



**STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS  
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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## **MARKETING FIELD OF STUDY**

**Klaipėdos valstybinė kolegija**

### **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**Expert panel:**

1. Panel chair: Prof. Teresa Paiva (Portugal) (signature)
2. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Akos Varga (Hungary)
3. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Vytautas Dikčius
4. Student representative: Benas Verslovas

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Report prepared in November, 2024  
Report language: English

# CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS .....	3
1.2. REVIEW PANEL .....	4
1.3. SITE VISIT .....	4
1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW .....	5
<b>II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM .....	7
AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS .....	12
AREA 2: LINKS BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC (OR ARTISTIC) RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION .....	14
AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS .....	15
AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT .....	17
AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS .....	19
AREA 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT ASSESSMENT, AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT .....	21
AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS .....	23
AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF .....	25
AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS .....	26
AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES .....	28
AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS .....	29
AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION .....	30
AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS .....	32
<b>V. SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>VI. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE .....</b>	<b>344</b>

# 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: Prof. Teresa Paiva, *Technology and Management Superior School of Guarda Polytechnic Institute*
2. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Akos Varga, *Corvinus University of Budapest, Institute of Marketing*
3. Academic member: Prof. Dr. Vytautas Dikčius, *Vilnius University, Faculty of Economics and Business Management*
4. Student representative: Benas Verslovas, *Vilnius College*

## **1.3. SITE VISIT**

The site visit was organised on 25 October 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 the preparation of the SER;
- Teaching staff;
- Students;
- Alumni and social stakeholders, including employers.

## 1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

### Overview of the HEI

Klaipeda College (hereinafter KVK) is a state higher education institution for college studies. It is based on professional practice, applied research, and experimental development and provides higher college education and lifelong learning. It is organised in three collegial government bodies: KVK Council, KVK Academic Council, and the Director. The advisory bodies are the KVK Management, the Directorate and the Dean's Office (also the Collegiate Advisory), the Research Council, and the Labour Council. Regarding the administrative units, KVK has several departments: Public Relations Department, International Relations Department, Projects Department, Library, Finance and Accounting Department, Information Technology Centre, Personnel Department, Law and Public Procurement Department, Infrastructure Service, Quality Centre, Study and Career Centre (SKC), Centre for Applied Research Activities, and Training and Service Centre. KVK, established in 2009, has three faculties (Business, Technology, and Health Sciences) and ten departments that implement twenty-three study programmes in 21 fields of study.

KVK's vision, mission, values, strategic goal, priorities and programmes are evident in the Strategic Plan for 2023– 2025. It has been implementing its sustainable development goals through the content of the studies and their specific results, thus ensuring quality educational and applied research services that comply with the resident's needs in the region. It has around 2554 students, of which 35,70% are in the Faculty of Business, 36,61 % in the Faculty of Health Sciences and 27,69 % in the Faculty of Technology.

### Overview of the study field

The Business Administration Department at the Faculty of Business offers the Digital Marketing Study Programme, registered as a study and training programme on 30/08/2017 and 21/10/2020, received accreditation regarding the marketing study field. This study programme has a high graduate employment index, student involvement in scientific applied and experimental research, internationality, and graduation papers relevant to the companies established in Western Lithuania. It also seeks to comply with the needs of the labour market.

### Previous external evaluations

The study programme of Digital Marketing has not been evaluated before.

### 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 review panel has used the following additional sources of information:

- Research publications in the field of Marketing
- Opinion of Social Partners Survey
- Teachers CV
- Syllabus of Methodology Applied Research and Digital Marketing

## II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

### First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	Digital Marketing
State code	6531LX097
Type of study (college/university)	college studies
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	full-time, 3 years
Workload in ECTS	180
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Professional Bachelor's degree in Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Secondary Education
First registration date	30 August, 2017
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	

### III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **first cycle** of the Marketing field of study is given a **positive/negative** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points <sup>1*</sup>
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	4
Total:		24

### 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
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#### FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The expert panel sees that the aims and outcomes of the Digital Marketing (DM) study programme at KVK align well with societal and labour market demands. The program's primary aim is to produce highly qualified specialists proficient in modern digital marketing practices, problem-solving, and the strategic application of digital tools, which meet the national and regional economic development needs as outlined in various Lithuanian strategic plans, such as the "Lithuania 2030" strategy and the "Economic Transformation and Competitiveness Development Programme for 2022-2030".

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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.

The expert panel notes that KVK regularly assesses labour market trends and needs through strong engagement with social partners and industry stakeholders. These assessments are facilitated by annual CSP round table discussions, employer surveys, and feedback from internship providers. This consistent monitoring ensures that programme outcomes remain relevant and responsive to industry changes.

Social partners play an essential role in shaping the DM programme. Their contributions include direct feedback during committee meetings and collaborative research initiatives. The expert panel acknowledges the integration of suggestions from these partners, which has led to adjustments in programme content, such as new course additions (e.g., Creative Writing, Video Technologies) and the renaming of key courses to better align with industry practices.

Graduates from the DM programme are expected to possess a comprehensive set of digital marketing skills, including content creation, strategic communication planning, and the management of digital tools and channels. These competencies are structured to meet the pressing needs of the job market, ensuring that students can contribute effectively in various business contexts and adapt to future challenges.

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

The expert panel observes that the aims and outcomes of the Digital Marketing (DM) study programme are well-aligned with KVK's mission and strategic goals.

The panel sees that the DM programme strongly supports KVK's mission to provide high-quality education rooted in professional practice and lifelong learning. The programme aims to train specialists capable of creative and critical thinking, focusing on continuous professional development. This is evidenced by integrating practical training, such as internships and project-based coursework, which account for 44.81% of the programme's credit volume. This practical orientation enables students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings and fosters a culture of ongoing skill enhancement through experiential learning.

The DM programme aligns with KVK's strategic emphasis on contributing to regional and national development. The programme's learning outcomes are designed to address specific economic and market needs within Western Lithuania, thereby supporting KVK's goal of fostering regional advancement. The programme's content incorporates applied research and projects tailored to the needs of local businesses and organisations, reflecting KVK's priority of sustainable and practical education. Additionally, the programme's emphasis on developing student's ability to manage digital marketing tools and create value for businesses aligns with KVK's goal of enhancing cooperation with industry partners.

Internationalisation is also a core strategic focus of KVK, and the DM programme contributes to this by involving students in international projects and providing opportunities for cross-border academic exchanges. The programme's partnership with international academics and organisations and participation in Erasmus+ activities underscore this alignment.

The DM programme contributes to KVK's sustainable development goals through curriculum elements that stress the importance of ethical practices and social responsibility in digital marketing. The programme outcomes encourage graduates to create strategies that are not only effective but also socially responsible, which aligns with sustainable regional development strategies. Furthermore, commissioned graduation papers often address real-world issues local businesses face, contributing innovative solutions supporting the region's economic and social sustainability.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

Based on the observations during the site visit and reading in SER, the expert panel perceives a strong alignment between the study programme and KVK's vision, mission, goals, and sustainable initiatives. KVK has a good and frequent relationship with its social partners, and they integrate their needs well into the study programme.

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
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## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The study program follows the required legal documents for the first cycle of study in higher education in the Republic of Lithuania. The full-time study program lasts three years (six semesters) and has 180 ECTS. The expert panel stated that the total number of credits allocated for the achievement of the outcomes of the study field counts for 130 ETCS (73 ETCS are related to various courses, 48 – to internships, and 9 to a graduation paper), which slightly differs from the KVK calculation, presented in SER, but such an amount of credits fits the legal requirements (total number of internships is 54 ECTS, and the final thesis accounts for 9 ECTS). More than 50 percent of total hours is dedicated to contact work, while almost 50 percent is related to independent student work.

The requirement of the Descriptor of The General Requirements For The Implementation Of Studies (point 22.1.) states that full-time studies shall have a normal duration of 60 study credits per year. The DM programme has 62 ECTS during the first and second semesters (during the first year of study), which is slightly above the requirement and could cause a higher workload for students. This situation is a minor error and might be an error of calculation since in the description and justification of the study plan, as assessed, there is no evidence of non-compliance and a feeble structure of the study programmes. However, self-assessment reports have to be checked, and coherence and consistency must be ensured.

The expert panel noticed that courses have various durations, from 3 ECTS to 7 ECTS. Such differences can cause problems if one course is changed to another (for example, the course Methodology of Applied Research would be replaced with E-commerce or Digital Retail Management).

The expert panel states that four teachers have PhD degrees, but according to information provided in SER, they teach just five courses out of 30 courses in total, which counts 16.7 percent instead of the stated 25. The percentage could be even less (15% - 3 courses out of 20 courses related to digital marketing) if to take into account that one of them teaches just one course Business Statistics and one has two courses - one of them Economics. Both of these courses do not fit the marketing field of study, and this situation should be corrected.

The calculation of the share of lecturers with at least 3 years of practical experience in their teaching field was somewhat imprecise. The SER stated that 100% of teaching staff had such experience, but additional information provided by the institution showed that 75% of teachers have at least 3 years of practical experience in their teaching field. This percentage must be improved, even if it is sufficient to comply with requirements.

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

The expert panel affirms that the aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning strategies, and assessment methods of the Digital Marketing (DM) study programme at KVK are designed cohesively to ensure that students achieve the intended educational objectives.

The expert panel notes that the Graduation Paper Commission plays an integral role in updating the DM programme. Feedback from the Commission, which consists of employer representatives, external academics, and programme lecturers, is collected post-defence and reviewed annually. This input contributes to refining the learning outcomes and updating the curriculum to maintain relevance with current industry demands. Recommendations from the Commission often lead to curriculum adjustments that align with evolving marketing practices and the labour market's expectations.

The learning outcomes of the DM programme are effectively linked to specific teaching and assessment methods. For example, outcomes that emphasise the application of digital marketing theories and problem-solving are supported through practical assignments, case studies, and simulations. Assessment methods such as project evaluations, presentations, and practical assignments align with these teaching strategies to accurately measure students' comprehension and application skills. The programme uses a blend of lectures, group discussions, role-playing, and field projects to ensure that students develop a comprehensive skill set that meets industry requirements.

Practical assignments, such as internships and project-based coursework, play a pivotal role in achieving the programme's learning outcomes. The experts acknowledge that internships enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, enhancing their professional skills and industry readiness. The programme allocates substantial credit hours to practical training (44.81% of the total credit volume), reinforcing the emphasis on hands-on experience. Internships also provide opportunities for students to collaborate with social partners, contributing to mutual knowledge transfer and practical problem-solving.

The committee commends the DM programme for its commitment to updating teaching methods to reflect advancements in digital marketing technology and methodologies. These updates are facilitated by continuous interactions with industry experts, participation in international conferences, and the incorporation of new digital tools into the curriculum. Examples include the integration of contemporary subjects such as video technologies and creative writing, as well as adapting course content to include the latest trends in digital branding and marketing analytics.

The programme's teaching methods are regularly reviewed and enhanced to stay current with technological progress. The use of simulation tools, real-life case studies, and digital platforms allows students to stay abreast of cutting-edge practices in digital marketing. The involvement of guest lecturers from various industries and international academia further enriches the learning environment by introducing innovative practices and perspectives. However, there is a need to incorporate analysis through software to enrich the quality of the syllabus content and competences.

### 1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

The expert panel finds that the structure and sequence of subjects/modules within the Digital Marketing (DM) study programme at KVK are designed to foster the consistent and progressive development of student competencies.

The DM programme's course sequence is strategically structured to support a logical progression in the development of skills and knowledge. Foundational courses such as Basics of Digital Marketing and Marketing are introduced early in the programme to establish core concepts. These are followed by more advanced subjects like Digital Branding, Media Communication and Management, and Video Technologies, which build on earlier learning. Practical components, such as internships and E-commerce Practice, are interspersed throughout the study timeline to consolidate theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, ensuring students develop their competencies methodically.

The programme includes robust mechanisms to measure its effectiveness in developing student competencies. These mechanisms include regular evaluations of student performance, feedback from social partners, and reviews by the Study Programme Committee (SPC). Additionally, the department conducts an annual review of student progress, examining assessment results and

graduation paper outcomes. These evaluations help determine whether the course structure meets the intended learning outcomes and identify areas for curriculum improvement.

Student feedback and performance metrics play a significant role in shaping the course sequence and content. The panel notes that KVK uses student surveys, feedback from internship supervisors, and employer assessments to refine the programme. This feedback loop ensures that the curriculum remains responsive to student needs and industry trends. For example, feedback led to recent curriculum changes, such as the inclusion of subjects like Creative Writing to strengthen content creation skills and revisions in course titles to better align with market expectations.

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

The expert committee notes that the Digital Marketing (DM) study programme at KVK provides students with various options to tailor their educational experience to fit individual learning goals and career aspirations.

Students in the DM programme have the opportunity to select elective subjects that align with their personal interests and career paths. These electives, available from the second year of study, cover diverse topics to enhance general and field-specific competencies. Examples of elective courses chosen by students in recent years include Career Management, the Art of Negotiations, and Personal Finances Management. This elective system supports students in diversifying their knowledge and strengthening areas that complement their primary field of study.

The DM programme offers flexibility through individualised study plans. Students who wish to customise their learning paths can do so by selecting optional subjects from a comprehensive list provided on KVK's Moodle platform, which includes options from all faculties. Additionally, students can take advantage of free attendance opportunities and individual study programmes tailored to meet specific academic and career needs. This flexibility ensures that students can adapt their studies to align with unique career goals, whether they aim for roles in marketing management, entrepreneurship, or specialised digital marketing areas.

Students are informed about the opportunities for personalising their study plans through various channels, including orientation sessions, academic advising, and the KVK Study Regulations. Programme coordinators and faculty members actively encourage students to select electives and personalise their study paths to align with their career goals. Additionally, the university uses platforms such as Moodle to share detailed course descriptions, enabling students to make informed decisions. Regular meetings and feedback sessions with academic advisors also provide a space for discussing personal aspirations and aligning them with available course options.

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

The experts acknowledge that the final theses within the Digital Marketing (DM) study programme at KVK comply with the established field and cycle requirements, ensuring that graduates demonstrate the competencies expected at the first-cycle higher education level.

Industry partners play a significant role in the review and evaluation of final theses. Representatives from the business sector are actively involved in the Graduation Paper Commission, which includes employer representatives, external researchers, and KVK lecturers. These partners not only review and evaluate the theses but also frequently commission topics that address real business needs. For instance, in 2021, approximately 80% of the final theses were commissioned by companies, and this figure increased to 93.75% in 2023. This close collaboration ensures that the content of the theses is practical and aligned with current industry demands.

Final theses are evaluated based on specific criteria that align with field standards. These include the demonstration of comprehensive digital marketing knowledge, the application of research skills,

the ability to devise innovative and ethically sound solutions, and the presentation of findings in a clear and professional manner. The criteria also consider the extent to which the thesis integrates theoretical knowledge with practical applications, ensuring that graduates meet the expectations of both academic and industry benchmarks. The quality of the final theses can be improved if reflected more in the technical analysis identified in SER as worked in class. For example, the experts noted that in some theses, the depth of analysis was inconsistent; certain projects relied heavily on descriptive data without incorporating more robust analytical methods, such as regression analysis or segmentation frameworks. Highlighting such shortcomings provides an opportunity for better alignment between classroom learning and applied project execution.

The experts panel find this issue very important since the lack of a deeper analysis of the applied research induces the non-development of student's competences and tools to address the problems they will encounter in their future jobs. For the expert panel, it is important to enhance the need for careful and complete competence development for the student's critical thinking and analysis ability.

Topics for final theses are selected through a collaborative process involving students, faculty advisors, and industry partners. Students are encouraged to choose topics that align with their career interests and emerging industry trends. Faculty members guide students in refining these topics to ensure they are relevant and feasible for comprehensive research. Support is provided through workshops, academic consultations, and feedback from the Graduation Paper Commission. This support framework helps students align their research with current industry trends, contributing to the applicability and innovation of their work.

In conclusion, the expert committee finds that the DM programme at KVK upholds high standards in the development and evaluation of final theses. The involvement of industry partners, clear assessment criteria, and structured support for topic selection contribute to a rigorous process that meets both academic and professional requirements.

## **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)**

There are some technical points to overcome in the SPDM, like the number of ECTS in the DM first year and the number of teachers with PhD related to the DM field of study. Additionally, courses have various durations, from 3 ECTS to 7 ECTS, which could cause some problems when replacing one course with another.

The expert committee feels confident that the totality of the DM study programme's subjects/modules supports student competences' continuous and consistent development. The structured sequence of courses, coupled with systematic feedback and performance monitoring, ensures that students acquire a comprehensive set of skills that prepare them for the dynamic field of digital marketing. However, the final thesis quality can be improved by incorporating technical analysis to support the analysis, results and impact.

It also finds that the DM programme at KVK offers adequate opportunities for students to personalise their learning experience. The options for elective subjects, flexible learning arrangements, and clear communication channels contribute to a supportive academic environment that nurtures diverse career trajectories, even though a student agreement on the elective course is necessary for the programme to function each year.

## **AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS**

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

## COMMENDATIONS

1. The SPDM is well-structured and corresponds to the market needs.
2. The social partners have an interventive role in the SPDM.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings:

1. Broaden the elective options courses to implement.
2. Integrate more technical analysis (e.g. statistical analysis) into the programme and its outcomes.
3. Unify the duration of courses.

## 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
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### FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The expert panel admits the strong regional focus of Klaipėda State College, including SP DM. The expert panel also admits a strong direction of research activity related to the applied research. A number of applied studies and projects grows every year. However, only a part of these projects are related to the field of study – marketing – and an even smaller part is related to the digital marketing area.

The lecturers working with the SPDM published articles in peer-reviewed journals. The number of articles, published in journals and conference proceedings, fluctuated depending on year. 12 articles were published in 2021, while this number decreased to 9 next year and significantly increased in 2023 (19 articles) (analysis is based on a list of articles additionally presented to the experts). The expert panel points out that some articles were written by scientists who did not teach in the SPDM. Moreover, just one teacher - Šakytė-Statnickė was responsible (was among the authors of an article) for more than 50% of articles published in 2023 by the lecturers of the SPDM, and she was the one who published articles in WOS and Scopus journals. Based on the list of lecturers, presented in SER, the expert's panel concluded that just 44% of lecturers are engaged in writing scientific articles, which is a low percentage.

The thematic analysis of articles presented in WOS and Scopus journals showed that articles were related to communication rather than marketing or digital marketing. More marketing-related articles were published in local journals which do not have the same scientific validation and impact. This situation should be improved.

The applied projects developed and contractualised with the social partners linked to the SPDM are their key performance indicator in the applied research developed in the study field and present an important work developed with students, which is very positive.

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

The expert panel admits the link between studies and the latest developments in research and technology is mainly based on the lectures presented by visiting professors. Students are invited to deepen their knowledge by joining remote conferences and seminars. However, the site visit revealed quite a low interest of students in such events.

SER states that the content of the SPDM is reviewed and updated based on the latest scientific achievements and innovations every year, but no exact cases were presented. The expert panel argues that updated sources for most of the courses could increase relationships with the latest research developments. Analysis of the syllabus, presented by the institution, showed that some courses (Mobile Marketing) used quite old literature sources, and others – presented main literature and information resources, which are not directly related to the title of the course. Moreover, adding scientific articles to the course materials could bring the newest findings in science and/or marketing areas.

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

The experts pointed out many possibilities for students to be involved in research activities. The institution established a Student Scientific Society, and some of the students publish their research findings in scientific articles, reviewed scientific publications, and conference materials. Students also distribute their findings by writing and delivering presentations at national student conferences and project publicity events. They participate in local conferences two times per year and also in one student conference per year. Students also confirmed their participation in research projects initiated by teachers. They can make the projects with the teacher or without the teacher's support.

The expert panel emphasises the importance of including the latest developments in the final thesis since the topics of these papers reflect casual problems. Closer cooperation with the Lithuanian Marketing Association can strengthen the link between the content of studies and the latest developments in marketing.

The site visit proved that students were aware of statistical tools for data analysis, but they were not used for the final thesis. The expert committee argues that recommendations made by students in their final thesis would be more reliable if statistical or predictive analyses were applied.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

A number of applied studies and projects grow yearly, but just a small part of them are related to digital marketing. The number of articles published in journals and conference proceedings fluctuates depending on year. The scientific output depends highly on one teacher, while more than half of the teaching staff did not publish any scientific article. The thematic analysis of articles presented in WOS and Scopus journals showed that articles were related to communication rather than marketing or digital marketing.

The link between studies and the latest developments in research and technology is mainly based on the lectures presented by visiting professors. Students are invited to deepen their knowledge by attending remote conferences and seminars, but they are not engaged in such events. The latest developments in the science and marketing area should be better reflected in the syllabus, including new topics and sources of literature.

Students have various possibilities for being involved in scientific activities. However, the latest developments should be included in the final thesis since the topics of these papers reflect casual problems. Using statistical tools would increase the reliability of recommendations made by students in their final thesis.

## AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

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

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. There are opportunities for students to enroll in scientific activities.
2. The volume and quality of scientific output increased significantly in 2023.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To address shortcomings:**

1. Definition of strategic research guidelines to improve the quality (indexation) of the applied research.
2. A higher number of teachers should be included in writing high-level scientific articles related to marketing.
3. Teaching staff should be more engaged in the latest developments in science and marketing by adding additional readings and updating sources of information in the syllabus.
4. The final thesis should be related to the latest developments in science and marketing and integrate software or tools to improve the research quality and reliability.

### **For further improvement:**

1. Closer cooperation with the Lithuanian Marketing Association can strengthen the link between the content of studies and the latest marketing developments.

## AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

Student's admission to the SP DM is carried out following the terms and conditions of students' admission to collegial studies, following the principles of general admission, and the Rules of Students' Admission to the KVK. General admission is administered by the LAMA BPO. The rules of admission of students define the structure of the competitive score and the methodology of its calculation. The structure of the competitive score and other criteria are published on the KVK website.

The expert panel pointed out that the minimum competitive score for applicants to NSF studies was 2.0 in 2021-2023. The actual competitive scores vary from 7.29 to 2.74 in 2021, and from 6.86 to 3.83 in 2023. Such low minimal competitive scores increase the number of students but create many problems for the quality of the learning process. The site visit proved that lecturers have problems adapting course information to students with lower levels of competence.

Active promotional campaigns let the SP DM increase the number of enrolled students by several students every year, but the expert committee does not see any serious background to expect that "a new academic group is expected to be admitted for the DM study programme every year" as it stated in SER.

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

The procedure for crediting learning outcomes is approved by the KVK Academic Council. The document includes procedures for recognising learning outcomes (including partial) obtained in a foreign higher education institution, or from partial studies in a frame of Erasmus+ learning, as well as recognising non-formal and informal learning achievements. The learning outcomes are credited according to the following criteria: no limitations to optional subjects (modules); no more than 75% of the subjects, studied at another institution of higher education can be credited; the thesis or the graduation paper cannot be credited. Partial studies in cases of mobility agreements are credited according to the Erasmus+ mobility program coordination procedure.

According to the evidence, for the last three years, no foreign students in SP DM were required to have their learning achievements credited. The expert committee suggests that more efforts can be made to inform and explain to future students about the validations since they tend to be unaware of this process and how to carry it out.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

Student admission to the SPDM is carried out following the terms and conditions of the legal requirements, and the admission criteria are published on the college website. The interval of competitive scores was very large, which turned into problems related to quality assurance during the study process. The orientation towards the number of students could negatively impact the SP's image and decrease the demand for such specialists in the market.

The procedure for crediting learning outcomes is well documented. The lack of evidence of such activity for the last three years does not prove the effectiveness of such a system. Plus, it shows a lack of understanding of the developed procedures by the students.

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

### 3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

All KVK students have the opportunity to participate in short/long-term mobilities or professional and postgraduate internships under Erasmus + programmes and bilateral cooperation agreements.

The exchange program offers students the opportunity to study at foreign higher education institutions or complete internships abroad. Mobility opportunities, screening criteria, and competition conditions are presented twice a year during events held in the spring and autumn semesters. Students' learning outcomes are credited with an academic transcript upon their return. Publicity events, such as lectures, meetings, and social media posts, actively involve department heads, SPC members, lecturers, and students who share their positive Erasmus+ experiences. Mobility within the DM study program extends beyond EU countries to include Albania, Sakartvelo, Egypt, and Ukraine. However, during the reporting period, no foreign students were admitted for full-time studies in the field of Marketing.

Students from the field of marketing actively participate in international mobilities. In total, 12 students from the field of marketing have had long or short international mobility experience in 2021-2023, and had 6 incoming students. The participation in international mobilities and projects is positive. The example of the Malta program has illustrated the possibility of using short-term international mobilities rather than long-term. Some students were not keen to participate in long mobility programs as they were working in Lithuania.

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

KVK provides extensive academic, social, and financial support for students, including academic consultations, psychological support, career advising, and resources on Moodle, as outlined in the Student Support section of its website. The students confirmed the possibility to participate in the projects together with lecturers or separately. The students are encouraged to participate in the conferences two times per academic year.

The academic assistance offered by KVK encompasses supplementary consultations, adaptable lecture methods, personalised study plans, and systematic progress monitoring by department heads and associate deans. Additionally, students can seek guidance on financial aid, academic studies, or career planning through the KVK CCS. The KVK also offers psychological support for challenges such as emotional difficulties, adaptation, and academic struggles, which can be accessed by booking appointments.

The financial support options available to students include scholarships (which can be either incentive, one-time, or target-based), social payments, and assistance from the State Studies Foundation, which may take the form of loans, tuition compensation, or social scholarships. In instances where students encounter financial constraints, they have the option to defer their tuition payments in instalments. Additionally, students with special needs may be eligible for financial aid to cover study costs, target payments, and social scholarships. The faculty is equipped with facilities for individuals with disabilities, including lifts, designated bathrooms, and specialised equipment for students with hearing or visual impairments.

The students were happy that the administration motivated them to participate in studies or research activities providing bonuses (e.g. the graduate, who presented his experience in recording). They also were satisfied with the flexibility of attendance. As stated in SER, the students who are working

or cannot attend the lectures for other important reasons have the possibility to study according to the free study attendance schedule.

Financial aid options include incentive and target scholarships, social payments, and tuition assistance through the State Studies Foundation. Students in financial need can opt for tuition instalment plans, and those active in research or internships may receive additional premiums.

### 3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

KVK offers a thorough adaptation program for first-year students, covering study program goals, evaluation methods, schedules, and available support. Students are guided by KVK staff, senior students, and group curators, who maintain contact via phone, email, and group activities to support their transition. As it is stated in SER, Students' lecture and exam timetables are published on "Wise Timetable" and "Moodle". Both systems have a web interface and mobile applications. The Study Management System (SMS) (EDINA) enables the management of the study process.

In 2023, a survey showed high satisfaction: 100% of students felt informed about their program, 92.9% found the evaluation information sufficient, and 85.7% knew whom to contact for help. Out-of-class consultation scored 4.26, indicating strong support resources. KVK's orientation effectively meets student needs, as is shown in the satisfaction surveys students responded, and are stated in SER and confirmed in the site visit.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

KVK provides extensive academic, social, and financial support for students. It was perceived as a high level of satisfaction in all areas, and the conclusion of KVK's orientation effectively meets student needs.

There are opportunities for students to engage in international mobilities, even though there are usual constraints since most students work.

## AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

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

## COMMENDATIONS

1. KVK supports and effectively meets students' needs.
2. There is a policy for recognition of non-formal qualifications.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. More dissemination of the recognition procedures for accreditation of work and professional competences is necessary.

2. More motivation and promotion of international mobilities is needed.
3. Review the possibility to increase the lower level of competitive score

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

4.1.	Students are prepared for independent professional activity
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### **FACTUAL SITUATION**

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

The SP DM involves active studying methods: modelling of various situations, case analysis, virtual business simulation tools, creative projects, videos, lab work, round tables, debates, interviews, presentations, reflection, field trips to social partner companies, assignments, participation at practical-scientific student conferences, etc. A variety of study methods is enriched with methods for the evaluation of the study achievements. Lecturers use such methods as examination, problem questions, tests, conversations, evaluation of a concept map, practical-creative assignments, advertising concepts, project assignments, research methodology review, self-evaluation, demonstration of practical skills during internships, internship reports, etc.

The expert panel pointed out that The Descriptor of the Study Field of Marketing presents four social skills and three personal skills that should be achieved during college studies in the marketing area. However, the SP DM has just one learning outcome related to social and one to personal skills. The compatibility between the DM study program outcomes and the study subjects shows that research-related outcomes are present in most courses, even in courses such as Professional Foreign Language or Video Technology. However, the analysis of the final papers revealed a lack of statistical analysis of results and higher competence in the development of a questionnaire to be used in the applied research.

Students have the possibility to select elective courses - two elective courses are available in the third and fourth semesters. However, SER stated that just two courses were selected: Professional Client Service and The Art of Negotiations in 2020; Personal Finances Management and Public Speaking in 2021; Career Management and The Art of Negotiations in 2022; and no information about 2023. Such a situation shows that the ability to select any course exists just formally, while the reality requires the selection of one course by all students in a group, which minimises the options.

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

KVK provides accessible study conditions for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs through tailored support options, including individualised study schedules, flexible attendance, and adapted learning methods. Students can request accommodations via Moodle or by contacting KVK staff. An example of supporting students with individual needs was demonstrated by a disabled graduate who, with the assistance of the college, was able to participate fully in all academic and research activities. During his studies, he participated in the Erasmus exchange program, completed an internship, participated in a conference, and, together with their Bachelor's thesis supervisor, published a research article.

Financial assistance includes social scholarships, one-time payments, instalment tuition plans, and state loans. High-performing students may also receive tuition compensation and incentive scholarships for academic, cultural, or athletic achievements. These efforts ensure that all students have equitable access to education.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)**

Globally, the teaching and learning process addresses the needs of students and enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The SP DM involves a big variety of active studying methods and tools for the evaluation of the study achievements. All these methods are directed to the development of knowledge, research and specific learning outcomes, but the social and personal outcomes are underdeveloped. Additionally, a large number of courses dedicated to the development of a certain learning outcome, but don't guarantee reaching it.

Some courses have a broader title than necessary and should dedicate more time to presenting theoretical knowledge. Also, the expert team observed that the final papers revealed a lack of statistical analysis of results and higher competence in developing a questionnaire. Students have quite limited ability for selection of elective courses.

Access to KVK for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs is ensured. Students have the ability to select any course, but in reality, it requires the selection of one course by all students in a group.

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

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

Student progress in the DM programme is monitored through regular evaluations recorded in the EDINA system, with students able to track their results. The DM program committee and faculty review performance, offering support to students facing challenges through individual meetings. Retake sessions are available for failed exams, and academic debts can be resolved each semester.

Feedback is gathered through surveys and course evaluations, helping the department to improve the programme. For example, it was confirmed in the site visit that received the questionnaires after every exam, and expressed their opinion on how they liked the subject. Recent initiatives, like interim graduation paper monitoring and remote teaching training, have helped reduce dropouts and enhance student engagement.

### 4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

SPDM receives data on graduates' employability from the Employment Services, the Education Management Information System (EMIS), the State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Insurance and Labour, and by conducting graduate surveys via the Career Management Information System (hereinafter CMIS). During the period in question, the studies were completed by only one generation of DM students (2020), whose data were received and analysed one year after graduation. 90% of DM graduates get employment. During the site visit, the graduates and employers expressed their positive perception of the competences developed within SPDM and the skills needed to work.

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

KVK upholds academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination through its Code of Academic Ethics. Students sign a Declaration of Academic Integrity upon admission and may be asked to pledge honesty during assignments. Turnitin is used to check for plagiarism, and graduation papers are uploaded to eLABa for comparison.

Violations, such as cheating or plagiarism, result in penalties, including denial of exam retakes. The Commission of Academic Ethics reviews violations, though no issues have been reported in the Digital Marketing program.

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

The application of the procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process is well-described. Appeals can be submitted and will be examined according to the KVK Procedure for Appeal Submission and Examination. Appeals with their motives can be submitted in the following cases: 1) regarding the final evaluation of a subject's learning outcomes and/or violation of the evaluation procedure – the appeal must be submitted to the dean no later than in five business days since the evaluation; 2) regarding violations of the graduation paper evaluation procedure – no later than on the following day since the day of the defense by submitting an appeal to the Deputy Director for Studies and Science. The information regarding appeals and complaints is available on the institution's website.

SER stated that there were no appeals or complaints regarding the study process in the SP DM. The expert panel points out that a lack of awareness or transparency of the procedure (inexistence of an official form of the appeal) could cause an absence of such cases. Due to a lack of such cases, it is not possible to formulate any conclusions about the system's effectiveness.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

There is a systematic process of monitoring learning progress and giving feedback to students to promote self-assessment and learning progress planning. Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are implemented, and 90% of DM graduates could get employed. These are important and positive issues even though the expert team could not assess their effectiveness due to no examples to analyse.

Information about graduates' employability is mainly based on state-based sources. However, these sources could present just factual situations, but will not reveal reasons. Therefore, the SP DM should develop an additional system for analysis of problems, related to graduates' employability.

## AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

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

### COMMENDATIONS

1. Access to KVK for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs is ensured.
2. There is a systematic process of monitoring learning progress and giving feedback to students to promote self-assessment and learning progress planning
3. Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination exist and are implemented

### RECOMMENDATIONS

### To address shortcomings

1. Improvement of the theoretical knowledge presentation to reinforce student knowledge.
2. Improvement of the student's opportunities for elective courses.
3. Social and personal learning outcomes must be developed.
4. The relationship between the learning outcomes of the SP and courses should be reconsidered.
5. A system related to revealing problems of graduates' employability should be developed.

## AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

5.1.	Teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes
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### FACTUAL SITUATION

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

The number of academic staff members is stable (based on SER) and includes 16 teachers who work in the SP DM. Just four teachers have a PhD degree, while other lecturers declared having at least 3 years of practical experience in their teaching field. Since there are 32 courses (including elective courses and internships), it can be estimated that one teacher has two courses on average. Moreover, almost 69% of the SP DM teachers have 1.2-1.5 workloads at the KVK. Based on the information presented in SER, three teachers present two courses, one - three courses, one - six courses, and one - more than seven courses (including internships). The expert panel states that such distribution of courses reflects a lack of teaching staff (especially in the digital marketing area). On the other side, the high workload of teachers minimises their time for scientific work, which is reflected in the low output of science.

SER does not include an analysis of teaching staff according to age, but we can expect that a significant part of teachers is older than 40 or even 50 years old (based on the information about the teaching/practical work experience presented in SER). On one hand, a long duration in teaching and/or practical work could be a high advantage due to big experience in the field, but on the other hand, digital marketing is a rather new area and highly related to new technologies and IT knowledge, which typically is a bigger or smaller problem for X or Y generations. The site visit confirmed that the SP DM faces big challenges in attracting young professionals in the digital marketing area. Therefore, the expert committee suggests finding additional incentives that would increase the number of teachers, especially in the digital marketing area.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

Almost two-thirds of teachers have a 1.2-1.5 workload at the KVK, which reflects a serious lack of teaching staff (especially in the digital marketing area). Plus, the high workload of teachers minimises their time for scientific work, which is reflected in the low output of science.

SER does not include analysis of teaching staff according to age, but we can expect that a significant part of teachers is older than 40 or even 50 years old, digital marketing is a rather new area and highly related to new technologies and IT knowledge. The SPDM should concentrate on attracting young professionals in the digital marketing area.

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

#### 5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

KVK provides conditions to ensure the teaching staff's academic mobility, and it has an Internationalisation strategy that is renewed every three years. It sends an invitation to take part in the Erasmus+ programme to the academic staff twice a year, followed by screening processes that are not explained in SER. The institution also promotes academic mobility with non-EU members KA131 and KA171 and higher education institutions in Sakartvelo and Albania. KVK organises international weeks every year to attract representatives of foreign institutions of higher education,

enabling KVK lecturers to communicate, share experiences, and discuss prospective research or project cooperation.

The number of teachers mobilities, outgoing and incoming, has been augmenting (in 2023, it reached 56,25% of the digital marketing teachers and 25% of incoming professionals from foreign institutions), and the results of those mobilities are incorporated into improving the subject's content and methodological learning with new pedagogies and teaching materials. It also helps to strengthen relationships, resulting in new cooperation agreements with foreign educational institutions, which is positive.

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

Lecturer qualification improvement is subject to the KVK Staff Qualification Improvement Procedure, and funds are allocated to finance staff qualification improvement activities.

The training programmes have a wide range of possibilities, from integration modules for new employers and language courses to more technological and scientific works to be developed by the teachers. This plan is based on the fields of scientific interests of the lecturers, the subjects they teach, and KVK priorities. Lecturer decisions on the competencies to improve and appropriate methods are determined by their scientific interests and aims, defined during the annual interview with the department head, and decisions adopted by the committee of the study programme, and every year, they express the intention to attend and the costs involved in their training and improvement plans.

It is stated in SER that "During the period in question, all lecturers improved their qualifications by taking part in international conferences abroad and Lithuania, attending various qualification improvement events, where they learned about the latest organisational challenges and tendencies, research findings, also improved their remote teaching competencies, acted as members or leaders of various working groups, developed their learning, general and subject-related competencies, and foreign language skills (...) also raise their qualifications by participating in or leading scientific committees of international scientific conferences, reviewing and writing scientific papers". This situation was confirmed during the site visit when the lecturers present were aware of the procedures of the training programme definition and participation.

#### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

The mobility plan is growing and expresses KVK's effort to ensure teaching mobilities.

The training plan is agreed upon between teachers and faculty, and the department supports teachers in improving their different competences. Therefore, KVK is improving its numbers of mobilities (outgoing and incoming) and is promoting the teachers' development, allowing them to take opportunities to improve their work and impact the study programme. It is a continuous effort that cannot be stopped.

### AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 5	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial	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
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		shortcomings to be eliminated.			without any shortcomings
<b>First cycle</b>			3		

## COMMENDATIONS

1. Adequate teacher's stability and experience.
2. Teachers are given possibilities of internationalisation
3. The college systematically supports the competence development of the teaching staff.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings:

1. Attract more Ph.D. teachers in the DM field.
2. Internationalisation and improvement is a continuous work that has to be promoted and supported
3. The SP DM lacks teaching staff, and it should attract young professionals to the digital marketing area.

## AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

The institution has the requisite material resources to facilitate effective teaching and learning. All classrooms are furnished with multimedia and remote/hybrid work equipment. All computers are connected to a network, and internet access is also available in the dormitories, where students may utilise their computers for assignments undertaken outside of the classroom.

This encompasses both the physical classroom facilities and the requisite hardware and software. The institution boasts a computer lab, which provides students access to a range of software, including Adobe Premiere, Clip Camp, Kdenlive, and Canva. Additionally, it houses a Business Competence Centre, which hosts two practice enterprises that simulate actual enterprise operations through the Simulith network in Lithuania. The Media Lab allows students to engage in filming and photography, while the Individual/Group Work Lab provides a dedicated space for collaborative projects. Students may access software pertinent to their academic programme, including but not limited to WordPress, ChatGPT, CopyAI, OpenArt, Hotpot.ai, and Gencraft. Additionally, they may utilise other software to develop their research and business practices, such as SPSS23.0, accessible from 18 workstations, and STEKAS PLIUS and BSS IT. However, in the visit meetings, it was possible to comprehend some difficulties in using the software within the study programme courses, where some of them do not use all the computing programs offered or use a more modern version. The use of business simulation is important, but there are more specific marketing simulation tools that could be implemented as well.

The college's purchasing strategy is characterised by centralisation, whereby all hardware, software and other necessary resources are purchased through public procurement in accordance with a predefined annual plan. The library provides course books in Lithuanian and some in English. Furthermore, academic staff and students can access online academic research databases (e.g. EBSCO, Taylor & Francis, Springer, and Emerald).

In the library can find some equipment and software designed to facilitate access for visitors with special needs (e.g., SuperNova Magnifier 13.03, JAWS 14 for Windows, Win Taker Voice 1.6). Additionally, they have keyboards designed for individuals with visual disabilities and alternative computer mice for those with motor disorders. All classrooms have ergonomic seating and work surfaces, with some workspaces equipped with stationary magnifiers. It is important to refer to the video statement of a special needs graduate student of KVK, who said that the institution was very attractive to him because of the elevators.

#### 6.1.2. There is continuous planning for and upgrading of resources.

On an annual basis, the Business Faculty prepares a procurement plan, which itemises all the resources required to successfully complete the programme of study. The necessity for both long-term and short-term assets required for the study of marketing is determined through discussions with lecturers, considering the requirements of students. The needs and requirements information is

collated into a priority procurement list, which is then discussed at the departmental level, documented in a protocol, and transformed into a plan for the procurement needs for the year in question. Furthermore, data regarding the requisite measures (IT software, scientific and special literature) for the studies is collected in collaboration with social partners and through the organisation of the study process. Subsequently, the necessity is either fulfilled without delay or incorporated into the annual plan.

## **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)**

KVK implements the necessary procedures to provide an adequate environment and infrastructure to endorse the teaching and learning process. However, sometimes the software access offer is not entirely sufficient or suitable for the needs stated in the visit meeting. It was possible to understand that some software is not enough and used in research development (e.g. SPSS only has 18 workstations, and there is no evidence of its use in most of the research) and sometimes the software mentioned is not implemented enough in the content of the study programme like SEO and google analytics tools and Adobe Illustrator (which is not mentioned and very necessary in digital marketing).

## **AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS**

<b>AREA 6</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory - 1</b> Does not meet the requirements	<b>Satisfactory - 2</b> Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated.	<b>Good - 3</b> Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	<b>Very good - 4</b> Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	<b>Exceptional - 5</b> Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
<b>First cycle</b>				X	

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The infrastructure, the equipment and the set of software offered by KVK are mostly adequate for the study programme
2. There is an organised procedure to ensure continuous improvement through the acquisition of the resources needed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For further improvements:

1. There is a need to reflect more on the use of some software in the study programme content (e.g. SEO tools, Adobe Illustrator), output (e.g. research), and specific needs (e.g. marketing simulators).

## 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, continuous monitoring, transparency, and public information.
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### FACTUAL SITUATION

#### 7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

The KVK employs a systematic assessment of the internal quality of the studies in question. Some documents express the procedures and process of the different quality assurance strategies within the teaching and learning process. This encompasses the provision of feedback from students (subsequent to the conclusion of each academic semester) and delineating the processes through which this feedback is subjected to review and evaluation. Furthermore, feedback is solicited from social partners and other stakeholders annually, in addition to a more comprehensive survey conducted biannually. Teachers and students stated, during the site visit, that they were aware of the quality procedures.

The KVK initiates and organises a series of periodic and systematic surveys and studies, including student surveys conducted after each semester, an annual assessment of student and graduate satisfaction with the quality of the programme, an evaluation of employer perceptions of the preparedness of KVK graduates for the workplace conducted every two years, and an internal and external audit conducted annually.

The findings of the feedback and studies are subjected to analysis by the head of the department and the committee responsible for the study programme. They also analyse the data, identify potential areas for improvement and determine the measures to be integrated into the enhancement of the study programme or the study process.

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

The study programme committee is comprised of lectures, students and social partners, who collectively exert influence over all aspects of the programme. Furthermore, a yearly roundtable with social partners is held, during which the knowledge and skills are discussed.

Data collection for the DM study program is conducted through feedback procedures outlined in the KVK quality manual, including annual stakeholder opinion surveys. The analysis of stakeholder feedback on study outcomes, content, and evaluation methods is conducted by lecturers, while heads of BAD and CSP are responsible for reviewing program quality feedback. The results of these consultations are disseminated both internally, to lecturers, administration and faculty, and externally, to students and social partners, through meetings, seminars and conferences.

The social partners expressed satisfaction with this process and their level of involvement, on the applied projects, the evaluation of the final theses and on the SP feedback given. The students indicated that they perceive a degree of influence and that their feedback on the courses is given due consideration. Any subsequent action taken as a consequence of the feedback received is communicated back to the relevant stakeholders. However, there is a need to impact the compliance of the stakeholders better needs with the marketing content of the study programme. Sometimes, it fails to develop the marketing knowledge and competences compared with the focus on integrating the business needs and feedback.

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

Programme enhancements are initiated on an annual basis, guided by stakeholder feedback and survey results. Recent changes include the introduction of a new subject, Visual Technologies, the removal of an optional subject in the 5th semester, and adjustments to study topics and practical assignments. This systematic feedback and revision process is intended to ensure that the programme effectively meets its stated goals and the needs of its stakeholders.

The publicly available information regarding the degrees, for example, on the institution's website, appears to be sufficient. It would be advantageous if students and social partners were more cognizant of their input's role in influencing future modifications to the degree. Overall, this area seems to be satisfactory, but there is room for improvement regarding making the impact of the received feedback more apparent.

### 7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

The assessment of the educational process and the quality of the academic programme is conducted at KVK annually through the administration of student surveys. Two instruments are employed to assess student satisfaction with the quality of their studies, namely the digital marketing program. A subject evaluation questionnaire issued by the KVK Quality Centre is made available on EDINA after the examination results are available. And a survey of student satisfaction with the quality of their studies. The analysis of the results representing student satisfaction with their studies revealed that the general index of the study programme student satisfaction with the quality of their studies in 2023 was 81%.

Some indications of the number of students answering the surveys are missing in SER to be able to analyse the meaning of the 81% satisfaction. High satisfaction areas included active teaching methods and lecturer cooperation. Everyone in the site visit meetings answered that they fill the surveys.

During meetings with students and lecturers, several measures of improvement are discussed, such as implementing student incentives, updating subject content, involving social partners in the study process, providing access to electronic databases for assignments, preparing joint assignments across semester subjects, enhancing lecturers' subject-related, digital, and general competencies, and improving internship management monitoring. These measures have been incorporated into the department's action plan and the individual plans of lecturers involved in the DM programme. The resulting increase in the satisfaction index indicates that the actions and measures applied to manage and enhance the study programme and process are both effective and efficient.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

KVK is a very organised institution with clear procedures, strong alignment with labour market needs, and the ability to incorporate suggestions. However, in SER and the visit meetings, it was possible to understand that there is a need to balance the answer to market needs and the broader development of marketing competences. Focusing more on global marketing trends is necessary to prepare to work everywhere and enhance students' international employability.

### AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

<b>AREA 7</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory - 1</b> Does not meet the requirements	<b>Satisfactory - 2</b> Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated.	<b>Good - 3</b> Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	<b>Very good - 4</b> Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	<b>Exceptional - 5</b> Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
<b>First cycle</b>				X	

### COMMENDATIONS

1. There is a structure of quality management in the study field.
2. The feedback of the stakeholders who are truly involved with KVK is integrated into the study programme content.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

For further recommendations

1. There is a need to balance the answer to market needs and the broader development of marketing competences.

## V. SUMMARY

The Digital Marketing Study Program (SPDM) at KVK demonstrates strong alignment with the institution's vision, goals, and sustainable initiatives. The program structure effectively supports the continuous development of student competencies, integrating market needs through active involvement with social partners. However, improvements are necessary for course unification, final thesis quality, and increasing the number of PhD teachers in the digital marketing field. Expanding elective course options and integrating more technical analysis into program outcomes would further enhance the curriculum.

Scientific output in the program has increased but is heavily dependent on a small portion of the teaching staff. Many publications focus on communication rather than marketing or digital marketing. Strategic research guidelines, closer collaboration with the Lithuanian Marketing Association, and greater engagement of teaching staff in high-level scientific work are recommended. Final theses should align with the latest marketing developments, incorporating statistical tools and software to improve their quality and relevance.

While KVK provides extensive support for students and ensures adequate infrastructure, the competitive score range for admissions poses challenges for quality assurance. Procedures for crediting prior learning are in place but require greater dissemination. International mobility opportunities are available but constrained by working students, necessitating stronger promotion and support.

The teaching process is robust, offering diverse methods to achieve intended learning outcomes. However, social and personal competencies need to be developed and the relationship between courses and learning outcomes strengthened. Enhancing the theoretical content of courses, integrating statistical analyses in final assignments, and refining employability analysis systems are crucial.

Teacher workload challenges affect their ability to contribute to research, and a focus on recruiting younger professionals in digital marketing is essential to address these gaps. Internationalisation efforts and teacher mobility plans are improving, reflecting KVK's commitment to staff development.

The institution provides adequate infrastructure, but the availability and integration of specific software, such as SEO tools, Google Analytics, and Adobe Illustrator, needs enhancement. These tools should be better reflected in the curriculum and research activities.

Overall, KVK is an organised institution with a clear focus on labour market alignment. However, balancing market needs with broader marketing competencies and global trends is necessary to enhance students' international employability and prepare them for evolving global challenges.

The Expert's team appreciated the carefully structured and written self-evaluation report. During the study visit, there was an opportunity to understand, discuss, and brainstorm the KVK and SPDM context and situation.

## VI. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Examples of excellence should include examples exhibiting exceptional characteristics that are implicitly not achievable by all.

*If, according to the review panel, there are no such exceptional characteristics demonstrated by the HEI in this particular study field, this section should be skipped / left empty.*