SKVC

STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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INFORMATION SERVICES FIELD OF STUDY

Vilnius University

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:

1. Panel chair: Prof. Anna Maria Tammaro ……………………….. (signature)
2. Academic member: Asoc. Prof. Baiba Holma
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4. Student representative: Greta Namentkevič

SKVC coordinator: Greta Misevičiūtė

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: Prof. Anna Maria Tammaro
2. Academic member: Asoc. Prof. Baiba Holma
3. Academic member: Asoc. Prof. Franjo Pehar
4. Student representative: Greta Namentkevič

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 5 May 2025 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(ies);
- Team responsible for preparation of the SER;
- Teaching staff;
- Students;
- Alumni and social stakeholders including employers.

There was no need for translation and the meetings were conducted in English.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

Vilnius University (VU), established in 1579, holds the distinction of being Lithuania's oldest and largest higher education institution. The university is made up of 15 main academic units, which include 11 faculties, an institute, a center, an academy, and a business school. Additionally, there are 12 core non-academic units. As a state university, Vilnius University underwent significant higher education reforms after Lithuania regained independence in 1990. The Bologna Declaration was signed by the university in 1999, and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) was implemented in 2011. The university's programs are structured to allow for easy comparison of qualifications awarded in Lithuania and abroad in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The Vilnius University (VU) study quality management system is designed to ensure high-quality studies and the processes that support them. Its purpose is to establish the groundwork for the university's study quality assurance policy and to build a culture of quality. The Study Quality Guide is the central document for managing the academic aspects of the VU study quality system. This guide covers: 1) the internal processes and procedures for assuring study quality; 2) the responsibilities and obligations for ensuring and improving study quality; and 3) the indicators used to evaluate study quality. The rules and procedures described in the Study Quality Guide follow the assessment areas set out in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model (EFQM), which has been customized for the university.

Overview of the study field

Information Services studies are offered within the Faculty of Communication, established in 1991. This faculty houses four research units—traditionally referred to as departments—that each conduct research and offer studies in their respective domains: the Department of Book, Media and Publishing Studies; the Department of Organisational Information and Communication Research; the Department of Digital Cultures and Communication; and the Centre for Journalism and Media Studies. In 1995, building on the success of the PHARE project "Education for Information Management in Lithuania," Vilnius University partnered with institutions from Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, and Sweden to develop and launch a Master's degree program in Information Management. This recognition highlighted the necessity to analyze social communication processes from an informational perspective and to develop a broader communication and information theory.. Formal study programs in Information Services at Vilnius University commenced in 1997.

Vilnius University offers three study programmes in Information Services:

- *BA in Business Information Management*
- *MA in Information Systems Management*
- *MA in Knowledge Management and Leadership*

The Information Services study programs at Vilnius University have been significantly revised and managed to comply with regulations from both the Republic of Lithuania and the European Union. These regulations include national laws and ministerial orders related to education, science, and studies, as well as EU standards for quality assurance in higher education. Additionally, the program committees follow Vilnius University's internal regulations and strategic plans. These efforts ensure the programs provide a thorough education that meets local, national requirements and adheres to international standards. The study programmes are regularly updated considering the latest scientific

developments, labour market needs, strategic development goals of Lithuania and the European Union, expert evaluations, suggestions from social partners and stakeholders, and feedback from students.

Previous external evaluations

The study programmes in the field of Information Services underwent external evaluation in 2021. The external experts evaluation was limited by COVID-19 restrictions, with online site visit and relying primarily on self-report analysis.

On August 9, 2022, the Centre for Quality Assessment of Studies completed its review and accredited the programs for the next three years. After this, an improvement plan was developed to address specific issues that had been found. This plan was approved by the Vice-Rector of Studies at Vilnius University on May 2, 2023. The plan included 41 specific actions to be carried out throughout 2023 (more details are in Appendix No. 7).

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**:

- Appendix 1 Objectives and learning outcomes of study programmes in the study field of information services

- Appendix 2 Study programme plans in the field of information services BA in business information management study programme plan (Full-time studies), academic year 2023 (Competences and learning outcomes based on course units (modules) within the study programme)

- Appendix 3 coherence of study outcomes, study subjects, study and assessment methods in the study programmes in information services BA study program in business information management

- Appendix 4 A list of permanent (at least half-time and at least 3 years at the institution) teaching staff in the field of information services

- Appendix 5 List of final thesis topics (2021–2023) Business information management bachelor study programme

- Appendix 6 List of higher education institutions visited by students for partial studies during the evaluation period

- Appendix 7 Improvement plan and progress report of the study field of information services (SP "Business Information Management" (6121JX022), "Management of Information Systems" (6211JX029), "Knowledge Management and Leadership" (6211JX030))

- Appendix 8 Study programme committees for the study programmes in the field of information services

Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

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

Final papers and tasks for students:

- Master Information System Management
- Master Knowledge Management and Leadership
- Bachelor Business Information Management

External evaluation report study field of information services at Vilnius University (2022)

Study Quality Guide 2024

Additional information 2025: Courses in English, Guidelines and regulations for AI, Data Management Plan, process in updating online information, transparency of existing improvement, information regarding the new programme, students research projects, employability after graduation, process of including engaging external teaching staff, additional information on international students, publications of the Faculty

Course description: Connected life, culture and identity, Information security, Leadership communication,Media and advertising,Media and Information Literacy, Quantitative research methods

Description of the Field of Information Services, approved by Order No V-1604 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania on 22 December 2023. Available online: https://skvc.lrv.lt/en/quality-assurance/study-fields-descriptors/

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	Business Information Management
State code	6121JX022
Type of study (college/university)	University studies
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time, 4 years
Workload in ECTS	240
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Bachelor of Social Sciences
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Secondary education
First registration date	1997-05-19 Nr. 565
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	

Second cycle/LTQF 7

Title of the study programme	Information System Management	Knowledge Management and Leadership
pState code	6211JX029	6211JX030
Type of study (college/university)	University studies	University studies
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full time, 2 years	Full time, 1 year and half
Workload in ECTS	120	90
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Master of Social Science	Master of Social Science
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Admission requirements	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree
First registration date	1997-05-19 Nr. 565	1997-05-19 Nr. 565
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 Information Services 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	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	4
	Total:	28

The **second cycle** of the Information Services 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	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	4
	Total:	28

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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.
[2]

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 Faculty of Communication of the Vilnius University (hereinafter – the Faculty) provides three study programmes in the field of Information Services: one undergraduate study programme − Business Information Management (BA "Business Information Management") − and two graduate study programmes − Information Systems Management (MA "Information Systems Management"), and Knowledge Management and Leadership (MA "Knowledge Management and Leadership").
All three programmes belong to the Information science subfield - knowledge and information management in organizations and the Faculty provides study programmes in this subfield of Information Science from 1997 making necessary changes and improvements both in the programmes and its curriculum to educate information and knowledge management professionals.

The SER clearly and convincingly describes the necessity for the need for specialists trained in these study programmes in the labour market. First of all it refers to the conceptual and strategic documents: both of the European Union, and Lithuania. Second, it characterizes changes in the development of society, stressing the widespread use of information and communication technologies, and therefore - technological and other transformations influencing changes in every aspect of organisational work and society. Third, it justifies the needs for information specialists with relevant knowledge and skills aligned with these changes. Stable and growing need for these specialists in Lithuania is proved by the results of assessment by the Lithuanian Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA), Lithuanian business service report (2023) and National Employment Service. Necessity for graduates of study programmes was confirmed in the meeting with social partners.

Learning outcomes (LO) provided by the study programmes are improved compared with previous accreditation (2022), and it is based on the demands of the labour market (social partners), recommendations of international professional organisations, foreign partners providing similar education programs, and aligned with national and Vilnius University legal requirements for the study process. It refers also to the OECD (2023) inventory of competences for the 21st Century.

According to the SER, and specifically the information in the Appendix 1, LO are formulated to align with legal requirements for study process (complexity of obtained knowledge and skills for each study cycle, necessary competencies of the field of Information Services) and missions and visions of Vilnius University.

BA "Business Information Management"
As the aim of this programme is to educate information management specialists for organizations who are competent in information management and communication processes within organizations, the subject-specific competencies of LO are detailed and cover topics of knowledge and information, knowledge and information management, information systems, organisational systems and processes, activities and problem analyses of organizations.
LO include basic research skills and competencies, as well as understanding of information behaviour of individuals and groups and understanding of the necessity of ICT application, skills how to organise communication services and manage projects, information seeking and retrieval.
General competencies include personal and social skills. Personal skills encompass the individual's capacity for self-assessment in relation to their professional growth and development, identification of

the problems of the field and possibilities to solve problems, skills in information seeking and critical analyses, development of information tools; as well as dissemination / communication of information. Social skills include different types of communication skills and teamwork.

Aim and LO of the BA "Business Information Management" are coordinated and reflect both needs of the labor market and requirements of 21st century information society (information management, ICT, organisational management, information and communication services, project management; basic research skills, information and media literacy, communication skills, self improvement assessment, teamwork).

MA "Information Systems Management"

The aim of this programme is to educate qualified experts capable of information systems management (in all aspects - design, maintenance, development, problem identification and solution, developing strategies for its implementation, application of latest IT).

The subject-specific competencies of LO of the programme cover knowledge and skills about the importance of information and knowledge for society and organisational performance, design, maintenance and development of information systems, issues of intellectual property, analysis of data flows, strategic management of information services. LO focuses also in providing interdisciplinarity competencies (information science, communication science, computer science etc.) for more successful management of information systems in organizations.

It includes profound knowledge and skills in research like possibilities "to carry out interdisciplinary research using data mining techniques and the latest programming technologies, taking into account the principles of information services",

More specific competencies (special competencies) of LO of this programme are abilities to identify and solve complex consumer problems by applying innovative methods, analyses of information environment and information needs of organization, use of latest tools for information system development and to improve performance of organizations, as well as data processing, development of databases and innovative information services in a different professional environments.

General competencies include the following personal skills: independent IT use for information management, information literacy, leading teamwork, problem solving. Social skills are leading teamwork, group activities, structured process approach to assess information systems, proactive problem solving, ethical information behaviour, responsibility for individual and team's performance, and motivational skills.

Aim and LO of the master programme are coordinated and LO include competencies important for society and the field (differents aspects of information systems management in organizations, latest ICT application, strategic management of information services, interdisciplinary approach to information systems problem identification and solutions, profound research skills, analyses of information environment and information needs, appropriate delivery of information services, leading teamwork and group work, motivational skills, responsibility for performance, proactive problem solving etc.).

MA "Knowledge Management and Leadership"

Aim of this master programme is to educate highly qualified professionals in knowledge management and leadership "*for intelligent, creative, knowledge-based businesses".*

The subject-specific competencies of LO includes understanding of knowledge and information in society, strategic analysis techniques of information and knowledge management in organizations, competencies for solutions of communication problems, creativity and implementation of strategic projects for improvement of organisation effectiveness. It includes research competencies for investigation of knowledge management and leadership as well as communication and information problems, use project management approach for market research and assessment of information services and products, assess the quality of research (identify problems and shortcomings). Special competencies include abilities to communicate and collaborate in intercultural and multicultural environments using ICT in different professional settings, competencies to analyse leadership and legal norms in leadership relations, critically analyse information used in decision making process.

General competencies include personal and social skills. Personal skills cover learning skills, time and task management skills, information and data literacy, collaboration skills, ability to integrate different viewpoints, negotiation, communication skills, and problem solving. Social competencies include effective communication and team leading skills.

Aim and LO of this master programme are coordinated and correspond to the needs of society and labour market - information professionals are more focused on leadership and knowledge management in organizations with subject specific competencies on leadership and improvement of organization effectiveness with use of information, information technologies, and successful communication.

Each study programme is designed with a specific aim to prepare information professionals for particular roles and areas of specialization within the field:

1) in BA "Business Information Management"
   - to educate information professionals in information management in organisations with the following career possibilities: information and communication specialists, (IT) project managers, public relations and marketing specialists in both business and public sector organisations, as well as in communication agencies;
2) in MA "Information System Management"
   - to prepare experts in information systems management with career possibilities in various organisations that require the development and management of information systems and technologies focusing on the effective organisation of processes related to data collection, processing, storage, and ethical use. These organisations can include business enterprises, public institutions, non-governmental organisations, and more. The specific positions available to graduates of the programme depend on the type and size of the organisation, but typically include roles such as Information System Project Manager or Lead Specialist, IT Project Manager or Lead Specialist, Information Technology Consultant, Analyst, Information Technology and System Developer, and Data Management Specialist.
3) in MA "Knowledge Management and Leadership"
   - to prepare professionals in knowledge management and leadership with career possibilities in private, public, and non-governmental sector organisations, where they develop, implement, or enhance effective knowledge and information management by creating organisational memory and preserving the expertise and knowledge of employees. Career opportunities include such roles as Specialist, Coordinator, Manager, Supervisor, or Consultant in organisations engaged in areas such as Knowledge Management, Business Analytics, Innovation, Creativity, Science and Technology, Communication, and Public Relations, or in departments of organisations that perform these functions.

All study programmes cover in different levels and scope the following topics: information and knowledge management, the application of ICT in organisational information and knowledge processing, and the management of organisations and organizational communications, research of information and communication. Master level study programmes place emphasis on information systems, communication, leadership, use of technology, and strategic planning.

Based on the LO, it can be concluded that the BA provides the basis for information management in organisations, while both master programmes provide specialization possibilities in knowledge and information management in organizations - each has different focuses: the first - on information systems (more technology oriented) and the second - on knowledge management and leadership (more oriented on human capital and information resources). Student enrolment figures reflect the degree of interest in the respective study programmes. According to SER, there are 326 students in the BA "Business information management" programme, 28 students in MA "Information system management" and 28 - in MA "Knowledge management and Leadership". This leads to the conclusion that each programme is distinctive and educates information professionals with different career possibilities relevant to labour market needs.

As all study programmes belong to a rapidly changing local and global information field (for example, technological transformations regarding AI, cybersecurity, etc.), regular updates of LO competencies are necessary. Consequently, a clear understanding of how IT development influences the ongoing transformation of knowledge and competencies is crucial for the effective maintenance and continuous improvement of all study programmes.

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

According to the document "The Statute of Vilnius University" (Approved by Law No. I-281 as of 12 June 1990 of the Republic of Lithuania (version of Law XII-862 as of 6 May 2014 of the Republic of Lithuania) Vilnius University mission is "*arising from the past, driven by the challenges of the present, and to be passed onto future generations – shall be the University's irrefutable obligation and inalienable right to enhance cognitive and creative powers of both Lithuania and the world; to nurture academic and other spiritual and social values; and to educate active, responsible citizens and society leaders of the State of Lithuania*".

Based on the SER, all study programmes are developed due to the changing needs of society and labour market - "*driven by challenges of the present*" - to provide competent information specialists (experts, highly qualified professionals) - knowledge and information management professionals in organisations ("*cognitive and creative power of both Lituania and world*") - and it is stated in the aim of every programme. Study programmes are regularly updated - for example - since 2022, BA programme has been improved to avoid redundancy, align learning outcomes, and respond to technological and market developments.

Subject-specific competencies and general competences of the LO of all study programmes are aligned with the mission of the Vilnius University and provides possibilities to prepare graduates who are active, responsible citizens, society leaders in information service fields.

Vilnius University Strategic Plans for 2021 - 2025 - highlights three strategic directions: 1) Creating the society and state; 2) Collaborative; 3) Sustainable.

According to SER, Appendix No.1 - the aim and LO of study programmes of the Information Services field is to educate and prepare graduates who are capable of solving societal problems in the information field, who are prepared to conduct research in information and communication, and management field, who has interdisciplinary knowledge base (in information science, communication science, management science, computers science) to better solve problems and develop strategies in information management in organizations. Personal and social skills of general competencies of LO stresses the importance of information and media literacy, communication skills, time and tasks management, teamwork and leadership skills (motivation, organization of groups and project teams)). It is possible to agree that study programmes contribute implementation of Vilnius University priorities.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

Aims and LO of all study programmes are aligned with Lithuania economic and societal needs, and the strategy of Vilnius University. Programmes focus on education and preparation of high quality information professionals responsible for different tasks of information management in organisations (from general information management in organisations in BA programme, to specialization in information systems management, and knowledge management and leadership in MA programmes). LO are aligned with the aim of each study programme and cover relevant subject-specific and general competencies. Due to the dynamic nature of the information field regular updating of competencies are necessary.

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

All study programmes comply with national and Vilnius University's legal and regulatory requirements.

BA "Business Information Management"
The programme is based on the Descriptor of the first cycle study programme (*DESCRIPTOR OF THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDIES*). It has 240 study credits (each semester consisting of 30 credits), from it: 180 credits for subjects of field of studies (including - 20 credits for final thesis, 20 credits for internship) and 60 credits for elective subjects (other field subjects, subjects from other faculties, general university subjects (15 credits)) according to Vilnius University personalization reform.
LO of BA are aligned with the Descriptor of Field of study - Information services (*DESCRIPTOR OF THE STUDY FIELD OF INFORMATION SERVICES*) for the first cycle - bachelor programme.
According to the Appendix 2: total programme workload - 6240 hours, contact hours/onsite contact hours - 2458 hours (39,39%), independent student work - 3782 hours (60,61%). The average workload for all subjects in the programme is 26.56 hours per credit.

MA "Information System Management"
The programme is based on the Descriptor of the second cycle study programme (*DESCRIPTOR OF THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDIES*). It has 120 study credits, each semester consisting of 30 credits. From 120 credits: 90 credits for compulsory subjects of the field of studies (including - 30 credits for final thesis), 30 credits for elective subjects (semester 1 - 3).
LO of MA are aligned with the Descriptor of Field of study - Information services (*DESCRIPTOR OF THE STUDY FIELD OF INFORMATION SERVICES*) for the second cycle - master programme.
According to the Appendix 2: total programme workload - 3200 hours, contact hours/onsite contact hours - max 1064 hours, independent student work - max 2312 hours.

MA "Knowledge management and Leadership"
The programme is based on the Descriptor of the second cycle study programme (*DESCRIPTOR OF THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDIES*): It has 90 study credits, each semester consisting of 30 credits. From 90 credits: 40 credits for compulsory subjects of the field of studies, 30 credits for final thesis, 20 credits for elective subjects (semester 1 - 2).
LO of MA are aligned with the Descriptor of Field of study - Information services (*DESCRIPTOR OF THE STUDY FIELD OF INFORMATION SERVICES*) for the second cycle - master programme.
According to the Appendix 2: total programme workload - 2400 hours, contact hours/onsite contact hours - max 864 hours, independent student work - max 1444 hours.

The average amount in both MA programmes of contact work is from 33% to 36%; the amount of independent work in the programme is from 60% to 72%.

Number of study credits, its allocation and workload correspond to requirements of regulatory documents.

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

According to SER, Appendix No 3., and information obtained during the meeting with teaching staff, a variety of study methods - both passive and active - are employed across all study programmes to achieve the aim of programme and LO. Among the passive methods, lectures are most frequently mentioned. However, a wide range of active learning methods are also used to engage students in the learning process, including seminars, discussions and presentations, case analyses, project work, independent and group research, practical assignments, and individual tasks. Notably, problem-based learning is particularly emphasised in both Master's level study programmes. A significant number of courses indicate the inclusion of individual work as part of the learning process in the Master level programmes. It can be concluded that the applied teaching methods are aligned with a student-centred approach.

It would be beneficial to obtain information on the amount of each instructional method used in the study process, to understand which method is the dominant method and how important are lectures still in the study process.

According to the meeting with teaching staff, and SER, attention is paid to improve teaching methods and to use more innovative and interactive forms. Teachers improved their pedagogical skills in specially organized training: seminar and workshop.

There are different assessment methods used in all study programmes: final and midterm tests, exams, individual and group presentations, reports on the project (group project); case analyses, cumulative grading, assessment forms according to the type is diagnostic, formative, individual, summative type. The use of assessment methods does not differ substantially across the programmes.

According to the SER and based on recommendations of previous external evaluation, assessments for each study programme course were revised and improved to promote student learning motivation. Teachers had a possibility to improve their pedagogical skills in the seminar - "Methods of Assessing Study Achievements: Examples of Best Practices."

1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

According to SER, the programmes provide a clear description of the full range of competencies developed during the studies: general (personal and social) and subject-specific (knowledge, competencies of conducting research, special competencies).

Curriculum of **BA "Business Information Management"** divides subjects into four groups: 1. The core subjects, 2. General university education subjects; 3. Special (professional) part of the study subjects; 4. Individual study courses.

There are the following thematic areas in the curriculum: 1) Information and Knowledge Management, 2) IT Applications in Business, 3) Communication and Visualization; 4) Research and Academic Skills; 5) Business and Organizational Management. Each thematic area has 4-6 mandatory subjects and optional (elective) subjects which are related to mandatory subjects. It is mentioned that the study process provides strong theory-practice connection. The curriculum has been structured to provide a logical sequence of course acquisition during 8 semesters, with a gradual advancement in knowledge and skills: first year is more focused on general courses (communication, creativity, economics, ICTs) and introduction to information and academic skills, second - provides transition to applied knowledge; subjects in information systems, research ethics, and the start of coursework; third - specialization in systems, law, analytics, integrated communication, and individual elective pathways, and forth - mandatory internship, bachelor thesis project, research writing, and advanced analytics topics.

There are also relevant approaches used in choice of teaching / learning and obtained competencies: first two years place greater emphasis on classroom learning and foundational knowledge, third and fourth - on independent work, specialization, applied skills, and research.

The curriculum now consists of 180 study credits of compulsory studies and 60 study credits allocated to individual studies (personalization). Offered from 2nd to 7th semester, electives allow students to focus on preferred areas to deepen specific competencies (e.g., negotiation, social media, innovation, databases, intercultural communication).

The curriculum balances general competencies (personal, social, communicative) and subject-specific competencies (theoretical knowledge, research skills, and professional abilities), and integrates theory with practice, culminating in a final-year internship and a bachelor's thesis. The programme is practice-oriented, using real-world examples, guest lecturers, field visits, and applied tools. Since 2022, updates have been made to avoid redundancy, align learning outcomes, and respond to technological and market developments.

MA "Information Systems Management" is logically connected with **BA "Business Information Management"** but with more specialization and deeper focus on research. The progression pathway from BA to MA is clearly defined and pedagogically sound.

Curriculum of **MA "Information Systems Management"** divides subjects in the following groups: 1. Core subjects; 2. Specialised and business management subjects; 3. Subjects related to research and project implementation; 4. Electives and special courses.

There are 4 semesters in the study programme. Each semester provides 4 mandatory subjects and 2 optional subjects. Students have to complete compulsory subjects while customising their path through electives aligned with their interests and career goals.

First semester provides subjects which support development of foundation and research competencies; the second semester focuses more on application and development subjects, the third semester on advanced integration and decision-making and the fourth semester is devoted to the master thesis.

Curriculum of the MA **"Knowledge Management and Leadership"** divides subjects in the following groups.: 1. Core subjects; 2. Specialised and business management subjects; 3. Subjects related to research and project implementation; 4. Electives and special courses. There are 3 semesters. Two semesters provide 4 mandatory subjects and 2 electives, which are complementary to core subjects. From 2024: The entire third semester (30 credits) dedicated to master's thesis.

Programme offers a balanced curriculum of theory and practice, combining compulsory core subjects with electives that support specialisation based on student interests and career goals. Each semester includes project work or a research paper to apply knowledge in real-world contexts. Courses are regularly updated to reflect evolving technologies and practices in knowledge and information services. Faculty during the site visit described the programme's strength as its "complexity", pointing to its capacity to respond to rapidly changing societal needs and to support a wide range of academic and professional directions.

Curriculum design of all study programmes support logical and gradual development of competencies (both subjects and teaching methods).

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

One of the distinctive strengths of the programme is its high level of personalisation and flexibility. According to SER, and meetings with students, and teaching staff, there are several opportunities to personalize curriculum: individual study plans, study in international exchange programme, a broad choice of elective courses and interdisciplinary modules (25 credits in BA programme, 30 credits in MA programme in Information Systems Management, and 25 credits in the MA programme in Knowledge Management and Leadership), optional internships, minor degree studies, recognition of competencies obtained in prior, non-formal and informal learning.

From 2023 - BA programme provides possibility for students to choose 1/4 (60 study credits) study courses of the study programme.

The optional and minor subjects are carefully integrated with the core curriculum and support career-focused specialisation and interdisciplinary learning.

As a student insightfully noted during the site visit, the programme feels "like a lake where you don't know what you'll find"—a metaphor that reflects the breadth and openness of the curriculum.

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

According to SER and information in the Faculty homepage, there are thoughtful, well-documented final thesis (bachelor and master thesis) preparation and defence procedures. It is well designed, with clear, structured, and transparent description of procedures.

There are several documents regulating preparation of final theses: starting from the Vilnius University level (*Regulations for the Preparation, Defence and Storage Written Academic Papers of Vilnius University Students approved by the Senate of the University; Procedure for the Administration of Research Papers in Vilnius University Study Information System approved by the Vice-Rector of Studies of the University*) up to the Faculty level (*the Methodological Guidelines for Written Theses of the Faculty of Communication*).

The requirements for the preparation of bachelor's and master's theses, along with the evaluation criteria, are detailed in the Methodological Guidelines for Written Theses of the Faculty of Communication. Guidelines for preparation, supervision, and evaluation are robust and ensure consistency, quality, and fairness.

There are clear distinctions between requirements for bachelor and master thesis, as well as criteria for evaluation. In the case of a master thesis, it is emphasized that "*the master thesis must not be purely descriptive or limited to a general overview of a problem*" but it has to "*be analytical and based on basic or applied scientific research*".

The final research project synthesises the knowledge and competencies developed throughout the programme, and often includes practical engagement with real-world problems connected with different issues "*in one of the thematic areas within the field of communication and information sciences*". The provided information (SER, Appendix No 5) confirms that topics of the BA and MA thesis (2021- 2023) were in communication science (advertising, internal communication in organizations, visual communication, gender studies, public relations, branding etc,), management science (leadership, risk management, project management, organisational culture, issues of management and communication and management and information and knowledge management, marketing), and in information science (knowledge management, knowledge creation and sharing, information management, information behaviour, usability, AI technologies).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

BA and both MA study programmes fully comply with national and institutional legal and regulatory requirements: number of study credits, allocation of study credits and workload of students comply with the stated requirements.

Curriculum offers a coherent and balanced structure, including a solid foundation of core courses. There are specialised and research-based components in the study programmes. All study programmes have a diverse range of elective and minor study opportunities.

Study personalization is the strength of the BA study programme, although the implementation appears to require more time before it can be fully evaluated.

The progression pathway from BA to MA is clearly defined and pedagogically sound.

A wide variety of teaching and assessment methods are used, fostering active learning and supporting different learning styles. Teachers have acquired the latest knowledge in pedagogy and strive to apply it in their professional practice.

Learning outcomes and expected competencies are well aligned with the course content throughout the programmes, and teaching and assessment methods are relevant for the study process.

Preparation and defence procedures of the final thesis are well documented - description of procedures is clear, structured, and transparent. There are clear distinctions between requirements for bachelor and master thesis, based on first and second cycle study programme requirements.

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

First cycle				X	
Second cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Study aims, learning outcomes, and curriculum of all study programmes are aligned with conceptual and strategic documents of EU, and Lithuania, and respond to labour market needs. Aims and LO correspond to Vilnius University mission and directions of strategic plan.
2. LO of study programmes are formulated clearly and according to the Descriptor of the General requirements for the implementation of studies and the Descriptor of the Study field of Information services and are also informed by input from labour market stakeholders.
3. BA "Business Information Management" and both MA study programmes ("Information System Management" and "Knowledge Management and Leadership") fully comply with national and institutional legal and regulatory requirements in number of study credits, its allocation and workload of students.
4. Curriculum of all study programmes offers a coherent and balanced structure: it has a solid foundation of core courses, specialised and research-based components, a diverse range of elective and minor study opportunities. Learning outcomes and expected competencies are well aligned with the course content throughout the programme.
5. The organization of the study process is aimed to foster student-centered learning by providing opportunities for curriculum personalization and incorporating a wide range of applied teaching and assessment methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. To highlight more explicitly the student-centred approach of the study programmes (the consistency of student-centred approaches across all courses and levels, active participation in learning, personalization and flexible learning options, and individual academic progression).
2. In order to enhance student academic performance and the attainment of intended learning outcomes, consider systematically involving both students and teaching staff in evaluating the balance between traditional lectures and interactive or innovative teaching methods.
3. It would be advisable to explore opportunities for further internationalisation of the study programmes, particularly by offering course delivery in English.

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

The study field Information Services is part of the Communication and Information Science field (S 008) within the broader domain of Social Sciences (S 000). At Vilnius University, research in the field is carried out by the Faculty of Communication.

The Faculty's Communication departments focus on specific research areas:

The Department of Book, Media, and Publishing Studies undertakes both fundamental research in book studies, documentation research, and media studies, alongside applied research in publishing, reading, and memory institutions. The main research themes of the Department include:
- publishing in a society of mediated culture and its history;
- documentary and iconographic heritage and its communication;
- the development of documentary communication sciences, the evolution and role of memory institutions and their collections.

The Department of Organisational Information and Communication Research investigates the information and communication infrastructure and activities of organizations within a networked society. The main research themes of the department include:
- information and knowledge management, communication activities within
- organisations, and the changes driven by digital transformation processes;
- communication of organisations, focusing on the analysis of public and media discourses, the communicated identity of organisations, and the assessment of changes in corporate communication, with an emphasis on aligning communicated corporate values with the public interest.

The Department of Digital Cultures and Communication explores the varying consumption of digital entertainment services, influenced by digital and social inequalities, examining their forms of expression and the potential of these services to foster social and digital inclusion. Research themes include:
- research on changes in information and communication practices related to the impact
- of digitisation on the way people communicate, create, consume information and interact;
- digital divide and inequality;
- digital stories and narratives;
- research frameworks for digital communication

The Journalism and Media Research Centre conducts research on journalism and media in Lithuania, focusing on structural, ethical, technological, cultural and political issues in media and journalism. Research themes include:
- media ecosystems and their dynamics;
- political and social communication;
- reception of media content, audiences and their behaviour on different platforms,
- media literacy and education.

Furthermore, the research units actively collaborate with diverse academic partners to produce joint publications, organize scientific events, and facilitate research visits.

The consistently increasing annual research performance assessment scores (See SER 2.1) demonstrate the Faculty's growing research capacity and potential. Research is primarily conducted by teams submitting three-year project applications and plans. To incentivize both the volume and quality of research output, high-achieving research is recognized and rewarded.

International and National Research Collaboration:

Faculty researchers actively collaborate with international colleagues from universities such as Warsaw, Helsinki, Vidzeme Applied Sciences, Stockholm, Oulu, Tartu, and Boras, participating in joint research, projects, and publications. They are also involved in broader international research projects.

Domestically, the Faculty collaborates with Lithuanian partners. A 2022 cooperation agreement with Debunk EU, a disinformation research and media literacy training organization active across several European countries and North America, has seen several faculty researchers contribute to their research using collected data and digital tools.

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

The curriculum actively incorporates R&D outcomes primarily through the engagement of active researchers as instructors. These faculty member research activities enrich their teaching with their own publications, both current and past, relevant to the course content. The evaluated study programs are delivered by 33 lecturers, a significant 81.9% of whom hold advanced degrees (detailed in Area 5.1). They maintain active research profiles, publishing in recognized national and international publications, and these publications are integrated into both core and elective course modules. Notably, research outputs from instructors in the Business Information Management BA program are also included in relevant courses.

These topics immerse students in contemporary research within Communication and Information science (List of thesis Appendix 5). Beyond direct incorporation, lectures, seminars, and exercises actively present and discuss the latest research and technological advancements. Course reading lists feature current publications, supplemented by recent research findings, technological innovations, and the University staff's latest research. Course coordinators are responsible for keeping course descriptions and content up-to-date, ensuring the inclusion of the newest examples and case studies in teaching materials. The Study program committees assess the novelty and relevance of study materials and the integration of research outputs during the approval of new course unit descriptions or the revision of existing ones.

The research interests of the faculty directly influence student research, as reflected in the themes of their final theses (See Final papers and tasks for students). Furthermore, students are required to conduct small research projects and comprehensive literature reviews for their term papers and final theses, demonstrating their understanding of the latest developments in their chosen field.

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

Faculty is actively exploring innovative ways to teach research methods and to enhance student research opportunities. This includes the planned regular publication of "Communication and Information: Students' Research Almanac," edited by Prof. Dr. A. Mikalauskienė, which will provide a platform for students at all levels to publish their research findings. The inaugural issue is currently in preparation.

Students have numerous opportunities for research engagement. The student-led Students' Scientific Society (SSS) coordinates scientific endeavors across all study levels. Following a period of inactivity during the pandemic, efforts are underway to revitalize the SSS, with a dedicated representative within the Faculty's Student Representation overseeing and supporting student research activities. The SSS organizes conferences, such as the 2022 international student conference "Be Part of the Solution: Information Heatwave, Media, and Contemporary Society," which featured student presentations and a published book of abstracts.

Actively involved students also collaborate with faculty on research publications and participate in national (e.g., VU TechHub) and international research competitions. Students who are actively involved in scientific activities collaborate with teachers to prepare research publications. Students can also participate in national (e.g. organised by VU TechHub) and international research competitions.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

Overall, the integration of research into the Information Services curriculum at Vilnius University is strong and well-supported structurally and operationally. The Vilnius University demonstrates good practice in linking teaching with research and fostering student engagement in research.

In conclusion, point 4 is awarded recognizing that the curriculum is linked to the latest research developments.

AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 2	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
First cycle				X	
Second cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The Faculty covers a broad range of research themes that reflect modern challenges in communication and information science, such as digital inequality, media literacy, and disinformation.
2. Instructors regularly incorporate their current research into teaching. Students benefit from exposure to real-time research developments through readings, discussions, and assignments.
3. Program committees review course updates for research relevance, ensuring systematic alignment with cutting-edge developments.
4. A high proportion of teaching staff hold advanced degrees and actively publish in peer-reviewed national and international venues.
5. Students have meaningful opportunities to participate in research, publish, and present, supporting research skill development across all study levels.
6. Engagement in global academic networks enriches the faculty's research profile and provides access to diverse perspectives and methodologies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Student research engagement is still developing: although opportunities exist, initiatives like the Student Research Almanac and revitalisation of the SSS are still in early stages. Full impact will depend on sustained support and student uptake.

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

Admission to the Bachelor of Arts (BA) studies in Information Services is carried out in accordance with "Rules of Admission to First-Cycle Study Programmes of Vilnius University", which are approved by the University Senate and published on the University's website. Admission shall be based on a competitive score calculated according to a set structure and methodology. The BA in Journalism programme also requires the completion of secondary education.

The admission requirements for each field of study, including the minimum scores and compulsory subjects, are clearly stated in the admission documentation. Additional points may be awarded for achievements such as participation in national or international competitions, excellent results in matriculation examinations or completion of preparatory courses. The specific procedures and examples for awarding additional points are specified in the same official documentation.

All relevant information - including criteria, procedures, calculation methodologies and updates - is publicly available on the Vilnius University admissions portal and in official publications, ensuring transparency and accessibility for prospective students.

The SER document provides data on the number of applicants for the following programs:

BA in Business Information Management

MA in Information Systems Management

MA in Knowledge Management and Leadership

For each program and year (2021-2023), the data includes the number of applicants who listed the program as their first priority and the number of applicants who listed it as one of their other priorities. This data is further broken down by whether the applicants were seeking state-funded or non-state-funded places.

BA in Business Information Management:

2021: 76 (state-funded, first priority), 194 (other priorities); 95 (non-state-funded, first priority), 258 (other priorities)
2022: 12 (state-funded, first priority), 60 (other priorities); 0 (non-state-funded, first priority), 20 (other priorities)
2023: 55 (state-funded, first priority), 196 (other priorities); 19 (non-state-funded, first priority), 87 (other priorities)

MA in Information Systems Management:

2021: 27 (state-funded, first priority), 130 (other priorities); no non-state-funded applicants
2022: 37 (state-funded, first priority), 46 (other priorities); 1 (non-state-funded, first priority), 19 (other priorities)
2023: 18 (state-funded, first priority), 17 (other priorities); 1 (non-state-funded, first priority), 2 (other priorities)

MA in Knowledge Management and Leadership:

2021: 67 (state-funded, first priority), 230 (other priorities); 31 (non-state-funded, first priority), 122 (other priorities)
2022: 13 (state-funded, first priority), 35 (other priorities); 2 (non-state-funded, first priority), 13 (other priorities)
2023: 24 (state-funded, first priority), 26 (other priorities); no non-state-funded applicants

The SER document notes that enrollment in the BA program in Business Information Management has been steadily increasing over the last three years. A quota of 75 students is set for admission, but this target has consistently been met or slightly exceeded. The majority (80% or more) of admitted students secure state-funded places. Interest in the graduate study programs is considered sufficient, with the MA in Information Systems Management showing a 30% increase in student numbers during the analyzed period.

The number of signed study contracts over the last three years reflects sustained demand for both undergraduate and graduate programs. In the BA program in Business Information Management, state-funded contracts ranged from 71 in 2021 to 63 in 2023, while non-state-funded contracts increased significantly from 6 to 21 over the same period. This indicates not only that the program continues to meet or slightly exceed its admission quota of 75 students but also that interest extends beyond the availability of state-funded places.

Relative values of admission outcomes further support the strength of these programs. For the BA in Business Information Management, the average admission score has remained stable over the last three years, with state-funded students scoring between 6.16 and 9.26 (average 7.23 in 2023), and non-state-funded students showing similar results. In the MA in Information Systems Management, the average admission score for state-funded students was 24.74 in 2023, compared to 22.52 for non-state-funded students, showing a competitive applicant pool across both categories. The MA in Knowledge Management and Leadership had the highest average admission scores, reaching 26.07 for state-funded students in 2023.

The analysis of these trends in the context of the broader academic field reveals that the programs are not only maintaining stable enrollment but are also attracting well-qualified candidates. The increasing share of non-state-funded students in the BA program suggests growing recognition of the program's value. At the graduate level, consistently high admission scores and strong demand reflect the programs' relevance and alignment with labor market needs in information systems and leadership.

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

Vilnius University (VU) applies a structured and transparent procedure for the recognition of education and qualifications related to higher education and acquired abroad, based on the Lisbon Recognition Convention and national legislation. This includes the "Regulation of the Procedure for Recognition of Education and Qualifications Related to Higher Education and Acquired through Educational Programmes in Foreign States and International Organizations" and other legal documents. VU has been granted the right to carry out such recognition by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania (Order No. V-376 of 23 April 2015). The academic recognition procedure is administered by the Student Admissions Unit of the Study Quality and Development Department.

A foreign qualification is recognised as equivalent if no substantial differences are found between the qualification and the requirements in Lithuania. Each case is assessed individually based on available information and precedents. In addition to foreign qualification recognition, VU allows students to request recognition of formal learning outcomes (e.g. from other institutions), as well as informal or self-directed learning—such as competencies gained through employment, volunteering, training, or independent study. Up to 75% of a program's scope may be recognised for formal learning, and up to 50% for informal or non-formal learning. Final theses, examinations, and similar elements cannot be recognised. The evaluation is conducted by Study Programme Committees (SPCs), and may involve designated assessors or panels.

Although VU has robust recognition procedures in place, during the 2021–2023 period, no applications for recognition of foreign qualifications, or for prior formal, informal, or non-formal learning were submitted by students in the Information Services study field. Therefore, no accredited or non-accredited recognition cases were recorded, and no reasons for non-recognition were documented. The procedures and eligibility requirements remain accessible through university websites and official guidelines for prospective and current students.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

The admission process for the Business Information Management program at VU is well-defined, transparent, and in accordance with academic standards. Both local and international students can access clear information about the admission process and requirements. The program description is aligned with the actual student experience. The procedures for recognizing foreign qualifications are in place and students from international backgrounds are well supported in the integration process.

The SER document provides detailed admission score statistics, presenting the lowest, highest, and average scores of students admitted to each program over the three-year period from 2021 to 2023. These scores offer valuable insight into the competitive nature of admissions and the academic caliber of the incoming cohorts. Specifically, they illustrate the level of demand and the quality of candidates competing for places within each study program.

According to the Vilnius University Self-Evaluation Report for the Business Information Services study field (2024), this admission data is further segmented by funding status, distinguishing between state-funded and non-state-funded places. This breakdown allows for a more nuanced understanding of the student profile across different funding categories. For instance, in 2023, the average admission score for students enrolling in the BA Business Information Management program was 7.23 for both state-funded and non-state-funded places, indicating a comparable level of academic preparedness among students regardless of their funding source.

Master's level programs within the Business Information Services field also reflect a high degree of academic competition. The average admission scores for these programs typically exceed 24 points, highlighting the rigorous selection process and the strong academic background of the admitted students. This trend underscores the university's commitment to maintaining high educational standards and attracting capable candidates to its graduate programs.

Overall, the admission score data from 2021 to 2023 reveals consistent competition across different study levels and funding categories, offering a comprehensive view of the academic readiness and competitiveness of the student body entering Vilnius University's Business Information Services programs.

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

Students in the Business Information Management program at Vilnius University have access to a wide range of international mobility opportunities, including Erasmus+ exchanges and internships abroad. The university's partnerships with numerous global institutions allow students to gain valuable experience in international business settings. The Information Services programs at all levels offer semester or year long study abroad, compulsory professional internships, additional summer internships, and graduate internships. Mobility can take place through Erasmus+, ISEP, NORDPLUS, and bilateral agreements. The Faculty of Communication holds 97 Erasmus and other cooperation

agreements, and Vilnius University's participation in the ARQUS and COIMBRA networks further expands these options.

The selection for study exchanges occurs twice annually, while internship placements are selected continuously. Admission is based on clear criteria such as student motivation and academic performance, with decisions made by a committee appointed by the Dean. The Study Administrator for International Studies and Projects manages these programs and provides information and support. Details about mobility opportunities are shared via the university and faculty websites, newsletters, information meetings, and individual consultations.

According to the Self-Evaluation Report, no foreign students were enrolled in full-time studies during the period analyzed. It also notes that undergraduate students more frequently participate in exchange programs compared to graduate students, who face challenges related to shorter study duration, professional responsibilities, and financial constraints.

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

VU offers comprehensive academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support to students in the Business Information Management program. Students can receive academic advising and assistance with their studies, while psychological and social support services are available to ensure their well-being. The university provides financial aid options, including scholarships and loans, and students are informed about these opportunities through Vilnius University's Consultation and Support site, psychological support site and academic advisors in the VU Student Services and Careers Office.The student support system is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all students, including those with special needs.

Since its launch in September 2019, the Vilnius University Mentoring Programme has become an integral part of the university's approach to student support. Mentors – including university staff and alumni – volunteer their time to share insights, offer encouragement, and help students navigate their academic paths and career planning. The programme is designed to foster general competencies, boost motivation, and support students in achieving their academic goals. In 2023 alone, 170 mentors took part in the initiative, working with 120 students across various disciplines – a testament to the growing strength and engagement of the university community.

3.2.3 Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient:

Vilnius University is dedicated to ensuring that students are thoroughly informed about academic procedures, important deadlines, and the range of support services available throughout their studies. To achieve this, the university provides a comprehensive array of counseling and advisory services designed to assist students at various stages of their academic journey. Information concerning academic programs, career opportunities, and additional services is made easily accessible through the university's official website and its counseling offices.

Both the university and individual faculties utilize multiple communication channels to introduce students to study programs and their requirements. They also provide a strong support system to ensure that students receive adequate and continuous consultations during their studies. This support framework includes centralized advising, personalized consultations, mentorship programs, and transparent access to relevant information.

Among the advisory services available, the Student Services and Careers Office offers personalized assistance on a wide range of issues including admissions, study processes, financial support, the suspension or termination of studies, the creation of individualized study plans, program transfers, internships, and extracurricular activities. Each core academic unit is supported by Academic Advisors who provide specialized guidance tailored to the program's specifics. Additionally, Study Programme Committee Chairs and faculty members offer expert advice on academic content and curriculum-

related questions. Student Representatives play an important role in providing peer support within academic units, while the Central Student Representation Office offers broader advocacy and guidance at the university level.

The mentorship program at Vilnius University aims to develop students' general competencies, improve their academic and personal achievements, enhance motivation, and support their professional development. Complementing these efforts, career counseling services provided by the Student Services and Careers Office assist students in career planning and navigating employment opportunities.

Together, these integrated services form a robust and supportive academic environment, fostering student success and ensuring that all students receive the guidance necessary to thrive during their studies at Vilnius University.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION(regarding 3.2.)

The Information Services programmes at Vilnius University provide a strong and effective student support system. This includes academic advising, financial assistance, psychological services, and opportunities for personal development. Additionally, academic mobility options enhance the international dimension of the study experience. The university ensures that students are well-informed and supported throughout their academic journey via multiple communication channels and advisory structures.

Student admission and support across both first- and second-cycle Information Services programs are implemented in a clear, consistent, and student-centered manner. Admission procedures are transparent and aligned with program learning outcomes. Recognition of foreign qualifications and prior learning is properly regulated and accessible, although no applications were submitted during the reference period. The wide range of support services academic, personal, and career related ensures that students are well equipped to succeed.

Opportunities for academic mobility, mentoring, and individual counseling significantly enrich the student experience. As no significant shortcomings were identified in any of these areas, this section is assessed as fully compliant with quality standards (score: 5) across all study cycles.

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
First cycle				X	
Second cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The student admission and support is clear, transparent, and aligned with program learning outcomes. Support system covers academic, financial, psychological, and personal assistance.
2. Recognition for foreign qualifications and prior learning ensure smooth integration of international students.
3. Strong academic mobility opportunities, including Erasmus+ and partnerships with international institutions, broaden the educational experience of students.
4. Students have access to timely, and easily accessible information and counseling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Consider expanding partnerships with non-European institutions to diversify academic mobility options.
2. Further develop platforms to enhance access to support services and information.

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 study programmes and course descriptions in the field of Information Services at the VU Faculty of Communication are designed to ensure coherence between the intended learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment approaches. Teaching is student-centred and structured to encourage independent learning, critical thinking and professional preparedness.

The study process prioritises student autonomy through a pedagogical model integrating blended learning methods, combining in-person and remote lectures, seminars, group work, case studies, simulations and consultations. Digital platforms such as Moodle and the VU Study Information System (VUSIS) facilitate access to learning materials and enable ongoing communication between students and instructors, thereby supporting these methods. While Moodle is the main virtual learning environment for organising coursework and activities, VUSIS stores important academic information such as admissions details, grades and performance statistics.

All courses, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, begin with clearly defined objectives, learning outcomes, teaching strategies and assessment criteria. The BA in Business Information Management follows a structured ratio of one part contact to two parts independent work, with the proportion of independent learning increasing in later semesters to support thesis preparation. Similarly, MA programmes such as Knowledge Management and Leadership and Information Systems Management place a strong emphasis on research-oriented learning in the final semesters, including term papers and project-based assignments. Feedback from students and alumni, collected through platforms such as 'Student Ambassadors' and surveys, confirms the value of the programme's practical focus and integration of research.

Experiential learning is integrated throughout the curriculum via simulations, site visits, guest lectures and collaborative tasks with social partners. A key part of this approach is the 12-week (20 ECTS) professional internship in the seventh semester of the BA programme. This internship offers students hands-on experience in public and private sector organisations. Governed by tripartite agreements, these internships enable students to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world settings and often lead to employment. Evaluation is based on structured student reports and feedback from the host organisation.

Research skills are systematically developed through integrated coursework and final theses. Dedicated courses such as 'Communication and Information Research Methods' support the development of planning, analytical, and academic writing skills. Assessment practices across the field are multimodal and include quizzes, presentations, reports, empirical research, practical tasks and case studies. The cumulative assessment model encourages consistent engagement and reflective learning. This is supported by continuous feedback via Moodle and VUSIS, as well as consultations. Students receive feedback on interim and final assignments to help them understand their progress, correct misconceptions and plan future learning steps. The final thesis serves as a capstone evaluation of the intended programme learning outcomes.

According to recent employment tracking data, over 80% of Bachelor of Arts (BA) graduates and almost all Master of Arts (MA) graduates find employment within one year of completing their studies, largely thanks to the relevance of the internship and research components.

There are clear opportunities for academic progression, with structured transitions from BA to MA studies supported by vertically aligned curriculum design.

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

In alignment with Vilnius University's broader inclusivity policies, the Faculty ensures access to higher education for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs through institutional strategies, tailored support services and an inclusive learning environment.

The university's Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy 2020–2025 provides a comprehensive institutional framework for inclusivity across dimensions such as disability, gender equality, cultural diversity, social exclusion, work-life balance, and anti-discrimination. The strategy supports the adaptation of study processes by investing in accessible infrastructure and assistive technology, as well as building the capacity of both students and staff.

The Disability Coordinator in the Community Welfare Unit monitors the needs of students with various conditions, including physical disabilities, mental health issues, autism spectrum disorders, learning difficulties and temporary impairments. These students may request individual study plans, modified timetables and access to adapted resources. Regular seminars are held to improve community awareness and promote integration.

The university's physical environment is undergoing continuous accessibility improvements, while platforms such as Moodle and VUSIS ensure flexible digital access to learning materials and academic processes. The faculty also offers additional consultations and scheduling flexibility to support students who are balancing their studies with health, family or work commitments.

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may be eligible for financial assistance, including one-off social grants and VU-named scholarships. Psychological counselling, academic advising and spiritual support services further enhance the institution's inclusive learning environment.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

The Faculty of Communication at VU takes a comprehensive, student-centred approach to preparing students for independent professional activity. Teaching and learning methods are closely aligned with the intended learning outcomes, combining theoretical content with experiential and research-based learning. The progressive increase in independent study hours fosters students' autonomy and critical engagement, and cumulative assessment provides consistent feedback and motivation.

Digital platforms such as Moodle and VUSIS support not only content delivery, but also personalised feedback, progress monitoring and adaptive academic planning. These features are particularly beneficial for students with varied learning needs.

Feedback from students and alumni, gathered through initiatives such as the 'Student Ambassadors' programme and surveys, confirms the perceived value of the programmes' practical focus, inclusive approach and alignment with professional needs. Programmes emphasise competence development for both immediate employment and further academic progression. Research capacity is systematically developed throughout the curriculum, supported by course-integrated assignments and thesis development.

Inclusivity is robustly addressed through university-wide and faculty-level policies. The Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy provides a sound framework, operationalised through personalised support services and adaptations for students with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The faculty offers structured access to physical, financial, academic and psychological support services, reflecting a commitment to educational equity at multiple levels.

The documented uptake of psychological and financial support services, alongside positive feedback from students, suggests that not only are inclusivity measures available, but they are also actively utilised and have an impact.

The high graduate employment rates - above 80% for BA graduates and almost 100% for MA graduates within a year - highlight the effectiveness of integrating internships and research components into the curriculum.

The Information Services programmes at the VU Faculty of Communication are coherent, inclusive and professionally oriented. They effectively integrate independent learning, experiential practice and research competencies within a supportive, adaptive educational environment.

To further improve outcomes, the faculty could consider innovating in the area of assessment, monitoring graduate transitions and enhancing peer assessment and feedback mechanisms.

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 Faculty of Communication at VU employs a comprehensive, multi-level system to monitor students' learning progress and provide timely, constructive feedback to support self-assessment and academic planning. The system operates at three levels: course/module, group and programme.

At the course/module level, individual instructors assess and guide student progress. A cumulative assessment approach is applied across the board, integrating various methods such as quizzes, presentations, written assignments, research tasks and practical activities. Feedback is closely linked with teaching methodologies and is delivered through in-person consultations and digital platforms, notably Moodle and VUSIS. These platforms enable real-time performance tracking, automated testing with delayed feedback and assignment submission with personalised comments, helping students to track their progress and plan their learning journeys. To further systematise this process, the faculty could consider formalising student engagement with feedback by providing them with structured tools, such as reflective journals or learning logs.

At the group level, the VU Study Administration Unit conducts periodic performance reviews. After each semester, students are ranked, and 'rotation analysis' is used to identify courses with consistently high (average ≥8) or borderline failing (average 5–4) performance. Targeted communications offering preparatory resources and personalised study advice are sent to students who have failed an examination, to support re-examination efforts and retention.

At the programme level, Study Programme Committees (SPCs) analyse broader trends in student achievement. This includes monitoring the outcomes of professional internships through feedback from host institutions, evaluating the quality of theses and completion rates, and reviewing enrolment, academic leave and dropout statistics. These analyses inform strategic adjustments to course structure, supervision practices and programme planning. In the future, integrating data on academic performance trends and retention rates could provide a more quantitative basis for these evaluations. Student satisfaction surveys, conducted at both the university and faculty levels, also provide data for evaluating and improving programme delivery.

Mechanisms to support formative assessment and reflective practice include peer reviews, iterative project submissions and reflective writing. These are particularly used in research-intensive and project-based modules across both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Instructors consistently align their feedback with the relevant assessment criteria to promote transparency and encourage students to engage with their academic goals.

The entire monitoring and feedback process is underpinned by digital infrastructure and institutional coordination, ensuring both individual academic development and programme-level quality assurance.

The Faculty has implemented a robust, multi-tiered system for monitoring student progress, reflecting institutional maturity and alignment with best practice in learner-centred education. Assessment and feedback are deeply integrated into teaching and learning processes through the cumulative evaluation model, digital platforms and formative tools. Including programme- and group-level analysis alongside individual feedback allows for micro- and macro-level adjustments that benefit students and enhance programme quality.

To further strengthen the system, the faculty could consider formalising how students engage with feedback (e.g. by using reflective tools) and ensuring greater consistency in the quality of feedback across courses. These steps would enhance the depth and equity of student learning support.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

The Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University (VU) systematically monitors graduate employability using a multi-layered approach that combines national data sources, institutional

tracking systems, and programme-level feedback. The primary tool used is the Career Tracking Information System (CTIS) (karjera.lt), which aggregates objective and subjective data.

Objective data is sourced from national state registers, including the Student Register, Citizen Register and SoDra (the State Social Insurance Fund). This provides employment status and contract information for up to five years after graduation and is updated biannually. Subjective data is collected via sociological surveys conducted one, three and five years after graduation. These surveys focus on metrics such as employability, career development and job satisfaction.

According to CTIS data:

- BA in Business Information Management: 80–90% of graduates are employed on formal contracts in Lithuania within one year, with the remainder typically continuing their studies at postgraduate level.
- MA in Information Systems Management: 100% of graduates are employed within one year.
- MA in Knowledge Management and Leadership: The employment rate is 89% within the same period.

These high employment rates reflect the relevance of programme content and skills development in relation to the labour market. The Faculty also supplements CTIS data with internal reviews conducted by the Study Programme Committees (SPCs). These reviews incorporate feedback from alumni and employers, particularly those who host internships or serve as guest lecturers, and inform regular curriculum updates. To increase employer input, the faculty could implement structured engagement mechanisms such as regular employer forums, strategic partnerships, and collaborative projects.

The Faculty also participates in VU's broader career pathway monitoring initiatives and engages with alumni through formal surveys and informal consultations. Although the existing data system is effective, response rates from employers and long-term alumni could be improved by implementing more structured engagement strategies. During the on-site visit, representatives of social partners observed that alumni primarily maintain contact and exchange information through informal, generation-specific, private communication channels. This highlights the potential benefits of creating a more structured and inclusive framework for alumni engagement, mentoring schemes and periodic follow-up surveys.

The Faculty takes a structured, data-driven approach to monitoring graduates' careers. Integrating national employment registers via CTIS, alongside targeted alumni surveys and programme-level evaluations, provides nuanced insights into graduate employability. The consistently high employment rates across all programmes highlight the effectiveness of aligning the curriculum with labour market demands.

To further enhance the utility of these insights, the faculty could benefit from increasing employer participation in feedback processes and expanding systematic alumni engagement beyond the first postgraduate year. Nevertheless, the monitoring framework is well-established and effectively informs programme improvement.

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

The Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University implements the institution's central policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination. These policies are governed by a comprehensive institutional framework, which includes the Vilnius University Code of Academic Ethics (2018), the Academic Ethics Committee Regulations and the Study Regulations. The framework also incorporates the procedures of both the Central and Core Academic Unit Ethics and Dispute Resolution Commissions.

All academic staff and students are bound by these regulations, which explicitly define violations such as plagiarism, fraud, forgery, bribery and complicity in unethical conduct. Sanctions range from formal reprimands to expulsion, and these rules are clearly communicated at the start of studies through syllabuses and during academic advising sessions.

To promote fair assessment practices, instructors use various methods, such as cumulative grading, open-book exams, digital exams, and involving multiple graders. The VU Student Representation's 'Honestly' programme offers impartial observation of final assessments as an optional service to strengthen academic transparency and trust.

The university uses a compulsory plagiarism detection system for written work, including bachelor's and master's theses, to ensure systematic monitoring of academic honesty.

Over the past three academic years, one case of academic dishonesty has been confirmed, resulting in the expulsion of a student from the BA in Business Information Management programme at Vilnius University.

Preventative awareness-raising is conducted through ethics training and community initiatives, and support services such as psychological counselling, academic advising and spiritual guidance are provided by the Community Welfare Unit.

In terms of inclusivity, the faculty actively engages with the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy 2020–2025, which covers non-discrimination, disability, gender equity and cultural sensitivity. Seminars and events are organised to promote ethical academic behaviour, inclusivity, and awareness of students' rights and responsibilities.

The Faculty has implemented a well-established framework to uphold academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. This framework is clearly defined by institutional policies and actively communicated and enforced through regulatory bodies, digital tools and awareness initiatives. Preventative measures, such as the 'Honestly' programme, electronic plagiarism detection and inclusive assessment practices, reinforce a culture of fairness and ethical behaviour. Further promotion of the 'Honestly' programme is recommended to increase its effectiveness and encourage broader participation among both students and staff.

The one recorded case of academic dishonesty suggests that policies are being effectively disseminated and that ethical awareness is high among students and staff. This example shows that the university has measures in place to deal with breaches of academic integrity. It also illustrates a specific instance in which these policies were enforced. Although this low number may indicate strong institutional awareness, periodic review of reporting systems is recommended to ensure robustness and identify any underreporting.

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

Vilnius University ensures that students have access to clear, structured and transparent processes for submitting and resolving academic appeals and complaints. These procedures are governed by the Vilnius University Study Regulations and are implemented at central and faculty levels. Such matters are handled by the Central and Core Academic Unit Dispute Resolution Commissions.

Students may appeal against decisions relating to academic assessments, disciplinary actions or broader grievances concerning research and study activities. Appeals against course grades must be submitted in writing within seven calendar days of the publication of grades. Procedural breaches in interim or final assessments or thesis defences can be appealed within three working days. However, final evaluations of bachelor's or master's theses cannot be appealed.

Petitions concerning potential rights violations must be filed within one month of the incident, with an extension of up to six months possible for serious reasons. The Faculty Disputes Committee consists of three faculty/research staff members and three student representatives.

Complaints concerning academic ethics—such as those involving plagiarism or discrimination—are reviewed by the Faculty Academic Ethics Committee, which comprises four faculty/research staff and two student representatives. Cases outside its remit are forwarded to the VU Central Academic Ethics Committee. Complaints must be submitted within one month, but this period may be extended by up to six months in exceptional circumstances.

The Faculty of Communication integrates these frameworks into its student support system, providing information through syllabuses, orientation sessions and digital tools, such as the VU Student Information System (VUSIS). According to the Self-Evaluation Report, no appeals or academic ethics complaints were registered in the Information Services field over the past three academic years. This may indicate either high student satisfaction or the underutilisation of procedures due to limited awareness or confidence.

The Faculty of Communication has a clearly defined, accessible and well-structured process for handling student appeals and academic ethics complaints. This process is supported by active student involvement and robust procedural safeguards. While the one reported case reflects a stable academic environment, it is advisable to periodically assess student awareness of, and perceptions surrounding, the appeals process, in order to ensure continued trust and transparency. This could involve conducting targeted surveys or focus groups to gather actionable feedback. Efforts should also be made to raise awareness of these procedures by running awareness campaigns involving workshops and information sessions. Following the Faculty's example of promoting counselling services via the hero section of the website, prominent notices should also be displayed on digital platforms.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

The Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University adopts a comprehensive and integrated approach to assessing students, monitoring their progress, tracking graduates, upholding academic integrity, and handling appeals. The policies and mechanisms across these four areas are aligned with the university's standards and are further enhanced through the Faculty's implementation, which is tailored to the field of information services.

Student progress is systematically monitored at course, group and programme levels using cumulative assessments, digital learning environments and structured feedback mechanisms. These processes encourage self-evaluation and informed learning planning among students. To further enhance student engagement, the Faculty could formalise reflective practices by introducing tools such as learning journals or structured feedback sessions. At the same time, the faculty uses a variety of assessment methods that align with learning outcomes and encourage continuous reflective learning. Consistency in feedback quality across courses could be improved through staff development and standardised feedback templates.

The centralised CTIS system combines objective state register data with periodic sociological surveys to advance graduate career monitoring. The high employability rates across both study cycles validate the programmes' relevance and quality. However, employer feedback could be more systematically integrated by organising regular employer forums and partnerships. Furthermore, alumni engagement should be extended beyond the first year after graduation, potentially through structured networks or mentorship schemes. As was observed during the on-site visit, alumni currently interact primarily through informal, generation-specific private channels, which suggests the need for a more centralised platform for alumni communication.

A strong institutional framework supports academic integrity and inclusivity. Preventive measures, clear communication, ethical oversight, and the absence of recent cases of academic dishonesty all reflect an ethical academic culture. To ensure robustness, the Faculty could periodically review the reporting and awareness mechanisms related to academic integrity, and include case study–based ethics training. Inclusivity is further reinforced through targeted support and policy implementation under the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy.

The procedures for student appeals and complaints are clear, transparent and timely. Although no appeals have been reported in recent years in the field of Information Services, continued efforts to assess student awareness of, and confidence in utilising, this system via surveys or focus groups are recommended. Awareness-raising efforts should mirror effective practices, such as promoting psychological counselling using website banners and informational campaigns to ensure high visibility and accessibility.

Overall, the Faculty exhibits high standards in safeguarding academic integrity, student progress, and postgraduate success. However, this strong performance could be further solidified through broader employer engagement, routine feedback on ethical and complaints procedures, and improved communication of student rights and feedback mechanisms.

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
First cycle				X	
Second cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Digital platforms such as Moodle and VUSIS are used effectively to support this alignment and provide ongoing feedback.
2. There is structured progression in student autonomy and independent study, which is effectively scaffolded over the programme duration.
3. There is strong integration of theoretical knowledge and practical application, particularly through simulations, project-based tasks and real-world assignments.
4. Experiential learning is a core strength, as demonstrated by the 12-week professional internship, which often results in job offers, showing employer trust in the programme's quality.
5. Students are empowered to shape their educational trajectory through flexible course selection and internship planning.
6. The learning environment is ethical, inclusive and supportive, backed by the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy 2020–2025 and specialised support units.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Although assessment methods vary, some undergraduate courses still rely heavily on traditional exam formats, such as multiple choice or written responses. Increasing the use of peer assessments, portfolios and real-world tasks could boost engagement and provide a more accurate reflection of professional scenarios.
2. Consistency could also be enhanced by standardising feedback quality across courses through faculty training or feedback templates.
3. Although graduate employability tracking is supported by CTIS and national data, it could be enhanced by systematically linking career outcomes to specific curricular components and learning experiences.
4. The curriculum does not sufficiently emphasise structured international or interdisciplinary collaboration. Introducing clearer frameworks for global or cross-sectoral learning experiences would benefit students in an increasingly interconnected world.
5. Integrating alumni feedback more fully into curriculum review and programme development could provide valuable insights into the long-term impact and relevance of study programmes.

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

At Vilnius University, teaching and research staff are recruited competitively according to the University's official regulations, ensuring transparency and merit-based selection. Positions are publicly advertised, with top-level openings also posted in English to attract international talent. Staff are typically employed for five-year terms, with the possibility of permanent contracts upon a second consecutive successful competition for the same role.

With 164 staff members, including 17 professors, 44 associate professors, and a high number of lecturers, the Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University has a significant capacity to deliver Information Services programs. In the field of Information Services, 33 permanent staff (81.9% with doctorates) contribute to study programmes. The SER document mentions engaging external hourly teachers with industry experience in areas such as public relations, creativity, negotiations, cybersecurity, and social media. This enhances teaching with applied knowledge. Examples include specialists from the Lithuanian Armed Forces, creative industries, and cybersecurity, contributing to both BA and MA programmes. Staff qualifications align closely with course content, and teaching is enriched by a mix of academic and practical experience.

Between 2020 and 2023, teacher turnover was low overall, with only two retirements. However, turnover was higher among practitioner-teachers, particularly in ICT-related subjects within Information Services programmes, due to the need for current industry expertise. While these professionals find teaching rewarding, the workload leads many to take breaks after 2–3 years. Notable examples include lecturers from business analytics, public relations, and creativity development courses. In the master's programmes, a cybersecurity expert also paused teaching in 2022. To address the shortage of teacher-researchers, the faculty encourages outstanding master's graduates to pursue PhDs, integrating them into teaching and research.

The student-teacher ratio is approximately 11.58 students per teacher (382 students / 33 teachers).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The teaching staff demonstrate strong academic and research credentials.

The number, qualifications, and competence of the teaching staff in the Information Services Field are adequate for achieving learning outcomes. This data should be linked to Area 2 indicators, which demonstrates teaching staff research capabilities. This research-led approach, coupled with alignment to university regulations, suggests a robust academic environment that is responsive to the demands of the Information Services field.

The evaluation point of 4, in conclusion, recognizes the good level of the teaching staff in the Information Services Field.

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

Vilnius University Faculty offers robust institutional support, including dedicated staff who assist teachers with international mobility opportunities and logistics. Teaching schedules are adapted to facilitate participation, and salaries are maintained during international visits. Teachers share their experiences and best practices, which are often distributed online and integrated into course content.

Academic and research mobility is a priority for enhancing teacher competencies and has gained increasing attention over the past five years. The Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University actively participates in five international programmes (e.g., Erasmus+, Arqus) and maintains Erasmus agreements with 93 partner institutions. These collaborations encourage both outbound teacher mobility for training and teaching, and inbound visits from international lecturers.

Since 2018, Vilnius University also offers internal funding for international teaching, study visits, and project-based exchanges.

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

In 2018, the Vilnius University implemented a system for developing teachers' pedagogical competencies, formalized in the "Vilnius University Regulations for the Organization of Teaching Staff and Research/Art Staff Recruiting Competitions and Certification." These regulations outline required pedagogical competencies, which are evaluated during certification and job competitions.

Since 2020, the Faculty of Communication has held regular performance discussions between staff and departmental heads, as well as annual meetings between study program chairs and faculty leadership. Since 2023, semester-start meetings have focused on study organization, research integration into teaching, collaboration promotion, and student research involvement.

Program quality is maintained by ensuring teacher qualifications align with course content, conducting regular performance evaluations, fostering strong links between teaching and research, including industry professionals, and promoting continuous dialogue between faculty and administration. Student feedback is formally gathered through structured surveys.

All teaching and research staff undergo certification every five years, assessed by panels that include students and international experts. Criteria include academic output, teaching performance, project leadership, and student supervision.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

International mobility is fostered both for incoming and outgoing teachers. However, the number of staff members who participated is not indicated, with only 93 connected institutions. Vilnius University implemented regulations for developing the required teachers' pedagogical competencies, which are evaluated during certification and job competitions.

Overall, the evaluation point of 4 is attributed because Vilnius University employs a rigorous and evolving system to ensure high-quality teaching staff, research-informed, and practice-oriented.

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
First cycle				X	
Second cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Highly qualified core Staff: The academic team meets formal qualification standards, and several have PhDs, ensuring academic rigour.
2. Inclusion of Practitioner-Teachers: Courses benefit from professionals with up-to-date industry expertise, particularly in fast-evolving fields like ICT and communication. This enhances real-world relevance and supports the employability of graduates.
3. Alignment with Market Needs: The involvement of experts from business analytics, cybersecurity, and communications ensures that teaching is aligned with labour market demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Integration of young researchers: Attracting talented master's graduates into doctoral programmes and progressively involving them in teaching could foster staff renewal and knowledge continuity.

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 Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University provides students in the Information Services field with a modern and well-equipped learning environment. Its infrastructure comprises multiple dedicated learning spaces, including lecture halls, computer labs, group work areas and study rooms. These are located across three buildings: the central VU building (Universiteto g. 3), M. K. Čiurlionio g. 21/27 and Saulėtekio al. 9.
These facilities are complemented by publicly accessible spaces in the VU Library, the VU Knowledge Centre in Saulėtekis and the VU Library Scholarly Communication and Information Centre.

The Faculty's premises are fully adapted for students with mobility impairments, and specialised workstations and software are available upon request for students with visual or hearing impairments. These adaptations form part of the university's commitment to accessibility under the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy 2020–2025.

The Faculty is equipped with specialised hardware and software used in various courses, including SPSS, NVivo, Adobe Creative Cloud, EBSCO, Taylor & Francis, Emerald, Web of Science and Scopus. Moodle and VUSIS are extensively used to manage course content, assignments, feedback and performance monitoring, supporting both in-person and hybrid learning models.

The library system provides broad access to printed and electronic academic literature. Students have access to over 60 databases, including subject-specific resources that are essential for Information Services. Faculty members and students can access recent research publications and course-related materials via Moodle, which supports asynchronous study and caters for students with flexible learning needs.

In terms of practical training, the faculty has partnerships with over 40 external organisations ranging from public institutions to private enterprises, ensuring a variety of relevant work placements. These placements form a vital part of the curriculum, particularly within the BA in Business Information Management programme, which incorporates a compulsory 12-week internship.

The modern, inclusive facilities, equipment and learning resources available at the Faculty of Communication are well-matched to the needs of the information services field. Students benefit from an effective blend of physical infrastructure, digital tools, and external practice opportunities. The learning environment clearly supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

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

The Faculty of Communication is committed to renewing its resources and developing its infrastructure in line with academic and technological advancements. Facilities and resources are planned and upgraded through central university mechanisms and faculty-level initiatives.

The Faculty regularly evaluates the adequacy of its resources through feedback from teachers and students, assessments from the study programme committee, and evolving academic requirements. This informs the acquisition of new software, the renewal of teaching tools and infrastructure improvements. For example, integrating software such as Adobe Creative Cloud, NVivo and SPSS,

as well as continuously developing the Moodle learning platform, reflects responses to pedagogical needs and technological trends.

Financial support for resource planning and upgrades comes from the university's budget and external funding. The faculty has documented a sustainable model of resource renewal which includes regular investment in IT infrastructure, library holdings and accessibility improvements. The Strategic Plan for 2021–2025 also includes objectives for enhancing the quality of learning resources and integrating new technologies into teaching and learning.

Resource renewal also addresses the needs of students with special requirements, including the provision of adaptive technologies and infrastructure adjustments based on recommendations from the Community Welfare Unit and the Disability Coordinator. Strategic priorities are reviewed periodically and adjusted in response to external evaluations and internal development plans.

The Faculty of Communication takes a well-organised, forward-looking approach to planning and renewing resources. Continuous investment in digital tools, teaching infrastructure and inclusivity measures ensures that learning environments evolve alongside academic and technological developments. This system is financially sustainable and responsive to stakeholder input.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

The Faculty of Communication offers students in the information services field a high-quality learning environment, supported by modern infrastructure, accessible digital platforms and a clear commitment to inclusivity and pedagogical relevance. The Faculty demonstrates thoughtful resource management and continuous investment in upgrading its facilities and learning tools across both indicators.

The premises are well equipped and distributed across key university buildings, offering students access to lecture halls, computer labs, collaborative spaces and digital resources. The provision of assistive technologies and physical adaptations reflects the university's commitment to accessibility under the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy.

Teaching and learning are effectively supported by up-to-date software and digital tools, including NVivo, SPSS, Moodle and a range of academic databases. The university library and its digital platforms provide access to recent and relevant literature that aligns with students' needs. Furthermore, extensive collaboration with external practice bases enriches the experiential learning component of the curriculum.

Resource renewal is systematically planned and underpinned by feedback loops, financial planning and strategic priorities. The faculty continuously updates its digital and physical learning environments in response to evolving pedagogical and technological demands.

Taken together, these strengths highlight the faculty's ability to maintain a dynamic, inclusive and pedagogically sound learning infrastructure that supports student success and long-term institutional resilience.

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
First cycle				X	

Second cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Modern, accessible and well-maintained infrastructure that supports both contact and independent study.
2. A comprehensive digital ecosystem including Moodle, VUSIS and access to over 60 academic databases.
3. There is clear alignment between learning resources and intended learning outcomes, particularly with regard to software provision and digital library access.
4. Strategic and financial planning for infrastructure renewal is embedded in institutional policy.
5. There is a strong commitment to inclusion, reflected in accessible facilities and assistive technologies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

No shortcomings

For further improvement

1. Improve the systematic integration of student and teacher feedback into resource renewal decisions to ensure responsiveness at programme and course levels.
2. Explore adopting innovative educational technologies, such as virtual labs and AI-supported platforms, to enhance digital learning environments.
3. Encourage the interdisciplinary use of facilities and digital tools to support cross-sectoral and collaborative learning experiences.

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

Vilnius University (VU) demonstrates a strong and multifaceted institutional responsibility for quality assurance in the field of study and across all its academic endeavors. This responsibility is manifested through a robust central oversight structure, well-defined internal quality processes, the active engagement of all stakeholders at various levels of governance, and a continuous commitment to improvement driven by data, feedback, and collaborative dialogue.

Institutional responsibility for quality assurance rests on the understanding that the University is fundamentally accountable for the quality of its programs and all related provisions. Vilnius University actively embraces this responsibility through a multi-layered and comprehensive internal quality assurance framework, as evidenced by the following:

Department of Study Quality and Development: this centralized body plays a vital role in fostering a quality-centric culture that aligns with the University's core mission. Their approach is based on the systematic monitoring and analysis of study-related data and the promotion of internal dialogue aimed at continuous quality improvement.

While the central department provides oversight, the responsibility for quality assurance is also deeply embedded within the University's academic units and governance structures.

Senate and Academic Unit Control: As stipulated by normative documents, the VU Senate and academic units exert control over internal quality assurance, ensuring accountability at all levels.

Study Programme Committees (SPCs): The study programme committees bear the greatest responsibility for the quality and continuous improvement of their respective programs. These committees, composed of teaching staff, social partners, and student representatives, actively engage in curriculum development, review, and enhancement. The Faculty administration further supports SPCs by providing guidance and facilitating regular discussions through the College of Studies, chaired by the Vice-Dean of Studies. This forum allows for the collaborative discussion of key issues related to study process management, student satisfaction, and strategic planning. The study programme committee for BA in Business Information management is composed of 6 teachers implementing the programme, 2 social partners and 2 student representatives. The joint study programme committee for the MA programmes in Information Management, which oversees the Information Systems Management and Knowledge Management and Leadership study programmes, is composed of 6 teachers, 2 social partners, 2 students representatives.

Faculty Administration's Role: The Vice-Dean for Studies holds direct responsibility for the study process at the Faculty of Communication, addressing matters beyond the scope of SPCs or the Faculty Board. The Study Department provides crucial administrative support, ensuring the smooth organization of studies, effective communication, and accurate record-keeping. The Department of Studies further supports students with academic counseling and manages program documentation.

Faculty Board Oversight: it plays a crucial role in overseeing the internal quality assurance of studies and approving key documents regulating the study process. They receive annual reports from the SPCs, which include analyses of enrollment, internationalization efforts, student satisfaction, resource needs, staff competencies, workload, and graduate outcomes.

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

Vilnius University's commitment to quality assurance is not static but rather a dynamic process driven by continuous feedback and collaboration.

Student Feedback: Information gathered from student surveys is actively discussed in SPC meetings, leading to the implementation of solutions to address concerns and improve the learning experience.

Social Partner Engagement: Social partners play a vital role in ensuring the internal quality and integrity of each study program through their participation in Faculty Boards, SPCs, thesis defense committees, internship supervision, guest lectures, and informal consultations. Their insights into labor market needs and graduate competencies are invaluable for curriculum development and ensuring program relevance.

Faculty-Led Initiatives: The Faculty actively encourages teacher development and the sharing of good practices through initiatives like the educational initiatives project and internal seminars. This fosters a culture of pedagogical innovation and continuous improvement at the grassroots level.

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

Vilnius University's study quality assurance system, developed within the "Development and Implementation of the Internal Study Quality Management System" project, adheres to European Higher Education Area standards and the Vilnius University's statute. Study Programme Committees for the Business Information Management BA and Information Management MA programs analyze feedback from faculty departments, students, graduates, teachers, and social partners, discussing program improvements and student-relevant issues.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

The significance of student feedback is formally recognized and systematically implemented at Vilnius University. The procedures for collecting feedback from all social stakeholders, including students, residents, doctoral students, and graduates, are meticulously outlined in the "Procedure for Organising Feedback from Social Stakeholders to Improve the Quality of Studies at Vilnius University." This process is directly linked to the indicators of the Vilnius University Strategic Plan, demonstrating its integral role in the overarching quality assurance framework.

Students, as the primary beneficiaries and most directly invested stakeholders in the quality of their education, play a vital role in this process. In collaboration with teaching staff and the administration of core academic units, such as the Faculty of Communication, students actively contribute to identifying emerging issues related to learning quality and collaboratively seeking effective solutions. The surveys employed for this purpose are rigorously designed and their quality is ensured by the relevant academic and non-academic departments across the University.

Vilnius University utilizes several standardized student surveys to gather comprehensive feedback:

Survey on the Quality of the Study Course (Module): Conducted during and/or at the end of each semester, this survey captures students' direct experiences with individual courses, including General University Courses.

Survey on the Quality of Semester Studies in General: Administered at the end of each semester by the VU Department of Study Quality and Development, this survey provides a broader perspective on students' overall satisfaction with their studies during that period.

Survey of First-Year Students: Conducted during the first semester by the VU Student Services and Careers Division, this survey gathers insights into the admission process, students' motivations for choosing their studies, and their initial expectations.

Survey of Final-Year Students: Carried out at the end of each study semester by the VU Department of Study Quality and Development, this survey focuses on the study program itself, the quality of its implementation, and the overall study conditions. The detailed results of these surveys, broken down by Faculties and study programs, are readily accessible to all VU staff on the internal University website.

Open-ended Questionnaire Survey of Students in Professional Internships: Conducted at the conclusion of each professional internship as part of the internship report, this survey specifically explores the benefits of the internship and identifies areas for potential organizational improvement. While the raw results are not publicly published, they are used in an aggregated format by the Faculty administration and the Study Programme Committees (SPCs) for informed decision-making regarding professional internships. Furthermore, students provide individual, reflective feedback on the internship's quality and its associated course alongside their formal results, which is subsequently discussed during individual internship evaluations.

Survey of Incoming Exchange Students: Administered at the end of each semester by the VU International Relations Department, this survey gathers feedback on the implementation of exchange programs from the perspective of incoming international students. The detailed results are available internally to VU staff.

Survey of Outgoing Exchange Students: Conducted at the end of the mobility period by the VU International Relations Department using the Erasmus+ Mobility Tool+, this survey gathers feedback from VU students on their exchange experiences. The results are intended for internal use by the VU Central Administration to enhance internal processes.

Survey of Students who have Completed an Internship Abroad: Administered at the end of each semester by the VU Student Services and Career Department using the Erasmus+ Mobility Tool+, this survey specifically focuses on the quality of the international internship experience. The results are intended for internal use by the VU Central Administration to improve internal processes.

Survey of Students who have terminated their studies: Conducted during the student's formal departure from the University by the Student Services and Career Department, this survey aims to understand the reasons behind students' decisions to discontinue their studies. Aggregated results are available internally to VU staff.

Survey of Graduates: Conducted 12, 36, and 60 months after graduation by the Student Services and Careers Division using the karjera.lt career management information system, this survey aims to gather data on the competencies acquired during studies and graduates' experiences in the labor

market. While currently facing challenges with low turnout, the University is actively seeking systematic solutions to improve graduate participation, and the data obtained is currently used as supplementary information.

These standardized surveys empower decision-makers to make informed choices concerning the assurance of study quality and contribute significantly to creating a student-friendly environment where students feel encouraged and safe to anonymously express their opinions, observations, and suggestions. The results derived from these comprehensive student satisfaction surveys are systematically shared with key stakeholders to facilitate meaningful improvements:

Teachers: Utilize the feedback to directly inform and enhance their course content, teaching methodologies, and assessment procedures.

Study Programme Committees (SPCs): Employ the data to drive improvements in study programs, ensure their overall quality, prepare self-evaluation reports for external evaluations, and inform the design of new programs.

Heads of Research and Study Units: Receive feedback related to the teachers within their units, enabling them to provide targeted advice and facilitate professional development opportunities.

University and Faculty Administration: Utilize the aggregated data to identify areas for improvement in the overall activities of the faculties and the University as a whole.

Recruitment-Certification Commission: Since 2019, representative data from student surveys has been considered by the Recruitment-Certification Commissions at the faculties and other Central Academic Units (CAUs) as a key element in assessing teachers' pedagogical activities during their certification process.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

Vilnius University (VU) demonstrates a well-established, multilayered approach to internal quality assurance (QA) and complies with European Higher Education Area standards and Vilnius University regulations. The SER report describes a data collection system that includes feedback from students, teachers, social partners, and other stakeholders. This suggests a multifaceted approach to data collection, which is positive for completeness.

Students at Vilnius University actively participate in improving learning quality by identifying emerging issues and working to find solutions. The university programs respond to labor market needs, receiving regular input from employers, alumni, and social partners.

The SER report provides several examples of how the results of data analysis are used to make changes and improve the quality of programs. For example, changes in course content, adjustments in teaching methods, and improvements in study materials are mentioned. This indicates a proactive approach to using data for continuous improvement.

In conclusion, point 4 is addressed. The report highlights centralized coordination, strong faculty involvement, effective stakeholder participation (particularly students and social partners), and a structured feedback system.

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
First cycle				X	
Second cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Strong central coordination with devolved responsibility at faculty and programme level.
2. Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities across institutional actors
3. Active and sustained engagement of students and social partners.
4. Use of feedback in decision-making processes, programme design, and academic staff evaluation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Publish aggregated survey outcomes and actions taken (e.g. student feedback reports) to increase transparency and public accountability.
2. Enhance graduate tracking by incentivizing responses or integrating with national employment data.

V. SUMMARY

This summary outlines the principal findings of the experts review panel, which are based on the Self-Evaluation Report, site visit observations, available documentation, and inquiries conducted during the site visit.

The external expert panel gives a positive evaluation of the Information Services programmes at Vilnius University, rating six assessment areas as good. The programs are designed to meet labor market needs and align with European Union and Lithuanian strategic documents.

During the site visit, when we asked the faculty to describe the best feature of Information Services programs, the answer was "complexity". Complexity describes this field of study well, which includes different work contexts (including the Public Administration) and different research and professional specializations. The complexity of the Information Services study programmes at Vilnius University, as described in the documents, is a significant strength. Therefore, the graduates are well-prepared for a variety of roles in different sectors, such as technology companies, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and academia. Consequently, the Information Services programmes are not limited to training just one type of professional, such as a librarian or an information services staff member. Instead, they provide foundational training that allows students to develop a set of transferable skills adaptable to various professional profiles. This versatility is crucial in today's rapidly evolving job market, which requires professionals who can adapt and learn new skills continuously.

The Information Services programs at Vilnius University provide a comprehensive education with core courses, specialized research, and electives, utilizing diverse teaching and assessment methods. The faculty is deeply engaged in research, offering students numerous opportunities to participate in and publish their work, placing students at the centre of the educational experience and ensuring they receive the support needed to achieve their desired outcomes. The study programmes align with EU and Lithuanian strategies, addressing labor market needs and the university's mission, featuring clearly defined learning outcomes and compliance with national standards. Research is well-integrated into the curriculum, with faculty actively incorporating modern research themes and providing students with meaningful research opportunities while highlighting the need for more discussions on technology impacts and interdisciplinary methods. Students receive comprehensive support, including academic counseling, financial aid, and mobility opportunities, ensuring timely and accessible information and counseling. Experiential learning, particularly through internships, is a key focus, and diverse assessment strategies are used in an inclusive, student-centered approach. While alumni engagement and employability metrics can be enhanced, the program boasts highly qualified staff with industry expertise, although high turnover and better integration of young researchers are areas for improvement. Modern infrastructure and a comprehensive digital ecosystem support the programs, with strategic planning for resource updates in place. The university's strong quality assurance framework includes central coordination, stakeholder participation, and use of feedback in decision-making.

The assessment of the VU Information Services study programs reveals strong evidence that their quality, particularly concerning their alignment with labor market needs, is not limited to a Lithuanian context. Instead, several aspects indicate that these programmes represent good practices that are relevant and potentially exemplary within a broader European framework. Further internationalization is a logical and valuable next step to enhance their quality and impact. Internationalization would further enhance the programs' quality and relevance by:

- Broadening Perspectives: Offering courses in English would attract more international students and faculty,
- Increasing Mobility: Enhanced internationalization would create more opportunities for student and faculty mobility
- Enhancing Employability: Graduates with experience in international settings and proficient in English are even more competitive in the European job market.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the SER report and other documentation together with the site visit confirmed a widespread culture of quality among all stakeholders, particularly senior management, administrative staff, the SER Team, and teaching staff. The appreciation and sense of belonging expressed by alumni, students, employers, and social partners was also clearly evident and highly appreciated by the expert panel during the site visit.

Furthermore, the site visit proved to be crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of the emotional and community-related aspects of the study field programmes. It is evident that the expert panel in the previous evaluation, which conducted the review remotely, was significantly limited in this regard. Additionally, the previous evaluation appeared to approach quality primarily through the lens of external standards, with less emphasis on alignment with labour market needs.

The expert panel would like to thank the staff of the Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University for their collaboration during the site visit, their constructive responses and the provision of supplementary documentation.