The School's research could be linked better to similar conditions across Europe; many of the successful parts of the research within the School (Smart Cities initiative for instance) could both benefit from and inform other research teams across Europe.

AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

3.1. Student selection and admission is in line with the learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

3.1.1. Student selection and admission criteria and procedures are adequate and transparent

The centralised admission to the integrated studies is organised by the Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Schools Conducting Centralised Admission and the students can find information on the procedure of the centralised admission, the admission procedures and deadlines via their website. Given the centralised nature of the process and its national nature it is well understood by the prospective students and the methods of selection are adequate and transparent. Its effectiveness is evident in the progression rates in the subsequent years in the school.

The centralised admission process follows the regulations approved by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. Admission scores are calculated based on a combination of maturity examination results, annual grades, and entrance examination which includes *Composition of Architectural Forms* and *Academic Commemorative Drawing*. These tasks assess creative and technical skills relevant to the programme. Applicants can use a competition score calculator provided on the KTU website to estimate their eligibility.

Information about the admission process is disseminated through study fairs, open days, student competitions, and online platforms. The KTU Admissions Department, Faculty Study Centre administrators, and programme leaders provide guidance and support to prospective students through consultations via email, phone, and in-person meetings.

Interest in the Architecture Integrated Studies programme has shown significant growth. Applications for state-funded positions increased from 28 in 2020 to 74 in 2023, with the highest number of applications recorded in 2022. Admissions to the programme nearly tripled in 2023 compared to previous years, reflecting a growing demand and recognition of the programme's quality.

KTU actively engages with prospective students through various initiatives designed to foster interest in architecture and related fields. These include:

- **Children's School of Architecture**: Introducing young learners to architectural concepts and creativity.
- **Summer Schools and Workshops**: Practical, hands-on experiences that explore architectural and engineering topics.
- **Drawing Courses**: Designed to develop fundamental artistic skills.
- **BIM-Focused Joint Projects**: Collaborative efforts between architecture and civil engineering students to explore Building Information Modelling.
- **Research Programmes and Erasmus Projects**: Opportunities for students to engage in international collaborations, including partnerships in Asia and joint projects with other universities.

These initiatives indicate KTU's approach to admissions and providing transparency and accessibility through their outreach and engagement activities.

3.1.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications, periods of study, and prior learning (established provisions and procedures)

The evaluation and academic recognition of education acquired abroad is conducted by the International Relations Department of the University. The procedure for the academic recognition of qualification, the identification of subjects and their transfer into the Lithuanian evaluation system is published on the website

of the University. The process is clear and is supportive of students coming from abroad who wish to study in the University and the potential outcomes of the process are clearly described. There is evidence of its popularity with the student numbers growing post COVID.

For applicants to state-funded study positions, the recognition process follows national guidelines outlined in the "Description of the Procedure for Competition for Admission to State-Funded Study Positions in Higher Education Institutions," approved by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport. Centralised admission involves applying to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education for evaluation and recognition of foreign qualifications. The determination of subject equivalences and grade conversion is conducted as part of this process.

Applicants for state non-funded study positions complete their applications through the Dream Apply information system. The evaluation of foreign education qualifications for these applicants is exclusively conducted by qualified staff at KTU's International Relations Department. This evaluation considers the value and level of the qualification in its country of origin and compares it to the Lithuanian system, focusing on learning outcomes and fundamental equivalences rather than detailed content comparisons.

Applications to the English-taught programme have increased post-COVID, from 6 to 12 applications in recent years. However, admissions have not yet consistently reached the required threshold of 5. Common reasons for unsuccessful admissions include unmet entry requirements, visa issues, or applicants independently withdrawing from the process.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

The student selection and admission process is transparent, well-structured, and aligned with programme learning outcomes. The centralised system ensures accessibility and clarity for prospective students, supported by robust outreach initiatives. The recognition of foreign qualifications is clear and inclusive, with transparent procedures managed by the International Relations Department. Growing interest and increased applications reflect the programme's quality and effective admissions strategy.

3.2. There is an effective student support system enabling students to maximise their learning progress

FACTUAL SITUATION

3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

The School encourages and supports students who wish to engage in Erasmus programmes and wish to study abroad. The uptake is relatively low for a School of this size- it was obviously hampered by the after effects of COVID but the numbers have yet to recover to their pre-COVID levels.

KTU encourages and supports student participation in academic mobility programmes, particularly Erasmus+, which facilitates international internships and partial studies abroad.

In addition to Erasmus+, students can participate in other programmes such as NORDTEK and state scholarships or engage in bilateral exchange agreements. The faculty frequently updates these agreements to ensure relevance and expand collaboration with new international institutions.

Participation rates declined significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Architecture programme student mobility dropping from 8 students in 2019-2020 to 1 student in 2020-2021. Master's programme mobility rates also decreased, from 2 students 1 student during the same period. Post-pandemic, participation has shown renewed growth as travel restrictions ease and student interest increases.

KTU also promotes faculty and student involvement in various open-call projects and contests to further encourage mobility and professional development. While students often prefer recurring partner institutions, efforts are made to diversify agreements and foster new collaborations.

3.2.2. Academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support provided to students is relevant, adequate, and effective

The School offers scholarships to support academic excellence, active involvement in campus life, difficult financial situations and mobility. The recently introduced AIS "Student Early Warning" provides early identification of underperforming architecture study programme students and is a proactive initiative to help the students. The counsellors provide the necessary support and the academic staff are very supportive of the students as evident in our Student Meeting on the day of the visit.

KTU provides a support system that addresses academic, financial, social, and personal needs, fostering a student-centred learning environment. Comprehensive academic support is offered through individual consultations, scheduled sessions visible in the Academic Information System, and virtual learning environments such as Moodle. Free bridging courses in mathematics, IT, chemistry, physics, and English are available to first-year students to strengthen their foundational knowledge. These courses are tailored to address gaps identified in their secondary education.

Financial assistance includes talent scholarships, sponsor-funded scholarships, and one-off grants for exceptional academic, research, or extracurricular achievements. Students facing financial difficulties can apply for social scholarships, reduced tuition fees, or dormitory accommodations at discounted rates. Mobility scholarships further enable participation in international exchange programmes. Tuition fee exemptions or refunds are available for students in challenging financial or social circumstances, decided on a case-by-case basis by the administration.

Facilities and resources, such as workshops and equipment, are available to support model-making and practical projects. Students expressed appreciation for the guidance provided in workshops but noted a need for additional studio space, which the university is planning to address with upcoming expansions and the establishment of a new laboratory.

Students have multiple channels for sharing feedback, including questionnaires at the end of courses, roundtable discussions, and "academic breakfasts" where faculty and administration engage directly with students to address concerns and provide updates. These forums are valued for fostering open communication and facilitating improvements in the programme.

3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

The students are provided with both online and in person supports via the Schools website:
the Academic Information System and the weekly newsletters of the Student Information and Service Centre, along with regular updates by emails and in person from the staff. The Academic Information System has a “one-stop-shop” where the students can get information on studies, scholarships and necessary academic support.

Comprehensive mentoring programmes are in place to support students at various stages of their education. First-year students are assigned peer mentors to help them integrate into university life, while academic mentors guide them through research activities and academic challenges. Career mentors offer advice on personal development and career planning, drawing on their professional expertise.

The university also offers psychological and emotional support through counselling services, including access to university psychologists and chaplains. Regular consultations with faculty staff ensure that students receive guidance on academic and personal matters.

Students noted that they value the opportunity to engage in regular critique sessions and consultations with professors, which provide clear feedback on their work. However, some expressed concerns about the workload during weekly critiques, suggesting that adjustments might help streamline the process for both students and faculty.

While students appreciated the opportunities for presenting final projects to diverse audiences, they also emphasised the need for dedicated studio spaces where they can leave ongoing projects and work collaboratively. There is enthusiasm for the planned laboratory expansions and additional resources, including software licenses, which will enhance the learning experience.

Although the course selection process and certification pathways could be more transparent, students find the feedback and support they receive from professors to be constructive and accessible. Internships offer valuable design experience but could better integrate technical skills and documentation relevant to architectural practice.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

KTU has established a comprehensive and effective student support system that addresses academic, financial, social, and personal needs, fostering an environment conducive to learning and personal growth. Academic mobility opportunities, such as Erasmus+ and other international exchange programs, are diverse and well-supported, though participation rates are still recovering post-COVID. The university encourages and facilitates these opportunities through bilateral agreements and mobility scholarships, ensuring students can enrich their academic and professional experiences abroad.

Financial and academic support systems are robust, with scholarships, bridging courses, and the innovative "Student Early Warning" system, which identifies and assists underperforming students proactively. Additionally, the availability of individual consultations, mentoring programs, and counselling services, including psychological and emotional support, highlights KTU’s commitment to a student-centred approach.

Students value the detailed feedback and guidance provided through regular critique sessions and consultations with professors, though concerns about heavy workloads during critiques suggest a need for adjustments to optimise the process for both students and staff. Furthermore, students appreciate opportunities for presenting final projects to diverse audiences, enhancing their professional development.

Facility expansions, including planned laboratories and additional studio spaces, are needed and will work towards addressing current limitations in collaborative working areas. While students are generally satisfied with the resources and support provided, further efforts to integrate technical skills and documentation into internships and improve transparency in course selection processes would enhance the overall learning experience.

AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 3	**Unsatisfactory - 1** Does not meet the requirements	**Satisfactory - 2** Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	**Good - 3** Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	**Very good - 4** Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	**Exceptional - 5** Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings

Integrated cycle			x		
Second cycle			x		

COMMENDATIONS

1. The collegiate working relationship between students and staff is facilitated by a clear strategy for the School. Each part of the school is aware of the overall strategy and is committed to its implementation, this delivers a coherence to the working of the school;
2. Ongoing enthusiasm, engagement of the staff and their commitment to the students. This is evident in initiatives such as the 'early intervention' where students are supported if they are showing signs of distress or weaker academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. The need for dedicated studio space is vital for the programme and will support the students to develop a collaborative studio culture;
2. The low rates of student mobility need to be addressed. The Erasmus programme is undersubscribed for a School of this size and needs more staff encouragement and support as well as previous Erasmus students acting as mentors to increase these numbers;
3. Review the admission requirements regarding English speaking students.

For further improvement

1. The mobility of students in studying abroad is hampered by the students engaged in work. The importance of work experience is well understood and demonstrated but the School could explore how to manage both by a reassessment of the timetable;
2. Explore flexible timetabling options to allow students to balance work experience with participation in academic mobility programs;
3. Enhance outreach efforts for Erasmus and other mobility opportunities, including workshops, testimonials, and mentoring by previous participants, to boost student engagement;
4. Expand the promotion of English-taught programmes and provide additional language support to attract and retain more international students.

AREA 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT ASSESSMENT, AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

4.1. Students are prepared for independent professional activity

FACTUAL SITUATION

4.1.1. Teaching and learning address the needs of students and enable them to achieve intended learning outcomes

The Programme Learning Outcomes are in line with the requirements for competencies of the architect and are well linked to the module learning outcomes. This is supported by the teaching modalities with a mix of in person one to one tuition, group workshops and presentations in the studio projects along with lectures in the theoretical subjects. The students have additional supports available via the GUIDed programme, where 5 different types of mentors share their experience and knowledge with students: a peer mentor, a start mentor, an academic mentor, a career mentor and a tutor.

4.1.2. Access to higher education for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs is ensured

KTU organises its activities by implementing the Equal Opportunities and Diversity and Violence Prevention Policy and ensuring its application, creating an open environment where the individual differences are recognised and valued. The School has adopted policies for Universal Design Learning with emphasis on ensuring that all learning styles are accommodated. This is evident in “Adaptability of Studies for the Students with Individual Educational Needs” on the KTU website which seeks to include all students.

KTU is committed to fostering inclusivity by ensuring equal access to education for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs. The university provides targeted support measures, including tuition fee exemptions, partial compensation of study costs, social scholarships, and reduced dormitory accommodation fees. Additionally, students with disabilities can receive targeted payments for special needs. These were mentioned very positively by the students.

Support for students with individual needs is coordinated by a dedicated social welfare coordinator within the Department of Student Affairs. This role includes assisting students with study-related issues, financial support applications, and scholarship competitions, as well as adapting study environments and ensuring full integration into the university community. For specific needs, students can complete a survey and consult with the coordinator, who informs faculty vice-deans about required adaptations.

The university’s approach to inclusive education prioritises respect for diversity and equality. Students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including autism spectrum disorders, dyslexia, and mental health challenges) can request adjustments to their studies. Support services include adapting infrastructure, providing financial assistance, and ensuring access to psychological counselling. Lecturers receive guidance and training to address the needs of students with disabilities effectively. Infrastructure adaptations include accessible facilities across university buildings, ensuring mobility for students with physical disabilities.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

Several systems are put in place to ensure students are prepared for independent professional activity. The programme’s learning outcomes align with the competency requirements for architects and are closely connected to the module-specific learning objectives. Access to higher education for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs is successfully protected through the Equal Opportunity and Diversity and Violence Prevention Policy.

4.2. There is an effective and transparent system for student assessment, progress monitoring, and assuring academic integrity

FACTUAL SITUATION

4.2.1. Monitoring of learning progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and learning progress planning is systematic

The Department of Academic Affairs prepares an annual report of the monitoring of the students' learning outcomes (according to the faculties and the study cycles) and presents it to the University rectorate; the report includes the indicators of the progress of students and repeated examinations, the evaluation of the effectiveness of newly introduced measures for the quality assurance in studies, the discussion about the reasons for the termination and interruption of studies, the attendance indicators, the violations of academic ethics, the results of the attendance and testing of the bridging courses and other information relevant to the evaluation of the systematicity of the monitoring of the progress in the quality of studies and the students' studies. This is reviewed within the School and appropriate action is undertaken where necessary. The Study Programmes Committee of Architecture and Heritage study fields keeps track of students' achievements in the Academic Information System: overall study average, mid-term and final settlement data for the semester and attendance records.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

A graduate survey is emailed annually to the graduates of the current and previous year.
The graduate survey aims to learn about the career path of the graduates: assess the current career of the graduates and the contribution of studies to their integration in the labour market. This is supported by the Alumni mentoring system the KTU Mentorship Programme. The data presented in the SER report is in line with best practice internationally.

4.2.3. Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are implemented

The students are obliged to sign a learning agreement and a declaration of academic integrity, in it the students undertake to follow the academic discipline, the procedure stipulated by the Code of Academic Ethics and the internal legislation of the University, to perform the tasks independently and honestly. The staff monitor this adherence through the assessment procedures and have a process to deal with any breaches.
The University assures tolerance and non-discrimination by implementing the Equality and Diversity and Violence Prevention Policy. There is a robust mechanism in place for dealing with any complaints that may arise.

4.2.4. Procedures for submitting and processing appeals and complaints are effective

The University applies the Guidelines for the Submission and Processing of the Students' Appeals and Complaints.
The 'layered' approach to dealing with the issue ensures that it is acted on at the appropriate level and where possible, it is recommended to solve the problem with the related parties first before escalating it.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

Overall, there is an effective and transparent system for student assessment, progress monitoring, and assuring academic integrity. The annual report prepared by the Department of Academic Affairs monitors students' learning outcomes and progress and feedback in a systematic manner. Graduate employability and career is properly monitored as well. A strong framework is in place to address any complaints that may arise,

supported by the Equality and Diversity and Violence Prevention Policy. The programme efficiently handles appeals and complaints in accordance with the University's Guidelines for the Submission and Processing of Students' Appeals and Complaints.

AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 4	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
Integrated cycle			x		
Second cycle			x		

COMMENDATIONS

1. The balance between design project work and theoretical subjects is well considered. This is evident in the documentation provided on modules and in the design project outputs;
2. The mentorship support available to the students in areas that they need additional tuition is well considered. They range from technical skills to the ‘soft skills’.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Provide dedicated studio spaces to foster peer-to-peer learning, collaborative knowledge creation, and preparation for professional practice;
2. Strengthen the structure and alignment of internships to better develop technical skills and meet professional requirements.

For further improvement

1. Implement a more dynamic feedback process involving structured peer feedback to enhance critical thinking and collaboration;
2. Strengthen mentorship opportunities with industry professionals to provide practical insights and networking;
3. Expand resources for project work, including studio space, software, and model-making tools;
4. Introduce interdisciplinary workshops to broaden students’ perspectives and problem-solving skills.

AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

5.1. Teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

5.1.1. The number, qualification, and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff is sufficient to achieve learning outcomes

The competence of lecturers in the field of study is evaluated and approved in accordance with the qualification requirements established by the Republic of Lithuania and Kaunas University of Technology. The staffing numbers are over 35 and given the size of the classes of students this would be in line with best practice for class sizes across a similar sized European School of Architecture. Ratio of 2.02 on the integrated masters programme.

The staff are matched in skill level to the stage of the programme with at least 50 % of the subjects in the first cycle of university studies must be taught by scientists or recognised artists (arts subjects), at least 80% of the Master's lecturers must have a degree in science (art) (be recognised artists) and at least 20 % of the subjects in the field must be taught by professors.

The staff hold a variety of awards for practice and different levels of qualifications to provide an appropriate mix of practical experience and academic rigour to the teaching and learning. This is evident in the numbers of staff at professorship level teaching at the later years of the programme and the scale at the earlier undergraduate stage of the programme.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

Opportunities for academic mobility and professional development for teaching staff are effectively supported at KTU. Participation in Erasmus+ and other international initiatives has resumed post-pandemic, aligning with practices in European architecture schools. The EDU_Lab Centre provides valuable resources for enhancing didactic skills, supporting both new and experienced teachers. Financial investments in innovative teaching methods, such as challenge-based learning, further enhance staff competencies and contribute to the program's quality.

5.2. Teaching staff is ensured opportunities to develop competences, and they are periodically evaluated

FACTUAL SITUATION

5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

Lecturers broaden their knowledge and competences by participating in the Erasmus+ mobility programme, various conferences and seminars as well as research and study projects not only in Europe, but also in Central America and South Asian universities.
This was greatly impacted by the pandemic but the numbers are recovering with 12 lectures in KTU Architecture participating in 2023 - this experience is in line with most European Schools of Architecture.

5.2.2. Opportunities for the development of the teaching staff are ensured

The development of the didactic competencies of KTU teachers is ensured by the EDU_Lab Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching operating for the last five years. This supports the staff as they begin their careers as teachers and also as a ‘follow up’ learning centre for staff to hone and develop new skills.

There is additional financial support via investment to integrate challenge-based learning (CBL) into studies. The Lab Centre is a strong support for the staff and the panel was impressed with this resource being used effectively by the staff.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

KTU ensures opportunities for teaching staff to develop competencies through participation in Erasmus+ and international projects. The EDU_Lab Centre effectively supports the development of didactic skills for both new and experienced staff. Financial investments, such as integrating challenge-based learning, further enhance professional growth and teaching quality. These efforts contribute to maintaining a high standard of education and align with practices in leading European architecture schools.

AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 5	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
Integrated cycle				x	
Second cycle				x	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The quality of the teaching is evident in the meeting with the students and the practitioners who have employed students and in some cases been taught by the existing staff. This is further evidenced in the impressive list of publications and research projects and design awards that the staff have been engaged in.
2. The ongoing commitment of the staff to improve their pedagogical skills is evident in the programmes. Teachers are actively developing their pedagogical skills with just over half of teachers upgrading their pedagogical competencies during the last few 5 years.
3. The University's commitment to continuing improvement in teaching via the EDU_Lab Centre for Excellence in Learning.
4. The connection between research and practice is being developed and opportunities are being researched.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

No comment

For further improvement

1. The School needs to attract more practitioners who are recent graduates. This will ensure a diverse cohort of teachers and keep the school connected to current practice.
2. The issue of academic remuneration came up in discussions on the visiting day. It is quite difficult to attract staff to the University given the competition from industry with regard to the salary levels.

3. Provide dedicated studio spaces to foster peer-to-peer learning, collaborative knowledge creation, and preparation for professional practice.
4. Enhance the integration of digital tools and emerging technologies in the curriculum to align with contemporary architectural practices.
5. Strengthen the structure and alignment of internships to better develop technical skills and meet professional requirements.
6. The University could explore a more flexible appointment system be it part time or for a short duration to encourage more practicing architects in practice to engage in teaching for short periods of time.
7. The Programme could work to attract staff exchange programmes via Erasmus to give the staff the opportunity to gain experience abroad and provide opportunities for international staff to teach on the programme.

AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

6.1. Facilities, informational and financial resources are sufficient and enable achieving learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

6.1.1. Facilities, informational and financial resources are adequate and sufficient for an effective learning process

The School benefits from being in the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture and allows it to share many resources. Through this sharing of equipment in the Faculty, the School has access to equipment such as the Infinity Lab – a virtual reality environment for a group of students to experience virtual reality. This can provide students with the experience of virtual city and construction site visits, both invaluable learning opportunities.

6.1.2. There is continuous planning for and upgrading of resources

The School presented a comprehensive proposal for the future of the School via its Learning Continuum and it is currently looking at the situation regarding the studio spaces. The University in 2023 built the M Lab building which the school has shared access to and the University is constantly reviewing the requirements. There have been notable recent improvements to the equipment and to the library resources but the space requirements for the programme seem to be lacking.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

The facilities, informational, and financial resources are sufficient to support effective learning, benefiting from shared access within the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture. Notable resources, such as the Infinity Lab and recent upgrades to equipment and library resources, enhance the learning experience. While continuous planning is evident, the lack of adequate studio spaces remains a challenge, highlighting the need for further resource optimisation to fully meet the programme's needs.

AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 6	**Unsatisfactory - 1** Does not meet the requirements	**Satisfactory - 2** Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	**Good - 3** Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	**Very good - 4** Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	**Exceptional - 5** Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
Integrated cycle			x		
Second cycle			x		

COMMENDATIONS

1. The connections to other parts of the Faculty and sharing of equipment means not only access to a wider range of teaching and learning tools but also lays the groundwork for collaborative studies. The newly opened M-Lab building is a case in point where there are obvious opportunities to develop cross disciplinary projects and research;

2. This sharing of equipment in the Faculty, has equipment such as the Infinity Lab – a virtual reality environment for a group of students to experience virtual reality. This can provide students with the experience of virtual city and construction site visits;
3. The Centre for Smart Cities and Infrastructure has equipment for reality scanning, drone photogrammetry, etc., which can be used by students on demand. The digital twin model of Kaunas allows students to place their projects in the context of the real environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Additional dedicated space for the studio to accommodate the students on a yearly basis permanently;
2. Train students in the necessary skills and incorporate the new equipment into the project work more to ensure that the students get the full benefit of the learning tools in their education.

For further improvement

1. Dedicated studio space is a must for a high quality education experience in Schools of Architecture. The students need spaces where they can work on their projects in between classes and placements. It is where the students engage in peer to peer learning and where they can immerse themselves in the culture of learning along with being an excellent model for future practice and collaborative design;
2. Encourage the students to seek opportunities abroad as well as within the country to provide for a diverse range of experience and provide the School and profession in Lithuania with an international network.

AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

7.1. The development of the field of study is based on an internal quality assurance system involving all stakeholders and continuous monitoring, transparency and public information

FACTUAL SITUATION

7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

The conformity and coherence of the learning aims, outcomes,programme structure and content of modules are systematically reviewed and updated in accordance with the terms and procedures established by the order of the KTU Rector.

7.1.2. Involvement of stakeholders (students and others) in internal quality assurance is effective

Employers and representatives of public organisations at the level of the field of study and/or programme are involved in all the processes of programme development, quality assessment and quality assurance. They are members of the field study programme committees, the qualification committee and the faculty council. Employers and representatives of public organisations are also involved in the working groups for the development of study programmes and in the working groups for the external evaluation of the self-assessment summary of the study fields.
Students participate in the Roundtable discussions twice annually.

7.1.3. Information on the programmes, their external evaluation, improvement processes, and outcomes is collected, used and made publicly available

The internal study quality assurance system is based on the European Union's key standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (ESG).
The Faculty has a Faculty Study Committee, which makes proposals and recommendations to the Dean. The Study Programmes Committee of Architecture and Heritage study fields, together with the head of the study programmes, and with the involvement of social partners (employers, representatives of public organisations), student representatives and lecturers, is responsible for the compliance of the content and delivery of the field of study and study programmes with the University's and external legal acts governing the studies.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

‘Student Voice’ surveys are conducted annually by the University. At a School level roundtable discussions are held twice a year. Roundtables bring together students, programme leaders, administrators and student association representatives to discuss each study module and general issues related to the study process. Students' comments and suggestions are recorded and forwarded to the study programme committee.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

KTU has an effective internal quality assurance system aligned with EU standards, ensuring systematic review and continuous improvement of study programmes. Stakeholders, including employers, public representatives, and students, actively participate in programme development and quality assessment processes. Mechanisms like the "Student Voice" surveys and roundtable discussions ensure feedback is collected, analysed, and acted upon. Information about programmes, evaluations, and improvements is publicly accessible, supporting transparency and accountability.

AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 7	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
Integrated cycle			x		
Second cycle			x		

COMMENDATIONS

1. The recent work done to publicise the KTU such as the KTU School of Architecture website, videos showcasing architecture study programmes, interviews of well-known architects teaching at KTU published, exhibitions;
2. Involvement of social partners and students in the study programme committee for architecture field of study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Strengthen mechanisms for systematically analysing and acting on student feedback to enhance programme quality and responsiveness;
2. Increase visibility and dissemination of programme evaluation outcomes to foster greater transparency and engagement from stakeholders.

For further improvement

1. The School could consider a more regular review of the overall strategy plan and programme by an outside team made up of academics from inside the University, external and members of the profession to provide an advisory role to the current teaching and learning and research and suggest future directions.

V. SUMMARY

1. The School may look to address the ongoing issue with recruitment of staff by exploring more **flexibility in delivering the teaching modules** to encourage more recent graduates to engage in teaching;

2. **The Erasmus programme** may also be able to come to the assistance of the University with more staff exchanges occurring which would also enrich the teaching practice;

3. **Engage and support pedagogical research.** This will lead to more publication and connection to external pedagogical research;

4. **Promote the University** more effectively to tie the University to practice and support the Learning Continuum;

5. **Integration of the design and subject matter** can be developed further. The Joint project initiative is something that could be repeated, for instance, or explore assessment methods to tie these together into a holistic approach. Better connection between the subject material and studio should be developed. It is uneven across the years at present with some years working well and others quite separate;

6. **The Quality Assurance process needs more rigour and more regularity.** This could be developed further by layering in more written/online feedback at the end of the year and having a regular full programme review every five years. This could include a review of the excellent Learning Continuum strategy for instance;

7. **Career planning and support for professional development** should be included in the programme. A 'How to…' part of a module. Can include the many types of architects for instance or how to plan your career;

8. **Feedback** via the presentations is stressful and could be reconfigured to allow a more participatory experience which may develop the students critical thinking skills further;

9. The School could develop the link to **alumni** more via a **Listening Forum** for the practice to get involved with the School;

10. **Lack of dedicated studio space is a concern for the programme. This needs to be addressed to ensure that the students are supported in their learning and develop a studio culture.**

VI. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

1. The School vision of the **Learning Continuum** is a clear way to think about the programme and how it can connect the students, the University and the wider society.

2. The quality of the overall **Self Evaluation Report** was very strong with a detailed analysis of the strengths of the programme and areas for improvement.

3. The **mentoring** of staff and students with the programme is welcome development, which resulted in good feedback from staff on how they are supported.

4. **Alumni** is a strong source of knowledge and support and could be tapped further.

5. **Students learning with communities** part of programme is a good way to extend the reach of the programme beyond the school boundaries.

6. **Supportive staff** from the student perspective as evident in our meeting with the students.

7. The interaction of architectural practice with the **digital learning** is strong. This can this be developed further into more fields of cross disciplinary research.

8. The **EDU_Lab Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching** is a strong resource for the staff for development of their pedagogical skills.

The panel would like to thank all the staff and students who produced the SER report and were available on the day to provide feedback, answer queries and show the work and facilities to the review team.